

# Asylum applications in the European Union

## Statistics in focus

### POPULATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

110/2007

#### Population

Author

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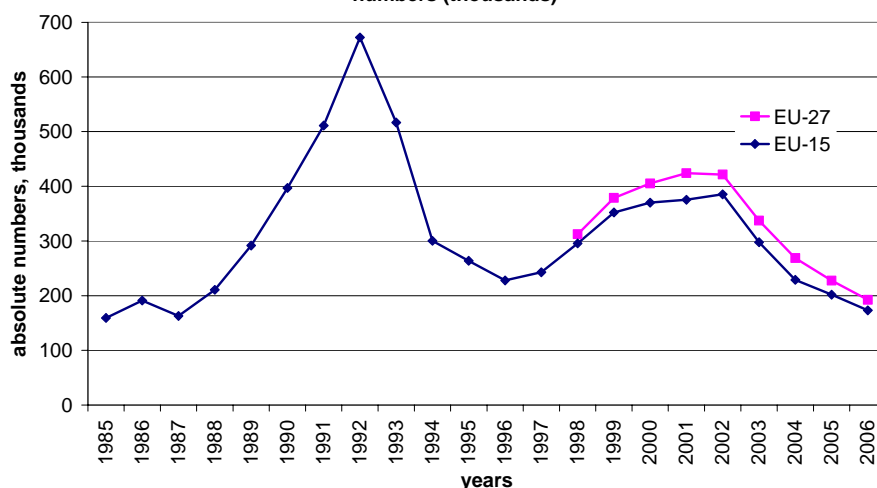
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The number of new applications for asylum<sup>1)</sup> in the EU continued to fall in 2006

Figure 1. New asylum applications, EU-27, EU-15, 1985-2006 in absolute numbers (thousands)



Source: Eurostat

This publication provides an insight into patterns and trends in asylum applications. However, differences in national methodology mean that caution should be exercised when interpreting detailed comparisons between countries. Readers are advised to refer to the methodological notes at the end of this publication.

### Highlights

The number of asylum applications in the EU has been falling for the past five years, and in 2006 some 192 000 asylum applications were lodged in all 27 EU Member States. This compared with over 670 000 applications in 1992 (data for EU-15), and marked a significant decrease during this period. Other notable developments in 2006 were as follows:

- There were over 15% fewer asylum applications in EU-27 in 2006, compared to the previous year. In just five years, the number of applications has fallen by more than half.
- The number of applications last year fell in most Member States, with Slovenia reporting a drop of nearly 70%, Latvia 60% and Cyprus, Austria and France around 40%.
- Several countries noted an increase in asylum applications, with Lithuania up 44%, Sweden 38%, Greece 35% and Hungary nearly 32%.
- With almost 27 900 applications lodged last year, the UK was ahead of France (26 300), Sweden (24 300) and Germany (21 000).
- There were about 0.4 applications per 1000 citizens in EU-27 last year (0.5 in 2005). With almost 6 applications per thousand, Cyprus received the highest number of applications relative to its total population, followed by Malta (3.1) and Sweden (2.7).
- The main countries of origin of those seeking asylum in the EU in 2006 were Iraq, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro<sup>2)</sup>, Afghanistan and Turkey.

1) For some countries and years, applications on appeal may also be included.  
2) Although Montenegro and Serbia declared their independence on 3 June and 5 June 2006 respectively, no separate statistics are available up to December 2006.

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## Asylum seekers in 2006, worldwide

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According to the UNHCR<sup>1)</sup> (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) some 596 000 first and repeat applications for asylum were lodged in 2006 overall, which is down 11% on 2005. Europe, with almost 300 000 asylum requests, received the highest number, followed by Africa (159 000) and the Americas (78 000). According to the report, the highest number of new applications in 2006 was received by South Africa

(with an estimated 53 000, about one third of which were lodged by Zimbabwean citizens). The United States was next with 50 800 requests and Kenya with 37 300 (Somali citizens accounted for more than 70% of all applications). The highest number of applicants originated from Somalia (nearly 45 600). Iraqi nationals were next with (34 200), followed by Zimbabweans (22 000), Eritreans (19 400) and Chinese (19 300).

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## Asylum seekers in the European Union: since the 1990s...

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In the 1990s, political crises and armed conflicts were reflected in the numbers of people who applied for asylum in the EU15 Member States, as shown in Figure 1. A steady upward trend in the number of asylum applications, starting in 1988 and ending in 1992, was followed by a sharp drop in applications.

In the early 1990s the EU15 totals of asylum seekers were heavily influenced by the exceptionally large flows to Germany. In 1992, for example, Germany recorded almost 440 000 applications, representing around two thirds of the EU15 total for that year.

By 1996, the number of asylum applications in the EU15 had fallen back to almost 228 000. After 1996, further armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia led to an increase in asylum claims, which reached just over 370 000 (EU15) by the end of the 20th century. After 1999 the number of asylum applications remained largely

unchanged in the years 2000 - 2002, followed by a substantial fall in 2003.

The influence of the new Member States on the overall trend for the whole European Union is relatively small; the number of asylum applications in these states amounted, on average, to around 10 per cent of the EU total. In 2001, a small difference can be seen between the EU15 and EU27 figures. The number of asylum applications in EU27 increased compared to 2000, while the EU15 figure decreased. This was due to an increase in the number of applicants in the Czech Republic following a change in the asylum legislation. Over the past five years the number of applications in Malta has increased by more than eight times; in Cyprus it has almost tripled. This clearly reflects the geographical location of these countries on the main routes of asylum seekers entering the EU and their growing attractiveness for people seeking asylum.

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## ... and in 2006

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In 2006, the 27 EU Member States received 192 300 applications for asylum, which was more than 15% down on the previous year (Table 1 and Figure 2). However, this drop is more visible when compared to the beginning of the current decade. Since 2001, the number of asylum seekers in EU has more than halved. Measured against the peak recorded for EU15 in 1992 this fall was even greater (more than 70%).

The drop in the number of applications lodged has been observed in most EU Member States. In Slovenia the number of applications fell by almost 70% from 1 500 to 500. In Latvia the number of asylum seekers dropped by 60% (however, only 10 claims were lodged in 2006).

The biggest fall in 2006 in absolute terms was recorded in France – 16 300 fewer asylum seekers than in the previous year. Austria followed with 9 100 fewer applications and Germany 7 900 fewer.

On the other hand, several Member States recorded a significant increase in asylum applications during 2006. Sweden reported a 38% increase in applications (6 000 up on the previous year), with 9 000 asylum seekers originating from Iraq (35% of all recorded claims). Greece received 35% (i.e. 3 000) more applications in 2006, after a doubling of the number of claims in 2005.

Hungary reported a 32% increase in applications by 500 over 2005. In Lithuania the number of asylum claims rose by 44%, although the size of this increase was mainly due to the low baseline in 2005 (100 applications).

In 2006, the United Kingdom reported receiving 27 800 applications - the highest number of all EU Member States. However, as the UK is not able to distinguish between first and repeat applications, these figures are not fully comparable and should be interpreted with caution. France was next with 26 300 first applications lodged (34 800 if repeat applications are included). Sweden, which – like the UK - is unable to distinguish between first and repeat applications was in third place, with 24 300 applications. Germany, with 21 000 applications last year, received the fourth highest number of asylum claims, continuing the downward trend in asylum applications since 1993 (interrupted only in 2001). The following table presents an overview of applications for asylum in EU countries since 1985.

1) 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons; UNHCR, June 2007, <http://www.uhcr.org/statistics>

**Table 1. New asylum applications 1985-2006**

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
EU-27	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	312415	378790	405220	424170	421475	337235	268670	227520	192300
EU-15	159180	191025	162775	210740	291645	397030	511185	672385	516705	300280	263655	227805	242780	295505	352225	370290	375445	385425	297795	228980	201785	173030	
Belgium	5385	7645	5975	4510	8190	12945	15445	17675	26715	14340	11410	12435	11790	21965	35780	42690	24505	18800	13585	12400	12575	8870	
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	370	835	1350	1755	2430	2890	1320	985	700	500	
Czech Republic	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	2110	4085	7355	8790	18095	8485	11400	5300	3590	2730	
Denmark	8700	9300	2725	4670	4590	5290	4610	13885	14345	6650	5105	5895	5100	5700	6530	10345	12510	5945	4390	3235	2280	1795	
Germany	73830	99650	57380	103075	121320	193065	256110	438190	322600	127210	127935	117335	104355	98645	94775	78565	88285	71125	50565	35605	28915	21030	
Estonia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	25	25	5	10	10	15	10	10	5	
Ireland	:	:	50	50	40	60	30	40	90	360	420	1180	3880	4625	7725	10940	10325	11635	7485	4265	4305	4240	
Greece	1400	4300	6300	9300	6500	4100	2700	2110	860	1105	1280	1640	4375	2950	1530	3085	5500	5665	8180	4470	9050	12265	
Spain	2300	2300	2500	4515	4075	8645	8140	11710	12645	11990	5680	4730	4975	4935	8405	7925	9490	6310	5765	5365	5050	5295	
France	28925	26290	27670	34350	61420	54815	47380	28870	27565	25960	20415	17405	21415	22375	30905	38745	47290	51085	52205	50545	42580	26270	
Italy	5400	6500	11000	1300	2240	3570	24490	2590	1320	1830	1760	680	1890	13100	18450	15195	17400	16015	13705	9630	9345	10350	
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	225	790	650	1620	950	4405	9675	7715	4540	
Latvia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	35	20	5	15	25	5	5	20	10	
Lithuania	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	240	160	145	305	425	365	395	165	100	145	
Luxembourg	80	90	100	45	85	115	240	120	225	260	280	265	435	1710	2930	625	685	1040	1550	1575	800	525	
Hungary	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1260	:	7120	11500	7800	9555	6410	2400	1600	1610	1610	2115	
Malta	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	70	160	255	160	155	350	455	995	1165	1270	
Netherlands	5645	5865	13460	7485	13900	21210	21615	20345	35400	52575	29260	22855	34445	45215	39275	43895	32580	18665	13400	9780	12345	14465	
Austria	6725	8640	11405	15790	21880	22790	27305	16240	4745	5080	5920	6990	6720	13805	20130	18285	30125	39355	32360	24635	22460	13350	
Poland	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	600	840	600	3580	3425	3060	4660	4480	5170	6810	7925	5240	4225		
Portugal	70	120	180	250	115	60	235	655	2090	615	330	270	250	355	305	225	235	245	115	115	115	130	
Romania	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	600	:	:	:	:	2280	1000	885	545	485	380		
Slovenia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	30	35	35	70	335	745	9245	1510	650	1050	1090	1550	500		
Slovak Republic	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	85	95	140	360	415	645	505	1320	1555	8150	9745	10300	11395	3550	2850	
Finland	20	25	50	65	180	2745	2135	3635	2025	835	850	710	970	1270	3105	3170	1650	3445	3090	3575	3595	2275	
Sweden	14500	14600	18115	19595	30335	29420	27350	84020	37580	18640	9045	5775	9680	12840	11220	16285	23500	33015	31355	23160	17530	24320	
United Kingdom	6200	5700	5865	5740	16775	38200	73400	32300	28500	32830	43965	29640	32500	46015	71160	80315	71365	103080	60045	40625	30840	27850	
Iceland	:	:	5	:	10	5	20	15	0	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	85	40
Norway	830	2720	8615	6600	4435	3960	4570	5240	12875	3380	1460	1780	2270	8375	10160	10845	14770	17480	16020	7950	5400	5320	
Switzerland	8735	7910	10522	16652	24636	34946	41856	18433	25000	15708	16889	18059	23183	39736	43933	15780	18722	24253	18921	12732	8648	8578	

**Notes:**

Totals for EU-15 and EU-27 include data for available countries.

Data rounded up to the nearest 5.

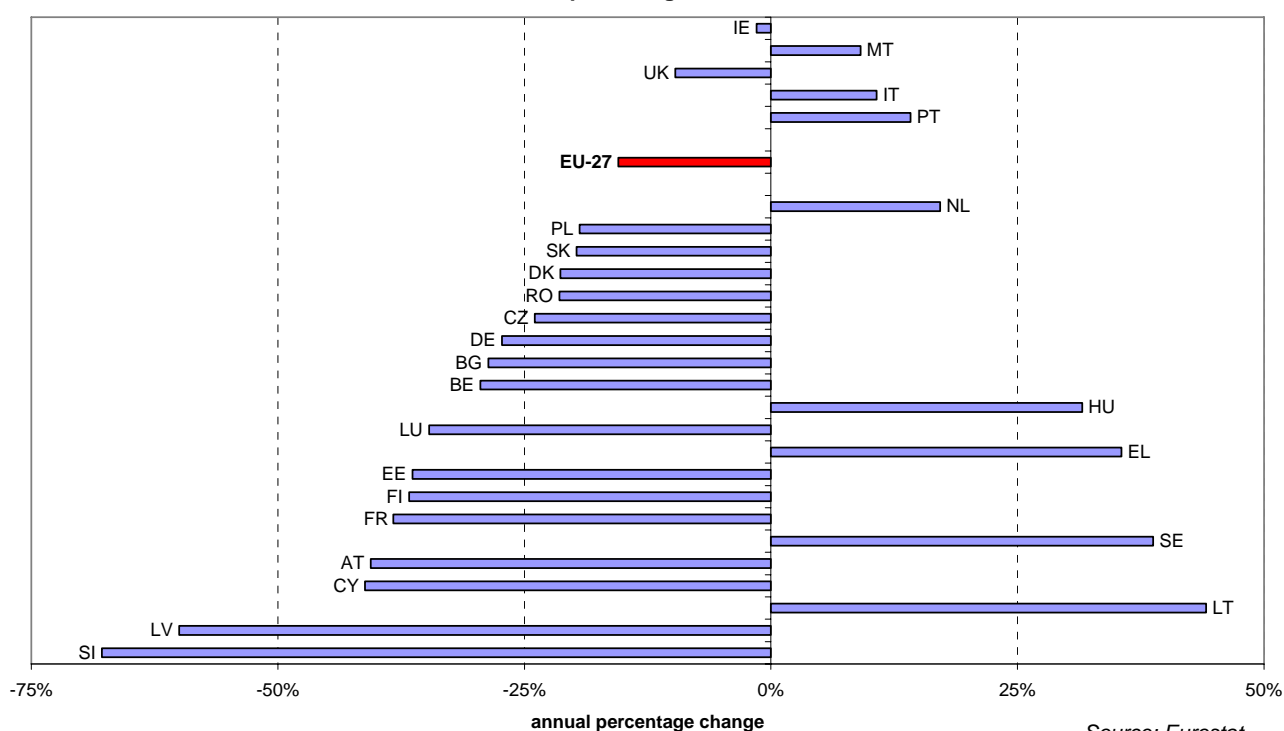
Not all national data suppliers are able to distinguish between first and repeat applications.

Statistics based on cases for some countries. See methodological notes for detailed explanation.

*italic* = provisional data, normal = final data

Source: Eurostat

Figure 2. Change in asylum applications in EU Members States between 2005 and 2006 in percentages



Source: Eurostat

## Asylum applications relative to population size

Table 2. Number of asylum applications per 1000 inhabitants, 2003-2006

	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU-27	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4
Belgium	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.8
Bulgaria	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Czech Republic	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.3
Denmark	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3
Germany	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3
Estonia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ireland	1.9	1.1	1.0	1.0
Greece	0.7	0.4	0.8	1.1
Spain	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
France	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.4
Italy	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Cyprus	6.2	13.2	10.3	5.9
Latvia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lithuania	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Luxembourg	3.5	3.5	1.8	1.1
Hungary	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Malta	1.2	2.5	2.9	3.1
Netherlands	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9
Austria	4.0	3.0	2.7	1.6
Poland	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Portugal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Romania	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Slovenia	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.2
Slovak Republic	1.9	2.1	0.7	0.5
Finland	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.4
Sweden	3.5	2.6	1.9	2.7
United Kingdom	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5
Iceland	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	0.1
Norway	3.5	1.7	1.2	1.1
Switzerland	2.6	1.7	1.2	1.2

**Notes:**

Population as on 1st of January.

Source: Eurostat

Another insight into the distribution of asylum seekers in Europe can be provided by measuring the number of applications relative to the resident population (Table 2). With the number of asylum seekers in the European Union falling since 2002, the ratio of asylum applications to the population size also fell. Whereas in 2003 there were on average 0.7 applications per thousand population in the EU, in 2006 the figure had dropped by almost half to 0.4.

The figures show that Cyprus received by far the largest number of applications for asylum in the period 2003-2006 in relative terms. In 2006 there were almost six applications per thousand population in Cyprus. Malta and Sweden followed with 3.1 and 2.7 applications respectively per thousand population. Over the whole period the smallest relative numbers of asylum applications were in the Baltic countries, Portugal and Romania.

However, the pattern of distribution of new asylum applications in the EU has been changing and, in 2000, it was Belgium and Slovenia that received the highest number of asylum applications relative to their population, followed in 2001 and 2002 by Austria. Lastly, the general overview presented here shows no sign of a trend towards a more equal distribution of new asylum applications based on the size of the total population.

## Countries of origin of asylum seekers

Table 3 presents the main asylum groups in the EU-27 Member States for the years 2003 and 2006<sup>1</sup>. It shows the relationship between the asylum seekers' country of citizenship and the countries where they apply for asylum. This relationship could be explained by one or more of the factors mentioned below.

As far as the countries of destination are concerned, the patterns of relations between country of origin and country where the application for asylum was submitted are even more specific.

Several factors influence the number and the destination of asylum seekers of a given citizenship. Although it is recognized that the country of last residence and the country of citizenship may differ, the geographical proximity between the relevant countries of citizenship and destination is an important factor. Other factors include language and historical ties, the presence of certain ethnic communities, the economic situation and employment and housing policies in the destination countries, as well as the activities of people traffickers or the likelihood - real or perceived - that the destination country will grant protection following an asylum application. Therefore, asylum seekers normally do not choose their destination country at random. This is reflected among other things, in the correlation between country of citizenship and country of destination.

Notable examples of this are citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (in Belgium and France), Algeria (France and Spain), Angola (Portugal), Colombia (Spain), Somalia (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden and Malta), Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovak Republic).

Finally, the presence of established communities of people with a given country of citizenship in the receiving country may influence the asylum seekers' choice (for example, Turkish and former Yugoslav citizens in several Member States).

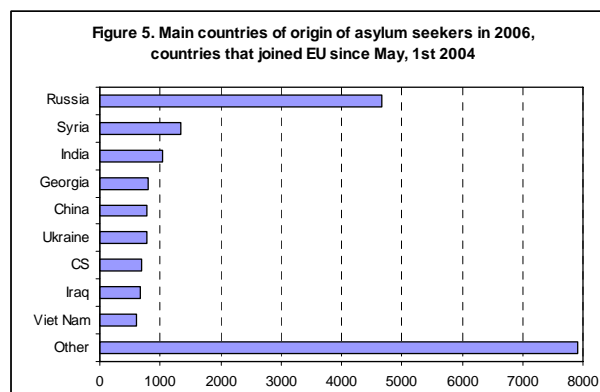
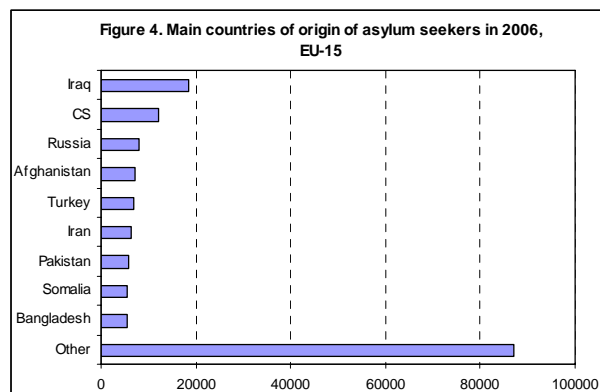
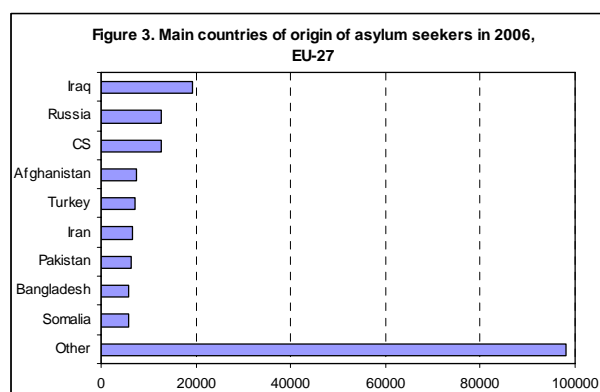
In 2006, one tenth of all asylum applications in the EU were submitted by Iraqis. With 19 200 claims, they were the largest group of asylum seekers, replacing Serbia and Montenegro (12 700) at the top of this ranking. Russian citizens lodged the second highest number of claims for asylum in the EU (12 800) in 2006, after having been the largest group of asylum seekers in 2003. However, while Russians accounted for a large share of all applications registered in EU-15 countries and new Member States, Iraqis and citizens of Serbia and Montenegro made up only a relatively small group of asylum seekers in Central and Eastern Europe.

Russians accounted for about 90% of all asylum claims in Poland and nearly 70% in Lithuania. They were also

the largest group of asylum seekers in Belgium, Estonia and Latvia.

The number of asylum seekers from Iraq in the EU has increased rapidly in 2006 and has almost doubled compared to 2005. More than one third of all asylum claims in Sweden in 2006 were lodged by Iraqis (and the number of applications has more than tripled since 2005). In Denmark they accounted for about 25% of all claims and in the Netherlands for 20%.

Serbians and Montenegrins, placed third among the top countries of origin of asylum seekers in the EU, belong to the top countries of origin in most Western European countries. They account for nearly 50% of all claims in Slovenia, 40% in Luxembourg, 20% in Austria and 15% in Germany. The Figures 3, 4, and 5 present the main countries of origin of asylum seekers in EU27, EU15 and in the twelve countries that have joined EU since May 2004.



CS – Serbia and Montenegro

Source: Eurostat

<sup>1</sup> No breakdown by citizenship was available for Italy for the years concerned.

**Table 3. Five main groups of asylum applicants by citizenship in absolute numbers in 2003 and 2006**

<b>BELGIUM</b>			
2003		2006	
CD	1565	Russia	1375
Russia	1290	CD	735
CS	810	CS	570
Cameroon	560	Iraq	550
Turkey	530	Guinea	375
Other	8830	Other	5265
<b>DENMARK</b>			
2003		2006	
Afghanistan	665	Iraq	475
CS	545	CS	255
Iraq	440	Afghanistan	120
Somalia	370	India	85
Russia	270	Iran	85
Other	2100	Other	775
<b>IRELAND</b>			
2003		2006	
Nigeria	2885	Nigeria	1020
Romania	740	Sudan	305
CD	255	Romania	290
Moldova	230	Iraq	215
Somalia	185	Iran	205
Other	3190	Other	2205
<b>FRANCE</b>			
2003		2006	
Turkey	6760	Turkey	2570
China	5295	CS	2195
CD	4405	Sri Lanka	1995
Algeria	2430	CD	1960
Mauritania	2325	Haiti	1810
Other	30990	Other	15740
<b>LITHUANIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	270	Russia	100
India	25	Belarus	5
Afghanistan	20	Ghana	5
Pakistan	15	Georgia	5
Stateless	15	Pakistan	5
Other	50	Other	25
<b>MALTA</b>			
2003		2006	
Somalia	115	Eritrea	390
Liberia	70	Somalia	205
CD	60	Sudan	180
Cote d'Ivoire	45	Ethiopia	125
Eritrea	30	Niger	75
Other	135	Other	295
<b>POLAND</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	5535	Russia	3770
Afghanistan	245	Belarus	55
India	235	Ukraine	45
Pakistan	150	Pakistan	40
Ukraine	85	Armenia	30
Other	560	Other	285
<b>SLOVENIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Turkey	190	CS	240
Iraq	185	Turkey	60
CS	165	BA	45
Iran	85	Albania	25
MK	75	MK	25
Other	350	Other	105
<b>SWEDEN</b>			
2003		2006	
CS	5305	Iraq	8950
Somalia	3070	CS	2000
Iraq	2700	Somalia	1065
Stateless	1785	Stateless	815
BA	1395	Russia	755
Other	17100	Other	10735
<b>BULGARIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Afghanistan	470	Afghanistan	260
Iraq	205	Iraq	65
Algeria	150	Armenia	30
Nigeria	95	Iran	20
Iraq	95	CS	15
Other	305	Other	110
<b>GERMANY</b>			
2003		2006	
Turkey	6300	CS	3235
CS	4910	Iraq	2115
Iraq	3850	Turkey	1950
Russia	3385	Russia	1040
China	2385	Viet Nam	990
Other	29735	Other	11700
<b>GREECE</b>			
2003		2006	
Iraq	2880	Bangladesh	3750
Pakistan	705	Pakistan	2380
Iran	630	Iraq	1415
Afghanistan	595	Afghanistan	1085
Myanmar	495	Iran	530
Other	2875	Other	3105
<b>CYPRUS</b>			
2003		2006	
Bangladesh	2075	Syria	1255
Pakistan	480	Sri Lanka	390
Iran	465	Georgia	335
Turkey	295	Bangladesh	310
Russia	250	Iran	305
Other	840	Other	1945
<b>LUXEMBURG</b>			
2003		2006	
CS	540	CS	205
Nigeria	85	Russia	45
Algeria	80	Iran	30
Albania	65	Albania	20
BA	60	Ukraine	20
Other	720	Other	205
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>			
2003		2006	
Iraq	3475	Iraq	2765
Iran	555	Somalia	1460
Unknown	520	Unknown	1040
Afghanistan	490	Afghanistan	930
Somalia	450	Iran	920
Other	7910	Other	7350
<b>PORTUGAL</b>			
2003		2006	
Angola	15	CD	15
CS	10	Israel	10
Albania	5	Albania	5
Belarus	5	Belarus	5
Russia	5	Russia	5
Other	75	Other	90
<b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	2665	India	705
India	1635	Russia	465
China	1075	Moldova	385
Armenia	745	Georgia	210
Afghanistan	630	Iraq	205
Other	3550	Other	880
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
2003		2006	
Somalia	7195	Eritrea	2725
Iraq	4290	Iran	2675
Zimbabwe	4020	Afghanistan	2650
China	3495	Somalia	2155
Iran	3495	Zimbabwe	2095
Other	37550	Other	15550
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	4850	Ukraine	510
Ukraine	2045	Egypt	420
Slovak Rep.	1055	Kazakhstan	220
China	855	Belarus	135
Viet Nam	565	Russia	135
Other	2030	Other	1310
<b>ESTONIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	5	Russia	5
Azerbaijan	5	Country2	0
Georgia	5	Country3	0
Country4	0	Country4	0
Country5	0	Country5	0
Other	0	Other	0
<b>SPAIN</b>			
2003		2006	
Nigeria	1685	Colombia	2240
Algeria	680	Nigeria	630
Colombia	525	Morocco	280
CD	270	Cote d'Ivoire	235
Cote d'Ivoire	240	Algeria	230
Other	2365	Other	1680
<b>LATVIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Georgia	5	Russia	5
Country2	0	Country2	0
Country3	0	Country3	0
Country4	0	Country4	0
Country5	0	Country5	0
Other	0	Other	5
<b>HUNGARY</b>			
2003		2006	
Afghanistan	470	Viet Nam	405
Iraq	350	CS	385
Georgia	205	China	275
Iran	170	Georgia	175
Turkey	125	Nigeria	110
Other	1080	Other	765
<b>AUSTRIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	6705	CS	2520
Turkey	2855	Russia	2440
India	2820	Moldova	900
CS	2525	Afghanistan	700
Afghanistan	2355	Turkey	670
Other	15100	Other	6120
<b>ROMANIA</b>			
2003		2006	
Iraq	245	Iraq	70
China	165	Somalia	50
India	155	China	45
Somalia	60	Turkey	25
Iran	50	Georgia	15
Other	210	Other	175
<b>FINLAND</b>			
2003		2006	
CS	455	Bulgaria	435
Bulgaria	285	CS	280
Russia	280	Iraq	220
Turkey	185	Russia	165
Croatia	170	Belarus	100
Other	1715	Other	1075
<b>EU-27</b>			
2003		2006	
Russia	30140	Iraq	19215
Iraq	21970	Russia	12760
Turkey	21950	CS	12705
CS	18875	Afghanistan	7430
China	15150	Turkey	7220
Other	229150	Other	132970

**Notes:**

CD – Congo, the Democratic Republic of the, CS – Serbia and Montenegro, BA – Bosnia and Herzegovina, MK – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Italy – no breakdown by citizenship for 2003 and 2006 available

Source: Eurostat

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Data sources:

Source of all data, graphs and tables in this publication is Eurostat (unless specifically stated otherwise).

### Definitions:

#### Asylum application

This is an application made by a third-country national or stateless person which can be understood as a request for international protection from a Member State under the Geneva Convention. Asylum applications are generally defined as new applications. Any application for international protection is presumed to be an application for asylum unless the person concerned explicitly requests another kind of protection that can be applied for separately. This definition is intended to refer to all those who apply for protection on an individual basis, irrespective of whether they lodge their application on arrival at borders, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether they entered the territory legally (e.g. as a tourist) or illegally. In deciding when to regard an asylum application as having been lodged, the principles expressed in Article 2 of Decision 1/97 adopted by the Article 18 Committee of the Dublin Convention should be applied, i.e. "An application for asylum is regarded as having been lodged from the moment the authorities of the Member State concerned have something in writing to that effect: either a form submitted by the applicant or an official statement drawn up by the authorities. In the event of a non-written application, the period between the statement of intent and the drawing up of the official statement must be as short as possible".

#### Asylum applicant or asylum seeker

A third country national or a stateless person who has made an application for asylum in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken.

#### Geneva Convention

The United Nations Convention of 28 July 1951 Relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967.

#### Interpretation of the number of applications:

All EU Member States produce statistics on asylum seekers, but unfortunately comparisons of national figures can be difficult and sometimes misleading.

Some Member States produce figures on individuals, whereas others produce statistics based on cases (for example, a case may cover a family of one or more asylum applicants with dependants). This means that

the number of individuals per counted application may vary; in many cases it is greater than 1. The number of individuals per application is usually unknown, with the result that it is not usually possible to convert one type of figures into another (In Italy, Netherlands, Slovak Republic and Norway, asylum statistics are based on cases; in the other countries they are based on persons).

Further difficulties are caused by differences in how Member States distinguish between first and subsequent applications for asylum by an individual. For example, a person may make a further application for asylum if their circumstances change or the situation in their country of origin deteriorates. Not all Member States can make a distinction in their statistics between first and subsequent applications. In some Member States, a new application is registered when an asylum seeker who is refused recognition as a refugee makes an administrative or judicial appeal against this refusal. Therefore, asylum application statistics for some countries may include repeat applications and appeals (Denmark, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway do not distinguish between first and repeat applications).

Lastly, interpretation of the statistics can be hindered by changes in legislation and administrative practice over time. It is clear that the harmonisation of statistics on asylum would be greatly facilitated by harmonised asylum procedures. Although the available statistics can provide an insight into patterns and trends in asylum, detailed comparisons between countries and over time should be treated with caution.

#### Abbreviations

The EU-15 comprises Belgium (BE), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Portugal (PT), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).

The EU-27 includes the countries of the EU-15 plus: Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI) and Slovakia (SK).

#### EU asylum policy:

The Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security (DG JLS) is responsible for developing EU policies on asylum. For more details please see:

[http://www.ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/justice_home/index_en.htm)

## ***Further information:***

### **Data:**

[EUROSTAT Website/Home page/Population and social conditions/Population/International Migration and Asylum/Asylum/Asylum applications by citizenship](#)

[EUROSTAT Website/Home page/Population and social conditions/Population/International Migration and Asylum/Asylum/New asylum applications by citizenship – monthly data](#)

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### **European Statistical Data Support:**

Eurostat set up with the members of the 'European statistical system' a network of support centres, which will exist in nearly all Member States as well as in some EFTA countries.

Their mission is to provide help and guidance to Internet users of European statistical data.

Contact details for this support network can be found on our Internet site: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

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