



EMN policy brief on migrants' movements through the Mediterranean



1st December 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EMN published the first version of this Policy Brief in December 2015 when European countries around the Mediterranean were facing a significant influx of persons. Large numbers of asylum seekers, migrants and displaced persons arrived by sea and land at the external borders of the European Union (EU) across the main entry routes such as the Mediterranean Sea and Western Balkans. That first report was produced at the peak of the migration crisis. Since then there have been significant new policies and operational interventions and patterns of migration have changed considerably and it was therefore decided to update this brief to present trends in asylum applications and irregular movements of non-EU migrants across the EU and Norway over the last few years.

This report focuses on the period 2012-2016 and – where data is available - up to August 2017 to identify patterns in migratory flows and provide a snapshot of these movements across the years. The Brief draws on the latest Eurostat data as reported by (Member) States as well as Frontex data on the number of detections recorded at the external borders of the EU. The report outlines the key routes of travel to the EU and the (Member) States where many subsequently claimed asylum and received their final decision. The data does not capture the movements of migrants once they have claimed asylum, nor those migrants entering the EU and Norway not detected upon entry or who do not subsequently claim asylum.

The Brief concentrates on the Mediterranean Member States (CY, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, MT and SI) as well as non-Mediterranean Member States (AT, BE, DE, HU, NL, SE and UK) that received over 100,000 asylum applications since 2012. The Brief additionally focuses on asylum applicants coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq since these three third countries represented over 50% of all asylum applications submitted in the EU between 2015 and 2016. Along with Eritrea, Iran, Somalia and the Sudan these are also those countries from which the majority of applicants received a positive decision on their application for asylum in these years.

Some of the information extracted from Eurostat, such as the data on secondary movements and the latest data from 2017, should be treated as indicative and may be subject to future adjustments. Nevertheless, this Brief provides a comprehensive picture of the evolution of irregular migration in the EU and Norway across the analysed period.

This executive summary highlights the main findings, which are subsequently explained in more depth in the six sections of this report which were drafted with the contribution of the European Migration Network (EMN) National Contact Points of France and United Kingdom.

Trends in asylum in the EU and Norway, 2012-2017

- ★ Between 2012 and 2016, almost 4 million asylum applications were lodged in the EU and Norway, with most registered in 2015 and 2016. By 2017 the number of asylum applications decreased significantly reaching similar levels to 2014.
- ★ The (Member) States with the largest number of asylum applications in the period 2012-2016 were Germany (41% of the total), Sweden (9%), France (9%), Italy (8%), Hungary (7%) and Austria (5%).
- ★ In Germany, between 2016 and 2017, the average number of asylum applications per month decreased significantly going from 70,000 in the first seven months of 2016 to 17,000 over the same period in 2017.
- ★ Around 7% of all asylum applications in 2015 were from unaccompanied minors while in 2016 this figured decreased to 5%. For example, in 2016, 400 thousand asylum applications came from children of which 64 thousand were unaccompanied minors.
- ★ On average 86% of all unaccompanied minors that applied for asylum in the EU in the period 2012-2016 were boys, and in 2016 most of their applications were lodged in Germany, Italy and Austria.
- ★ Between 2012 and 2016 most applicants for asylum came from Syria (23%), Afghanistan (12%), Iraq (8%), Pakistan (4%) and Kosovo (4%). The first three nationalities represented 43% of all asylum applications in the EU in this period, while between 2015 and 2016 they represented over 50%.
- ★ The rate of positive decisions for persons holding citizenship nationalities with the highest volume of decisions varied greatly in 2016. Syria (98.1%), Eritrea (92.5%), Iraq (63.5%), Afghanistan (56.7%) and Iran (52.5%) had the highest rate of positive decisions while Serbia (1.7%), Albania

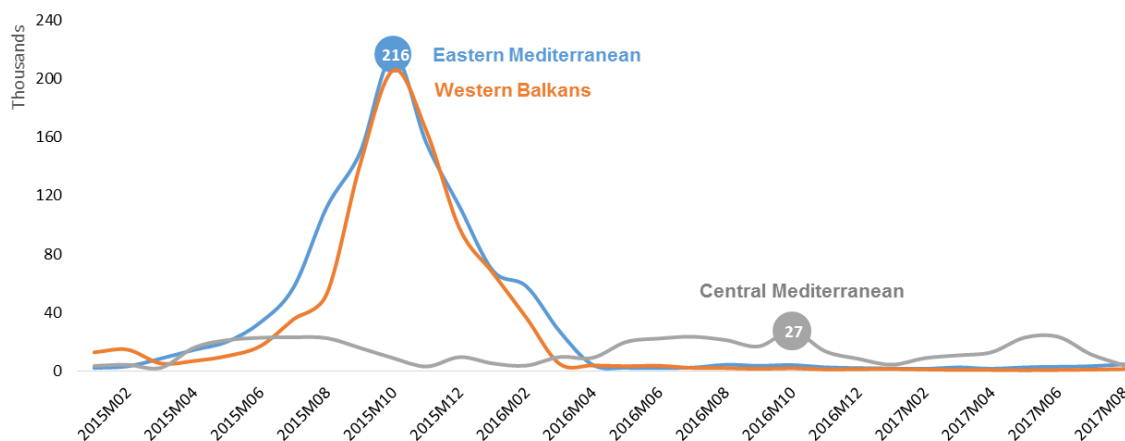
(3.1%), Kosovo (4.9%), Pakistan (17.4%) and Nigeria (21.7%) registered the lowest rate. The average rate of positive decisions in the EU was nearly 61% in 2016.

- ★ In 2016, Syrians received asylum in almost 100% of cases in Austria (99.8%), Germany (99.3%), Italy (98.7%), Netherlands (97%), Belgium (96%) and Sweden (96%). On the other hand, in Hungary the rate of positive decisions for Syrians was 10%. In the same year, Italy had the highest rate of positive decision across the three main nationalities seeking asylum in the EU (over 95%) while Hungary is at the opposite end (under 13%).

Migrant routes to Europe, 2012-2017

- ★ According to Frontex, 2015 saw the highest number of detected illegal border crossings at 1.82 million detections. This had decreased by 2016 to 0.5 million detections and in 2017 the number of detections is expected to further decrease to a level similar to 2014, a similar trend as for asylum applications. Syrians, Afghans and Iraqi nationals represented more than half of all detections in 2015 (964,000) when the largest number of crossings were registered.
- ★ The Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkans and Central Mediterranean were the three main entry routes in order of detections between 2012 and 2017. Together these three routes represented 97% of all detections since 2012. However, in the first eight months of 2017, the Western Mediterranean route registered a higher number of detections than in previous years and as a result in 2017 it is expected that the main entry routes to the EU will be Central, Eastern and Western Mediterranean.

Monthly detections for the Eastern and Central Mediterranean route and the Western Balkan route between 2015 and 2017



- ★ The migratory movements in 2017 have changed because the number of detections on the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes have dropped significantly. For example, the detections on the Eastern Mediterranean route went from nearly 900 thousand in 2015 to just over 180 thousand in 2016 and this descending trend continued in 2017. These changes can be explained by the EU-Turkey statement agreed in 2016 as well as by the more stringent border control rules implemented by (Member) States.
- ★ Because of these changes in migratory movements, (Member) States such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus have registered an increase in asylum applications in the first seven months of 2017 compared to 2016 while Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Poland and Austria registered a decrease in the same period.
- ★ More than 90% of the migrants travelling to the EU have used facilitation services provided by criminal groups who generate substantial profits from migrant smuggling. Smuggling activities are a danger to the life of migrants and can put their safety at risk. The greatest number of deaths along the migratory routes were registered on the Central Mediterranean route that has unfortunately seen a relatively constant and high number of deaths over the analysed period.

The scale of secondary movements in the EU and Norway, 2012-2016

- ★ Dublin III and Eurodac data can provide an indication of secondary movements. Because of the historical high number of asylum applications in 2015 the number of Dublin requests have increased significantly starting with 2015 and reached their highest level in 2016.

- ★ In 2016, there were 180,478 incoming Dublin requests, meaning that about 14% of all asylum applicants had already submitted an asylum application in a different (Member) State or that another (Member) State should take the responsibility for examining their asylum application. This indicates instances of secondary movements, however it is possible that the same person can trigger several Dublin requests and lead to double counting.
- ★ According to the incoming Dublin requests, except for 2015 (6%) the potential level of secondary movement in the EU has remained relatively constant (between 12% and 15%). Since the number of asylum applications in 2015 was the highest, it might be assumed that the level of secondary movements in 2015 was higher than available figures suggest. Due to limited data it is impossible to estimate the scale of the phenomenon.
- ★ In 2016, most asylum seekers that initially arrived in countries such as Italy, Poland or Norway travelled to other (Member) States such as Germany, France or Austria where they applied for asylum and this triggered an outgoing Dublin request because they had previously applied for asylum in another member state.
- ★ An outgoing Dublin request can result in a transfer of the person concerned, though the total number of transfers in 2016 represented only 13% of all outgoing requests. This suggests that most asylum seekers who identified in a (Member) State as being eligible for a transfer remained in that state or could not be transferred immediately. Norway (87%), Sweden (51%) and Denmark (39%) had the highest rate of transfers for (Member) States with over 1,000 transfers in 2016.
- ★ On the other hand, Eurodac data on the number of foreign hits shows that in 2016 30% of all persons that applied for international protection made a new application in another (Member) State. At the same time, Eurodac data from 2016 shows an increase compared to 2014 and 2015 across all categories of data, which may be interpreted as an increase in secondary movements.
- ★ Germany registered the largest number of Eurodac foreign hits in 2016 (48%), meaning that when applications were checked in the Eurodac database the applicant appeared to have already applied for asylum in a different (Member) State. France (12%) and Italy (8%) were the next (Member) States with the highest rate of foreign hits in the Eurodac database in the same year.

Humanitarian relief and resettlement, 2012-2017

- ★ The EU recognises that migration is a shared responsibility of countries of origin, transit and destination, therefore in the period 2012-2016 the EU has increased the level of humanitarian aid provided to migrants and asylum seekers. There are over 4 million Syrian refugees living outside of Syria and the EU has provided almost €5 billion since 2012 to this cause according to EDRIS data.
- ★ The EU's support goes both to Syrians in their country as well as to refugees found in their host communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt among others. For example, in Lebanon there are 1.1 million refugees making up almost a quarter of the Lebanese population while in Turkey over 2.5 million Syrian refugees were registered, making it the largest host of refugees in the world. As a result, in 2015, the EU announced that €3 billion would be allocated to support Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey of which €2.9 billion were already allocated by mid-October 2017.
- ★ Over the period 2012-2016 EU aid to Syrian nationals totalled €4.8 billion and the biggest donors were Germany (€1.5 billion) and United Kingdom (€1.2 billion) followed by the Netherlands (€258 million), Denmark (€175 million) and Sweden (€91 million). In the case of Iraqi nationals, EU aid amounted to €799 million in 2016 while for Afghan nationals the level of aid reached €198 million in the same year.
- ★ In 2015, (Member) States agreed to resettle via multilateral and national schemes 22 thousand displaced persons from outside the EU who were in clear need of international protection to protect them from smuggling and trafficking and provide them with a safe passage to the EU. As a result, the number of resettled Syrian nationals in the EU has more than doubled starting with 2015 and reached 11 thousand in 2016.
- ★ Since 2012, the countries with the highest number of resettled nationals in the EU are Syria (18 thousand), Congo (4 thousand), Somalia (3 thousand), Afghanistan (3 thousand) and Eritrea (2 thousand).

- ★ Between 2012 and 2016, the largest numbers of resettled Syrian nationals in the EEA were registered in the United Kingdom (5,700), Norway (5,400), Sweden (2,200), France (1,800) and Finland (1,400). UNHCR reports that by their estimate at least 300,000 Syrians are in need of resettlement in Turkey and as of August 2017, 74% of resettlements conducted by UNHCR in Turkey were for Syrian nationals followed by Iraqis (16%) and Iranians (6%).
- ★ As of November 2017, the number of relocations from Greece stood at 21 thousand and Italy at 10 thousand. In total over 31,500 persons were relocated from these two (Member) States representing 32% of the total legal commitment.

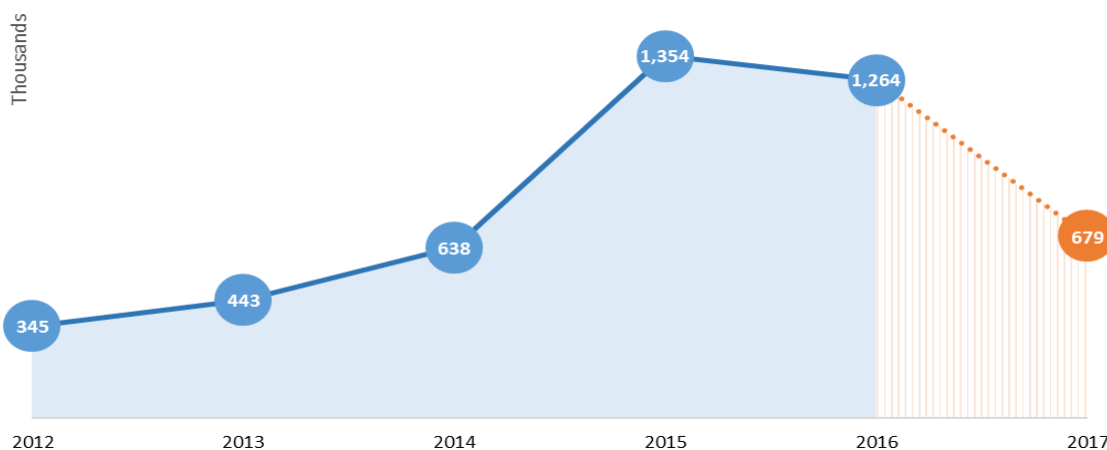
1 Trends in asylum applications

Political instability in Europe's neighbourhood regions have led to a significant increase in asylum seekers¹ in 2015 from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, the Sahel and Ukraine. This resulted in an unexpected number of asylum applications that created major challenges to the asylum systems of (Member) States. As a response to these challenges (Member) States have implemented a range of measures and policy changes in 2015 and 2016, leading to a sharp decrease in asylum applications by late 2016 and 2017.²

For example, while in 2015 Germany granted refugee status to almost all Syrians (99.7%) this fell to around 58% in 2016 due to policy changes that shifted focus to subsidiary protection.³ At the same time, the implementation of stronger border controls in (Member) States and especially along the Western Balkan route have decreased the number of asylum applications in (Member) States such as Hungary that saw a six-fold drop from 177,135 in 2015 to 29,430 in 2016. A major factor was also played by the EU-Turkey statement agreed on 18 March 2016.⁴ This reduced the flow of migrants through the Eastern Mediterranean route and together with the decrease in the Western Balkan route this resulted in a sustained decline in asylum application across (Member) States starting with 2016.

Overall, between 2012 and 2016, around 4 million asylum applications were lodged in the EU and Norway, reaching a peak of 1.35 million in 2015 and a subsequent decrease (6.7%) in 2016 to 1.26 million. 2017 has so far seen a lower average number of asylum applications than 2015 and 2016 (by almost half, see Figure 1). If this trend continues the total number of asylum applications in 2017 will be similar to 2014, signalling a return to the numbers seen before the European migration crisis started in 2015.

Figure 1. Total asylum applications in the EU and Norway, 2012 - 2017



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [*migr_asyappctza*]

Note: The estimate for 2017 is given based on data from January-July 2017 when on average 56,624 asylum applications were submitted each month.

Figure 2 presents the total number of asylum applications in the period 2012-2016 by (Member) State and shows that Germany (1.6 million), Sweden (370 thousand) and France (350 thousand) received the most applications in this period. Section 3 goes into more depth on these numbers.

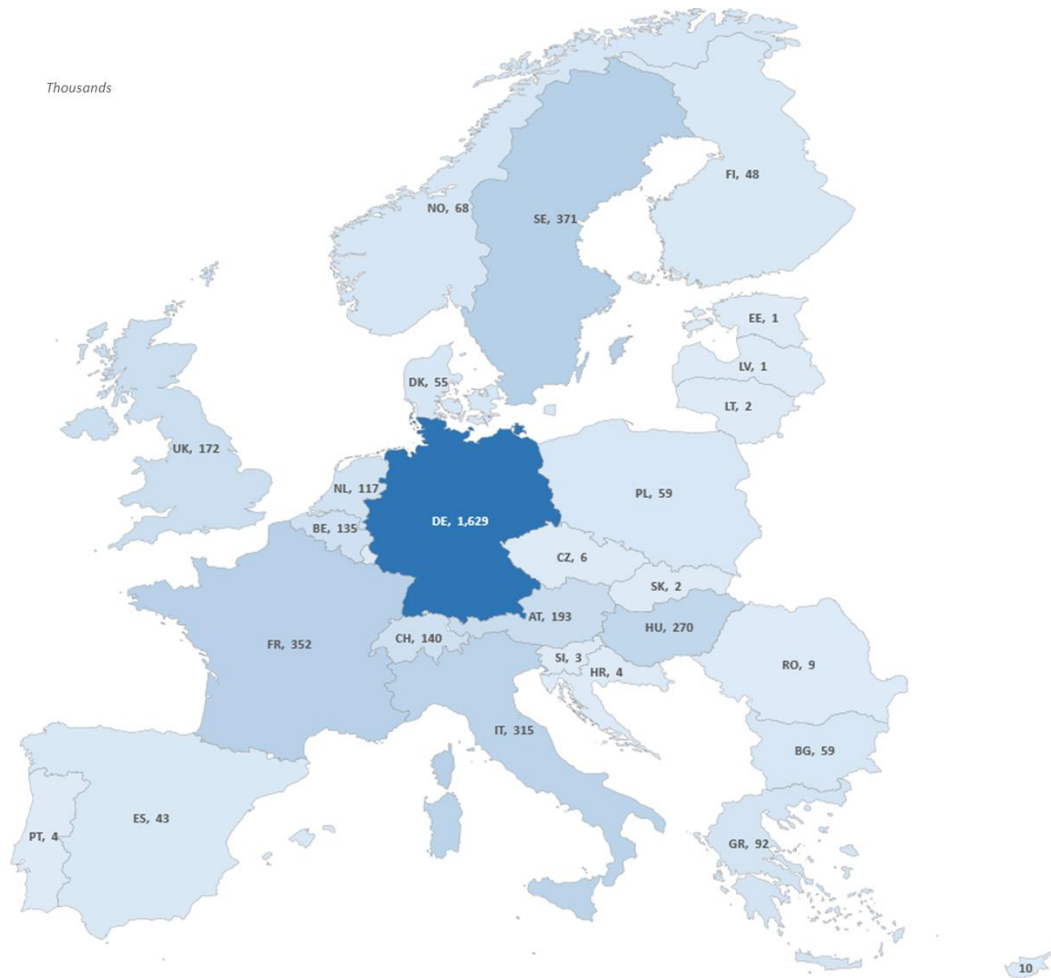
¹ Persons who have applied for international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) in respect of whom a final decision has not yet been taken.

² See the EMN Annual Policy Reports 2015 and 2016

³ Eurostat, *migr_asydcfsta*; in Germany the status under subsidiary protection applies for 12 months while for refugee status for 3 years.

⁴ The highest number of daily detections were registered in October 2015 at over 10,000, this quickly decreased to 5,000 by December and after the EU-Turkey statement in March 2016 the rate stabilised at an average of around 50 daily detections.

See: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>

Figure 2: Total number of asylum applications by (Member) State, 2012-2016

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza]

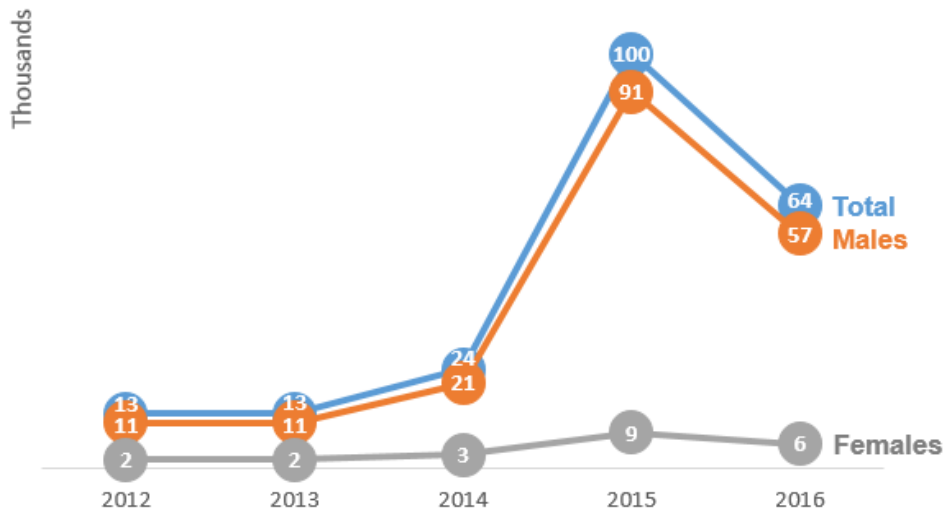
In 2016, children represented about 31% of all asylum applicants (400 thousand) and out of this group 64 thousand were unaccompanied minors (UAMs).⁵ The years up to 2015 showed a steady increase in the number of UAM applications at 7% of all asylum applications, subsequently decreasing to 5% in 2016 as presented in Figure 3. Boys made up the overwhelming majority of UAMs at 88% on average over the period 2012 – 2016.

In 2016, the (Member) States with the highest number of UAMs seeking asylum were Germany (36 thousand; 57%), Italy (6 thousand; 10%), Austria (4 thousand; 6%), United Kingdom (3 thousand; 5%) and Bulgaria (3 thousand; 4%). Together they represented 82% of the total in that year. However, in 2015, Sweden (34 thousand; 36%) registered the largest number of UAMs, followed by Germany (22 thousand; 23%) and Hungary (9 thousand; 9%).

In 2016, the main countries of origin of UAMs were Afghanistan (24 thousand; 38% of the total), Syria (12 thousand; 19%), Iraq (4 thousand; 7%), Eritrea (3 thousand; 5%) and Somalia (3 thousand; 4%).

⁵ Eurostat, migr_asyappctza and migr_asyunaa

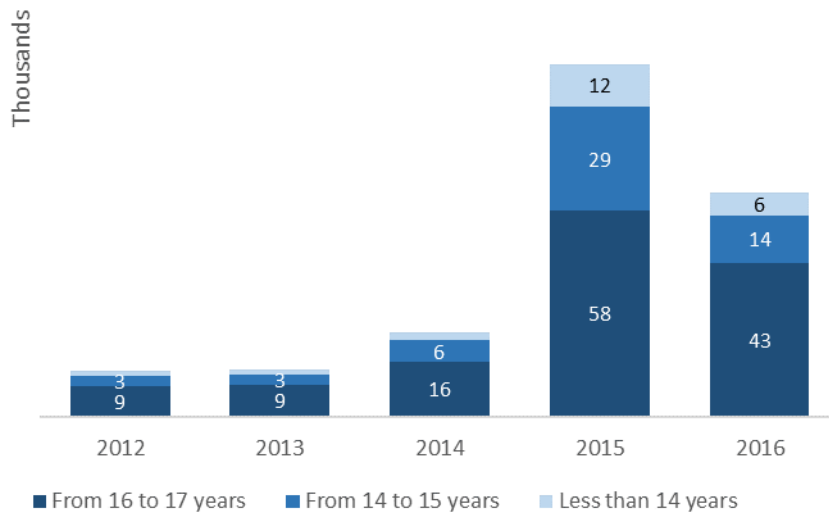
Figure 3. Number of UAMs seeking asylum by gender in EU + NO, 2012-2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 31 October 2017 [migr_asyunaa]

The majority of UAMs applying for asylum were aged between 16 and 17 years as pictured in Figure 4 (63% over the period 2012-2016). In the peak year 2015, 88% of UAMs were 14 or older and 12% were believed to be under 14 years old. Due to the increased number of UAMs several (Member) States amended national legislation and practices⁶ to improve procedures (e.g. age assessment or guardianship), reception conditions and the protection provided to vulnerable groups in the asylum procedure in accordance with the principles of the best interest of the child and family unity.

Figure 4. Number of UAMs seeking asylum by age in EU + NO, 2012-2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 31 October 2017 [migr_asyunaa]

⁶ EMN Annual Policy Reports 2015 and 2016: half of (Member) States reported the adoption of new legislative and policy measures in 2016 aiming to safeguard the rights and welfare of UAMs.

2 Asylum applications by nationality

Between 2012 and 2016 the largest number of asylum applications came from Syria (900 thousand; 23%) with the next largest countries of origin Afghanistan (460 thousand; 12%) and Iraq (300 thousand; 8%) and these three nationalities together represent 43% of all asylum seekers in the EU during this time (see Table 1). Due to the war in Syria that started in 2011, the number of Syrian nationals applying for asylum has continued to remain the highest one. The other significant nationalities with over 100,000 asylum applications in this period include Pakistan (161 thousand; 4%), Kosovo (152 thousand; 4%), Albania (136 thousand; 3%), Russia (135 thousand; 3%), Eritrea (126 thousand; 3%), Nigeria (118 thousand; 3%), Serbia (116 thousand; 3%) and Iran (105 thousand; 3%).

Table 1: Total annual asylum applications by nationality in the EU, 2012 – 2016

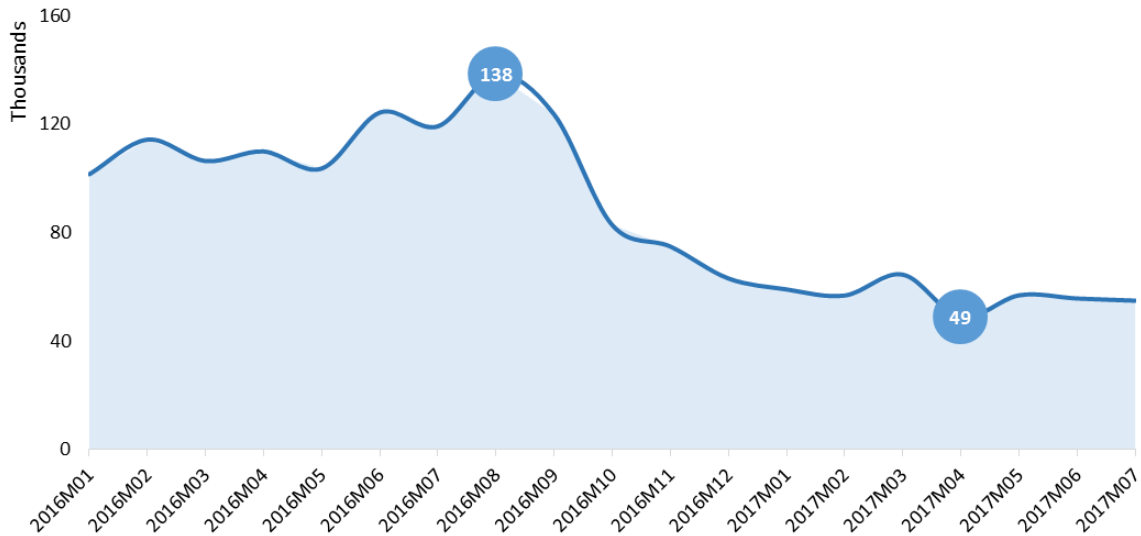
State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Syria	24,115	49,980	122,065	368,350	339,245	903,755
Afghanistan	28,020	26,215	41,405	181,415	186,605	463,660
Iraq	13,190	10,740	21,365	124,965	130,100	300,360
Pakistan	19,785	20,850	22,220	48,015	49,915	160,785
Kosovo	10,210	20,225	37,890	72,480	11,680	152,485
Albania	7,500	11,065	16,950	67,950	32,465	135,930
Russia	24,290	41,470	19,820	22,235	27,605	135,420
Eritrea	6,400	14,485	36,945	34,130	34,470	126,430
Nigeria	7,520	11,670	20,065	31,245	47,775	118,275
Serbia	19,055	22,360	30,840	30,065	13,185	115,505
Iran	13,600	12,680	10,905	26,575	41,395	105,155
Other	161,605	189,350	246,490	315,400	346,470	1,259,315
Extra EU-28	335,290	431,090	626,960	1,322,825	1,260,910	3,977,075

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza]

Note: The table shows nationalities with over 100,000 applications in the EU in the past 5 years

The evolution of monthly asylum applications in 2016 in the EU registered a gradual increase towards the summer months and reached a peak of just over 138 thousand applications in August, lower than the highest number reached in October 2015 at over 170 thousand applications. In both years there was a clear seasonal pattern with a sharp decrease in asylum applications as the winter months approached. In 2017 the total number of applications across all nationalities continued to decline reaching the lowest level in April at 49 thousand, a relatively low value had not been registered since June 2014 (47 thousand). As a result, the total number of asylum applications in the first seven months of 2017 (396 thousand) have decreased to almost half of those registered in 2016 (779 thousand) across all nationalities (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Monthly asylum applications in the EU in 2016 and 2017

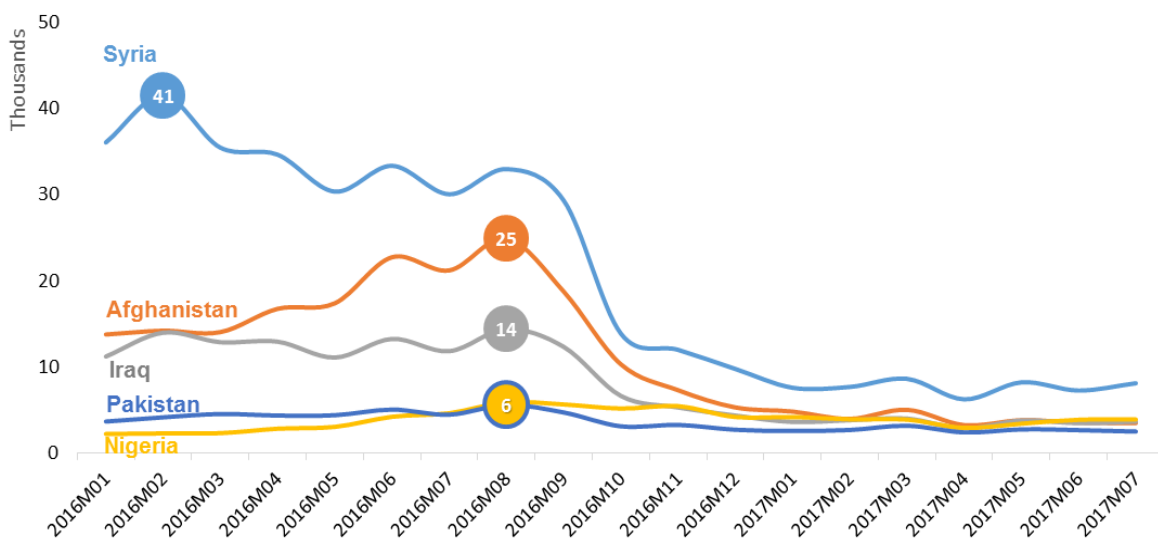


Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctzm]

Note: Peak and low values highlighted

In 2016, the number of Syrian nationals applying for asylum reached a peak of 41 thousand in February (see Figure 6) while the next four nationalities with the highest number of applications in 2016 reached their highest levels in August and then quickly declined by October. The number of applications continued to decrease in 2017 and reached their lowest levels in April 2017.

Figure 6. Monthly asylum applications by nationality in the EU in 2016 and 2017

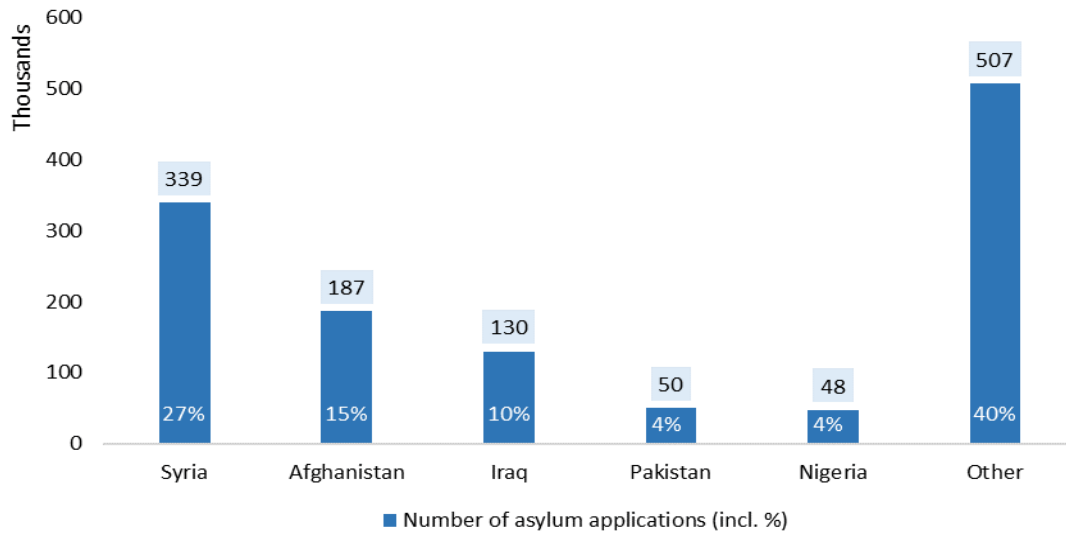


Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctzm]

Note: Peak values in 2016 highlighted for each nationality (top 5)

In 2016 the largest number of applications were received from Syria (339,240; 27%), Afghanistan (186,600; 15%), Iraq (130,105; 10%), Pakistan (49,195; 4%) and Nigeria (47,780; 4%) as pictured in Figure 7. In total they represent 60% of all asylum application made in the EU in 2016.

Figure 7: Top 5 nationalities claiming asylum in the EU in 2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctzm]

3 Asylum applications by Member State

Between 2012 and 2016, Germany received the largest number of asylum applications in the EU with a total of 1.63 million applications (see Table 2). This represented 41% of all applications lodged in the EU between 2012 and 2016. Of these 46% were lodged in 2016 and 29% in 2015. Thus, in 2015 and 2016 Germany received 75% of all applications lodged in the country between 2012 and 2016, representing 31% of all applications in the EU over the same period (i.e. 1.22 million).

The (Member) States receiving the largest number of asylum applications between 2012 and 2016 after Germany (1,629 thousand; 41%) are Sweden (371 thousand; 9%), France (352 thousand; 9%), Italy (315 thousand; 8%), Hungary (270 thousand; 7%) and Austria (193 thousand; 5%).

Looking only at 2016, the order is slightly different with Germany's share of the total being significantly larger at 745 thousand or 59%, followed by Italy (123 thousand; 10%), France (84 thousand; 7%), Greece (51 thousand; 4%), Austria (42 thousand; 3%) and UK (40 thousand; 3%).

Table 2: Asylum applications in the EU and Norway with (Member) States receiving over 40,000 applications, 2012-2016

Member State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Germany	77,485	126,705	202,645	476,510	745,155	1,628,500
Sweden	43,855	54,270	81,180	162,450	28,790	370,545
France	61,440	66,265	64,310	76,165	84,270	352,450
Italy	17,335	26,620	64,625	83,540	122,960	315,080
Hungary	2,155	18,895	42,775	177,135	29,430	270,390
Austria	17,415	17,500	28,035	88,160	42,255	193,365
UK	28,800	30,585	32,785	40,160	39,735	172,065
Belgium	28,075	21,030	22,710	44,660	18,280	134,755
Netherlands	13,095	13,060	24,495	44,970	20,945	116,565
Greece	9,575	8,225	9,430	13,205	51,110	91,545
Norway	9,675	11,930	11,415	31,110	3,485	67,615
Bulgaria	1,385	7,145	11,080	20,365	19,420	59,395
Poland	10,750	15,240	8,020	12,190	12,305	58,505
Denmark	6,045	7,170	14,680	20,935	6,180	55,010
Finland	3,095	3,210	3,620	32,345	5,605	47,875
Spain	2,565	4,485	5,615	14,780	15,755	43,200
Other MS	12,220	10,685	10,955	15,255	18,710	67,825
EU 28	335,290	431,090	626,960	1,322,825	1,260,910	3,977,075

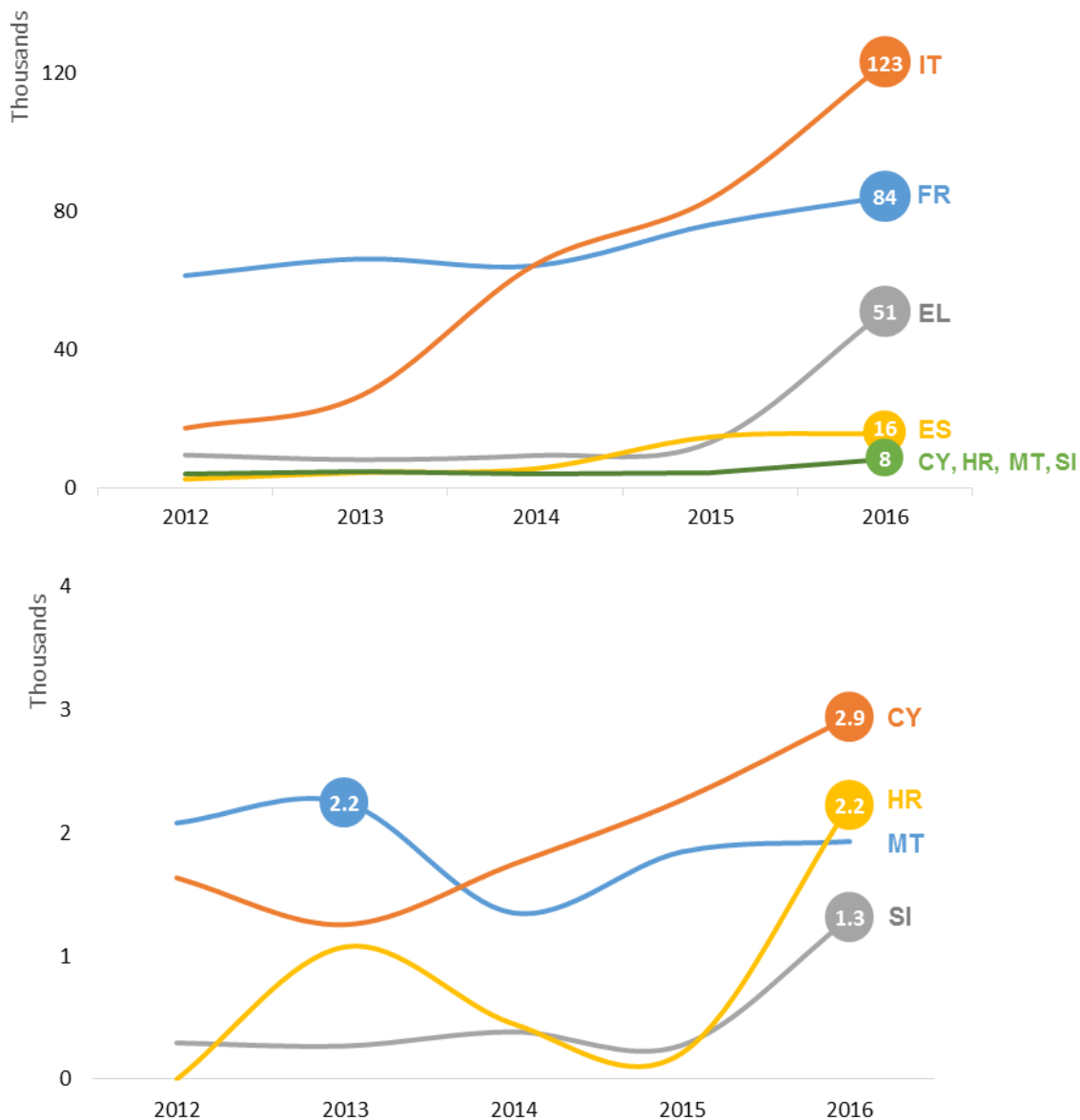
Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza]

In the Mediterranean Member States group (see Figure 8) the largest recipients of asylum applications since 2012 were France⁷ (352 thousand; 9%), Italy (315 thousand; 8%), Greece (92 thousand; 2%) and Spain (43 thousand; 1%). The other Mediterranean Member State (i.e. Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia and Croatia) received a total of 26 thousand asylum applications between 2012 and 2016 (less than 1% of total).

In the same group, in 2016, the largest numbers of asylum applications were received by Italy (123 thousand; 10%), France (84 thousand; 7%), Greece (51 thousand; 4%) and Spain (16 thousand; 1%).

In Malta, Cyprus, Slovenia and Croatia there was an increase to 8 thousand applications in 2016 compared to previous years that averaged around 4,000 applications per year. The reason why Greece suddenly registered an increase in asylum applications in 2016 is because in that year the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes were closed allowing far fewer asylum seekers to continue their journey beyond Greece. As a result, most migrants arriving in Greece had to apply for asylum there, placing significant pressure on the Greek reception centres.

⁷ Even though France has a Mediterranean border, contrary to the 3 other Member States, it has not registered so far direct arrivals of asylum seekers.

Figure 8: Total asylum applications in the Mediterranean Member States, 2012 - 2016

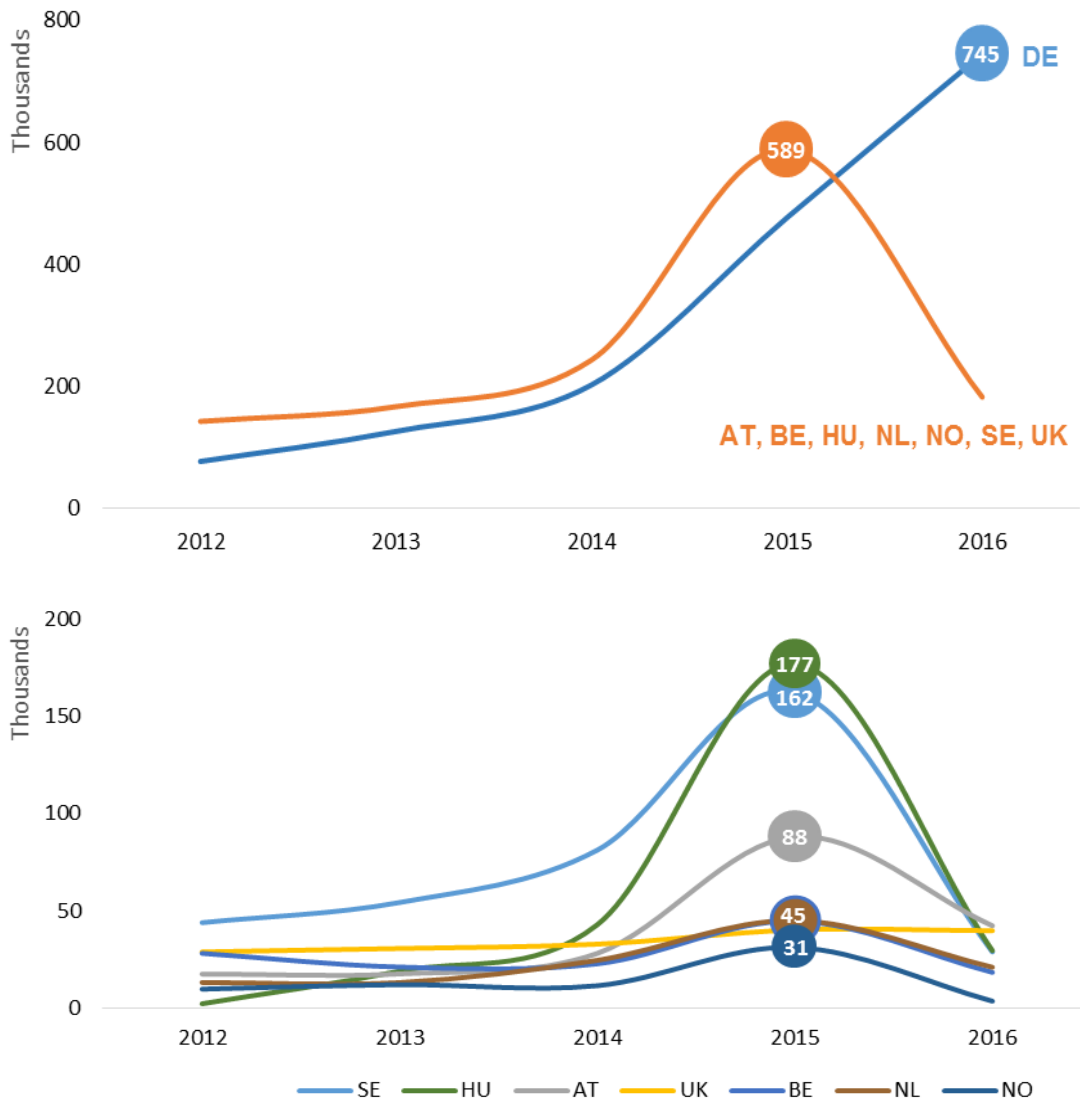
Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza]

Note: Peak values highlighted for each Member State

By a large margin, in the non-Mediterranean Member States group, Germany (745 thousand; 59%) received the largest number of asylum applications in 2016 (see Figure 9). This figure is larger than the next six Member States plus Norway combined at 182 thousand, specifically Austria (42 thousand; 3%), United Kingdom (40 thousand; 3%), Hungary (29 thousand; 2%), Sweden (29 thousand; 2%), Netherlands (21 thousand; 2%), Belgium (18 thousand; 1%) and Norway (3 thousand; 0.3%). As a result, Germany registered a majority of the asylum applications lodged in the EU in 2016 (59%).

Applications were spread a little more widely in 2015 when Germany received 476,510 (36%) asylum applications and the same six Member States plus Norway received 588,645 (44%) applications.

Figure 9: Total asylum applications in selected Non-Mediterranean (Member) States, 2012 - 2016



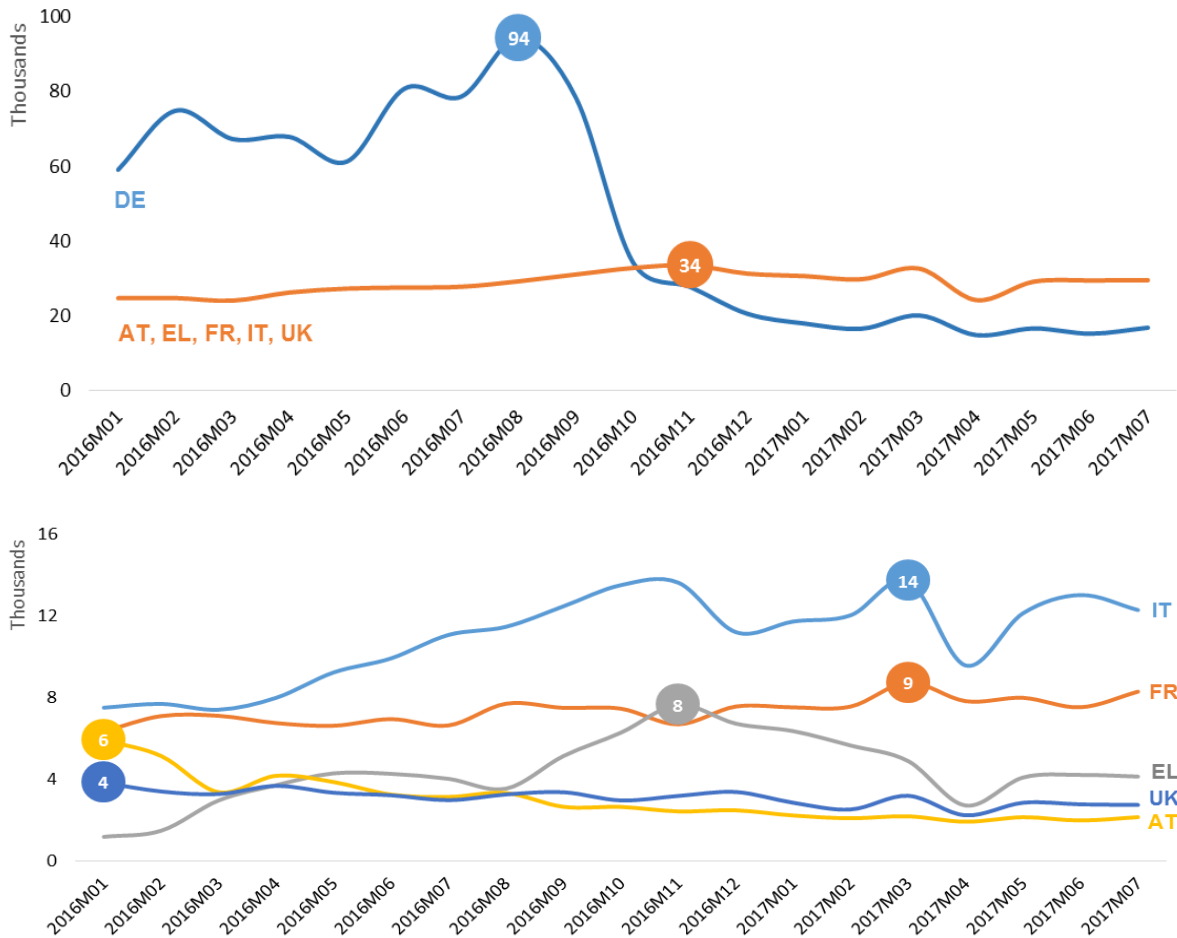
Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza]

Notes: The graphs shows MS with over 100,000 asylum applications received in the period 2012 - 2016, except IT and FR which are captured in the Mediterranean group. NO included.

Peak values highlighted for selected Member States

Analysing the monthly evolution of asylum applications in 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 10) shows that Germany registered a peak in the month of August 2016 with 94 thousand applications. This figure then gradually decreased in October and lead to a peak in the number of applications in the next five Member States by largest share of applications (i.e. Italy, France, Greece, Austria and UK) in November 2016 at 34 thousand. The month of April saw the lowest levels of applications registered at 15 thousand applications in Germany and 24 thousand in the other five Member States with the largest share of applications.

Between 2016 and 2017, Italy (14 thousand) and France (9 thousand) registered a peak in the number of asylum applications in March 2017, while Greece (8 thousand; November), Austria (6 thousand; January) and UK (4 thousand; January) registered a peak in 2016.

Figure 10: Monthly asylum applications for selected EU Member States in 2016 and 2017

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctzm]

Notes: The graphs shows MS with over 30,000 asylum applications received in 2016 and 2017

Peak values highlighted each selected Member States

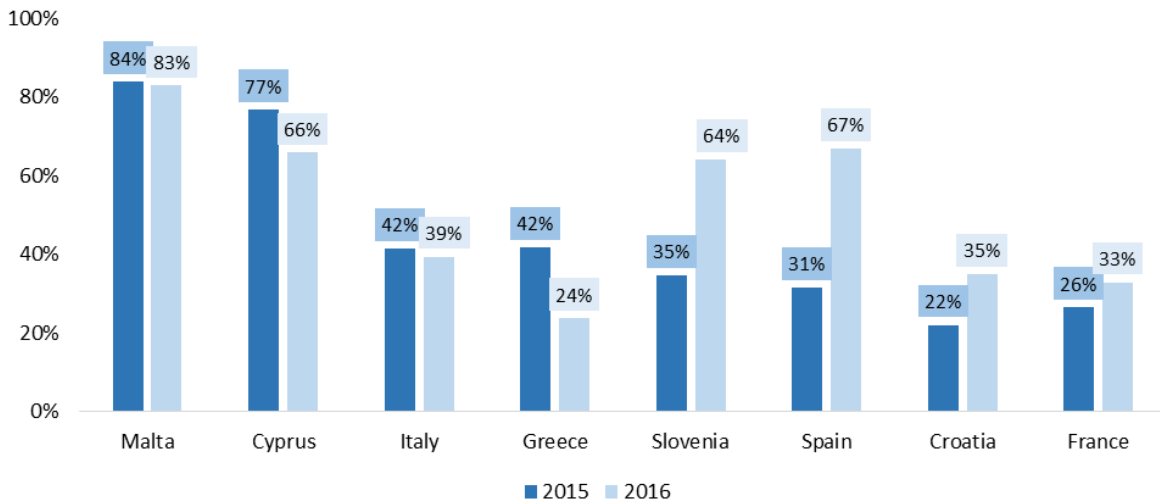
3.1 POSITIVE DECISIONS BY MEMBER STATE AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The proportion of positive decisions made on asylum applications in a country can vary depending on changes in the most common nationality groups that represent such applications in a particular year, and for a range of other reasons. Therefore, direct comparisons of rates should be treated with caution.

In the Mediterranean group (see Figure 11) two Member States (i.e. Malta; -1% and Italy; -3%) witnessed little variation in the rate of positive decisions⁸ to asylum applications in 2015 and 2016 while in two other Mediterranean Member States there was a significant positive increase in 2016 (e.g. Spain; +36% and Slovenia; +29%). There are four instances (i.e. in Malta, Cyprus, Italy and Greece) where the rate of positive decisions was lower in 2016 than in 2015, with a more pronounced negative difference in Greece (-18%) and Cyprus (-11%).

In some (Member) States a large majority of decisions concerned one nationality. For example, in 2016, Spain issued 90% of all positive decisions to Syrian nationals, followed by Cyprus (84%), Greece (61%) and Slovenia (53%). On the other hand, Malta issued most positive decisions to Libyans (45%) and Syrians (30%).

⁸ The rate of positive decisions is the number of positive decisions to grant asylum or any other form of humanitarian protection as a proportion of the total numbers of decisions made.

Figure 11: Rate of positive decisions in the Mediterranean Member States in 2015 and 2016

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfsta]

Table 3 presents the number of asylum applications and rate of positive decisions in 2016 in all the Mediterranean Member States. Malta registered the highest rates of positive decisions (83%), followed by Spain (67%), Cyprus (66%) and Slovenia (64%). On the other end of the scale were Greece (24%), France (33%), Croatia (35%) and Italy (39%).

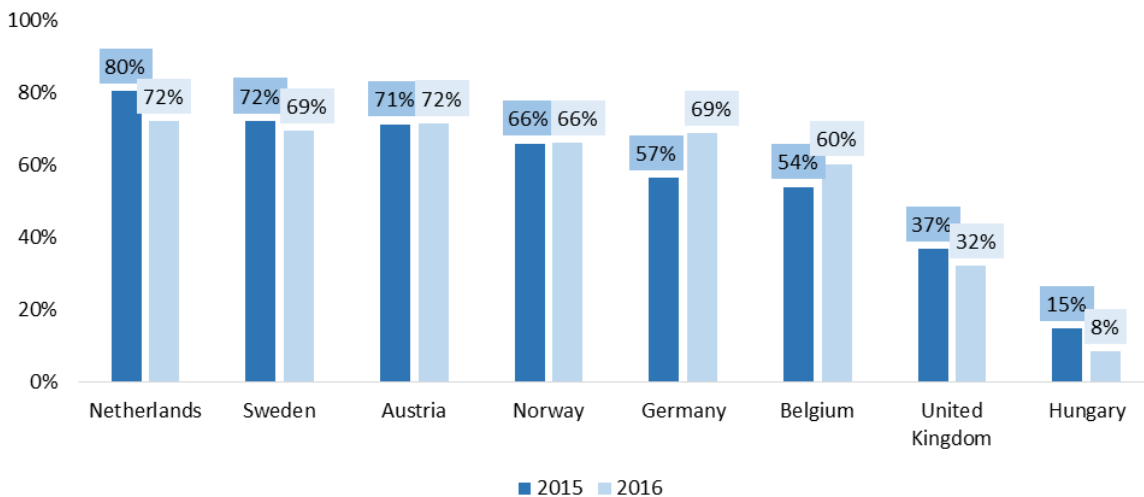
Table 3: Number of applications and first instance decisions for asylum applications in the Mediterranean Member States in 2016

Member State	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate
Malta	1,930	1,435	1,190	83%
Spain	15,755	10,250	6,855	67%
Cyprus	2,940	1,975	1,300	66%
Slovenia	1,310	265	170	64%
Italy	122,960	89,875	35,405	39%
Croatia	2,225	285	100	35%
France	84,270	87,485	28,755	33%
Greece	51,110	11,455	2,715	24%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza & migr_asydcfsta]

In the non-Mediterranean group (see Figure 12) two Member States (i.e. Austria; +1% and Sweden; -3%) have seen little variation in the rate of positive decisions to asylum applications in 2015 and 2016 while in two other non-Mediterranean Member States there was a positive increase in 2016 (e.g. Germany; +12% and Belgium; +6%). There are four instances (i.e. in the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and Hungary) where the share of positive decisions was slightly lower in 2016 than in 2015 with a more pronounced negative difference in the Netherlands (-8%) and Hungary (-7%). In Norway the percentage of positive decisions stayed the same at 66% despite the fact the numbers of decisions doubled in 2016 (19 thousand) compared to 2015 (9 thousand).

Some (Member) States included in the non-Mediterranean group issued a large majority of decisions to one nationality, similar to the Mediterranean group. For example, in 2016, Germany and Sweden issued 67% of all positive decisions to Syrian nationals, followed by Netherlands (62%), Austria (61%) and Norway (58%).

Figure 12: Rate of positive decisions in the Non-Mediterranean (Member) States in 2015 and 2016

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfsta]

Notes: The table shows EU MS with over 100,000 asylum applications received in the period 2012 - 2016, except IT and FR which are captured in the Mediterranean group

Table 4 presents the number of asylum applications and rate of positive decisions in 2016 in non-Mediterranean Member States with over 100,000 asylum applications in the past five years. The Netherlands (72%), Austria (72%), Sweden (69%), Germany (69%) and Belgium (60%) registered the highest rate of positive decisions. On the other end were Hungary (8%) and United Kingdom (32%). As previously noted, the rate of positive decisions will be affected by the groups of nationalities in asylum applications received by a (Member) State as well as other reasons.

Norway received 31 thousand asylum applications in 2015 which resulted in a high number of decisions in 2016 (13 thousand) of which 66% were positive. In 2016 Norway received around 3 thousand asylum applications, almost one tenth the figure for 2015 (31 thousand).

Table 4: Number of applications and first instance decisions for asylum applications in Non-Mediterranean (Member) States in 2016

Member State	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate
Netherlands	20,945	28,875	20,810	72%
Austria	42,255	42,415	30,370	72%
Sweden	28,790	95,770	66,340	69%
Germany	745,155	631,085	433,905	69%
Norway	3,485	19,310	12,775	66%
Belgium	18,280	24,960	15,045	60%
UK	38,785	30,915	9,935	32%
Hungary	29,430	5,105	430	8%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asyappctza & migr_asydcfsta]

Notes: The table shows EU MS with over 100,000 asylum applications received in the period 2012 - 2016, except IT and FR which are captured in the Mediterranean group

In 2016 there were 1.1 million first instance decisions across the EU which is almost double the figure in 2015 at 0.6 million (see Table 5). This is because 2015 saw the largest number of asylum applications however many of those applications were not decided until the following year (see Figure 1).

In 2016 the largest number of first instance decisions were issued for nationals coming from Syria (406 thousand; 37%), Afghanistan (103 thousand; 9%), Iraq (100 thousand; 9%), Albania (43 thousand; 4%) and Eritrea (36 thousand; 3%), as presented in Table 5. Between 2015 and 2016 the increase in the number of first instance decision was very high in the cases of Afghanistan (5.3 times), Iraq (3.8 times) and Syria (2.4 times). On the contrary, for Albania and Eritrea the numbers remained broadly similar. Together the applicants from these five Member States accounted for 62% of all first instance decisions in the EU in 2016.

In 2015 the order was slightly different with Syria (167 thousand; 28%), Albania (41 thousand; 7%), Kosovo (38 thousand; 6%), Eritrea (30 thousand; 5%) and Iraq (22 thousand; 5%) receiving the largest number of first instance decisions. Together these five nationalities accounted for 51% of all first instance decisions in the EU in 2015.

Table 5: Number of applications and first instant decisions for asylum applications by country of origin, 2015 - 2016

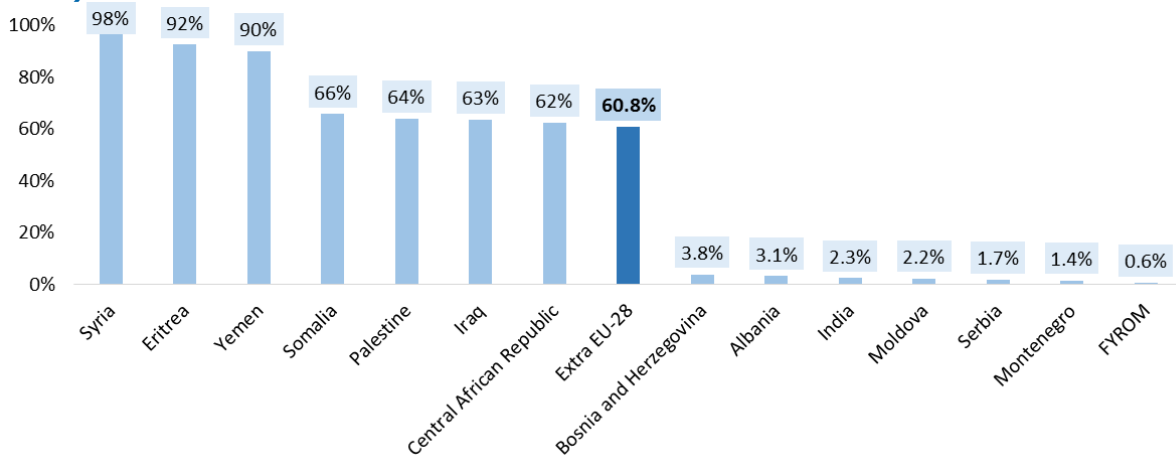
Third country	2015				2016			
	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate
Syria	368,350	166,665	162,095	97.3%	339,245	405,685	398,110	98.1%
Afghanistan	181,415	19,310	12,925	66.9%	186,605	102,920	58,405	56.7%
Iraq	124,965	26,045	22,360	85.9%	130,100	100,785	63,980	63.5%
Albania	67,950	41,410	1,085	2.6%	32,465	42,845	1,340	3.1%
Eritrea	34,130	30,120	27,050	89.8%	34,470	36,215	33,495	92.5%
Pakistan	48,015	18,905	4,995	26.4%	49,915	32,620	5,665	17.4%
Nigeria	31,245	18,090	4,430	24.5%	47,775	26,190	5,680	21.7%
Kosovo	72,480	37,620	880	2.3%	11,680	23,220	1,140	4.9%
Serbia	30,065	21,860	350	1.6%	13,185	22,875	395	1.7%
Iran	26,575	8,210	5,335	65.0%	41,395	19,935	10,460	52.5%
Somalia	21,050	8,725	5,500	63.0%	20,060	17,425	11,450	65.7%
Russia	22,235	13,325	3,320	24.9%	27,605	16,965	3,435	20.2%
Bangladesh	18,865	11,090	1,775	16.0%	17,245	14,030	2,355	16.8%
FYROM	15,855	8,465	90	1.1%	8,465	13,480	85	0.6%
Ukraine	22,040	9,440	2,810	29.8%	12,490	11,620	2,835	24.4%
Mali	8,405	10,470	3,055	29.2%	9,730	10,280	3,330	32.4%
Gambia	12,395	9,535	3,200	33.6%	16,030	10,105	3,010	29.8%
Algeria	8,280	3,670	225	6.1%	11,925	9,565	495	5.2%
Sudan	11,175	7,900	4,435	56.1%	11,370	9,205	4,815	52.3%
Senegal	9,035	6,310	1,760	27.9%	9,740	8,885	1,965	22.1%
Other	188,300	115,515	39,835	34%	228,460	171,325	60,210	35%
Extra EU-28	1,322,825	592,680	307,510	51.9%	1,259,955	1,106,175	672,655	60.8%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfstaj]

Note: Table sorted by number of decisions in 2016 and shows top 20 countries

The average rate of positive decisions in 2016 across the EU was 60.8% as presented in Figure 13 that shows the maximum and minimum values. The highest rates of positive decisions were registered for nationals coming from Syria (98%), Eritrea (92%), Yemen (90%), Somalia (66%) and Palestine (64%) if we exclude the stateless (89%) and unknown (80%) categories as well as states with under 1,000 decisions. On the opposite end the nationals with the lowest rate of positive decisions were from Macedonia (0.6%), Montenegro (1.4%), Serbia (1.7%), Moldova (2.2%) and India (2.3%).

Figure 13: Rate of positive decisions by country of origin in 2016 (max and min values, Extra-EU 28)

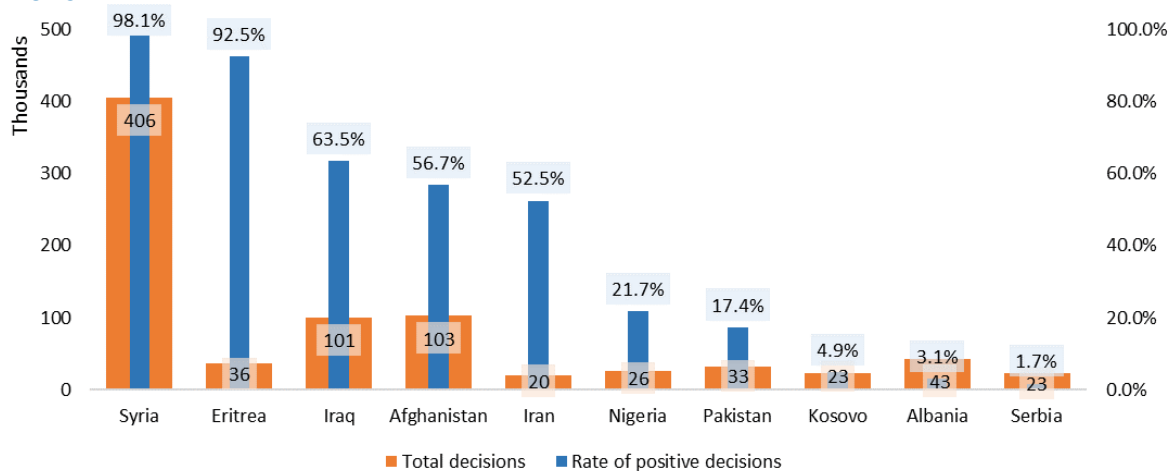


Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfsta]

Note: Categories stateless and unknown are not included as well as states with under 1,000 decisions.

In 2016, the top ten countries of origin having the highest volume of decisions had a rate of positive decisions that varied greatly as presented in Figure 14. Syria (406 thousand; 98.1%), Eritrea (36 thousand; 92.5%), Iraq (101 thousand; 63.5%), Afghanistan (103 thousand; 56.7%) and Iran (20 thousand; 52.5%) registered the highest rate of positive decisions in the group of countries with the highest volume of decisions. On the other hand, Serbia (23 thousand; 1.7%), Albania (43 thousand; 3.1%), Kosovo (23 thousand; 4.9%), Pakistan (33 thousand; 17.4%) and Nigeria (26 thousand; 21.7%) registered the lowest rate of positive decisions in the same group of countries.

Figure 14: Rate of positive decisions by country of origin with the highest volume of decisions in 2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfsta]

In 2016 there were 673 thousand positive decisions issued across the EU which is more than double compared to 2015 at 308 thousand (see Table 6). Year 2015 saw the largest number of asylum applications with 1.32 million applications in the EU of which 51.9% were positive while 2016 had 1.26 million applications of which 60.8% were positive.

Syrians accounted for 59% of all positive decisions issued in the EU in 2016 and in 2015 this percentage was somewhat lower at 53%. Iraq and Afghanistan are the two largest groups by number of applications after Syria and they represented 10% and 9% respectively of all positive decisions issued in 2016. In total Syria (59%), Iraq (10%) and Afghanistan (9%) represented 78% of all positive decisions issued in 2016 by the EU. In 2015 this percentage was somewhat lower at 64%.

Table 6: Rate of positive decisions by country of origin in 2015 and 2016 (max and min values, Extra-EU 28)

Third country	2015				2016			
	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate	Applications	Decisions	Positive	Rate
Syria	368,350	166,665	162,095	97.3%	339,245	405,685	398,110	98.1%
Eritrea	34,130	30,120	27,050	89.8%	34,470	36,215	33,495	92.5%
Yemen	1,475	440	325	73.9%	1,420	1,095	985	90.0%
Somalia	21,050	8,725	5,500	63.0%	20,060	17,425	11,450	65.7%
Palestine	3,215	1,375	915	66.5%	2,545	1,790	1,145	64.0%
Iraq	124,965	26,045	22,360	85.9%	130,100	100,785	63,980	63.5%
Central African Republic	1,040	860	745	86.6%	1,435	1,450	905	62.4%
Extra EU-28	1,322,825	592,680	307,510	51.9%	1,260,910	1,106,405	672,900	60.8%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8,935	6,610	215	3.3%	4,415	6,955	265	3.8%
Albania	67,950	41,410	1,085	2.6%	32,465	42,845	1,340	3.1%
India	5,045	2,080	90	4.3%	7,805	6,265	145	2.3%
Moldova	1,840	185	25	13.5%	3,655	3,130	70	2.2%
Serbia	30,065	21,860	350	1.6%	13,185	22,875	395	1.7%
Montenegro	4,080	2,425	40	1.6%	1,840	3,140	45	1.4%
FYROM	15,855	8,465	90	1.1%	8,465	13,480	85	0.6%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [*migr_asydcfsta*]

Note: Table sorted by rate of positive decision in 2016 and only states with over 1,000 decisions in 2016 were included in the analysis. Categories 'stateless' and 'unknown' were excluded.

3.2 GRANT RATES BY COUNTRY AND NATIONALITIES

Based on the grant rates, Syrians have the highest chance of receiving asylum in the EU (see Figure 15). Specifically, in 2016, Syrians received asylum in almost 100% of cases in Austria (99.8%), Germany (99.3%), Italy (98.7%), Netherlands (97%), Belgium (96%) and Sweden (96%). On the other hand, in Hungary the rate of positive decisions for Syrians was 10%.⁹

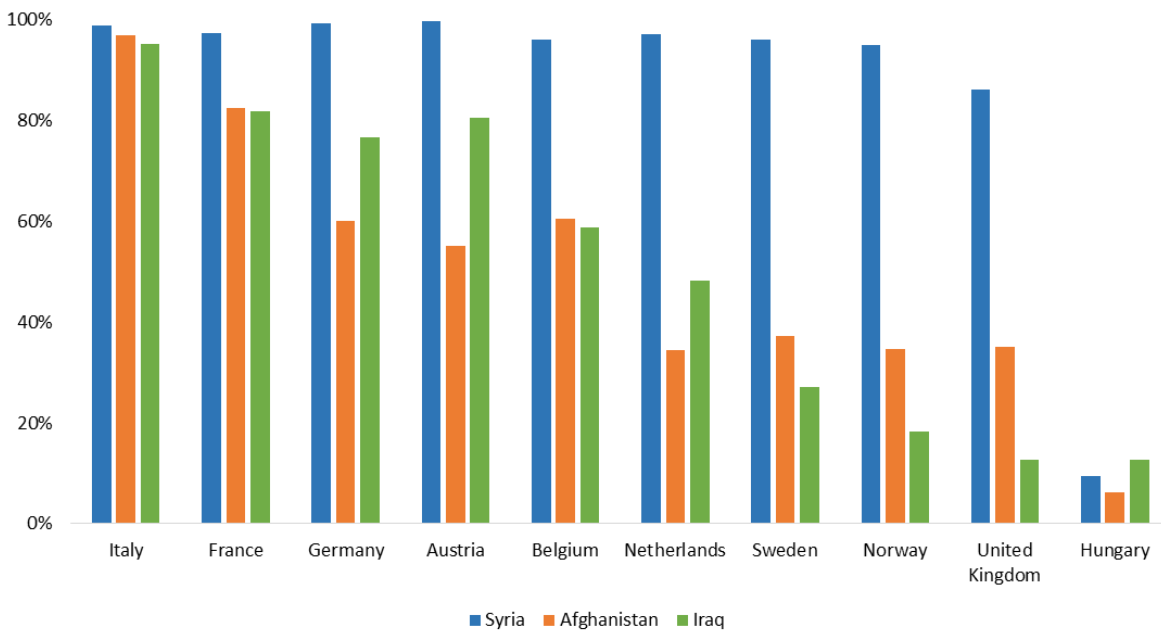
In the case of Afghan nationals, in 2016 they had a high rate of positive decisions in Italy (97%), Germany (60%) and Belgium (60%) while in Hungary (6%), Netherlands (34%) and United Kingdom (35%) the rate is much lower. Iraqi nationals in 2016 also had a high rate of positive decisions in Italy (95%), Austria (81%) and Germany (77%) while in Hungary (13%), United Kingdom (13%) and Sweden (27%) the rate is significantly lower.

⁹ The low percentage in HU can be explained by the July 2015 government decree that designated EU and candidate countries, including Serbia, safe third countries. Consequently, all asylum claims submitted by people transiting into Hungary through Serbia or in Hungarian transit zones were considered *prima facie* inadmissible and subjected to an accelerated procedure.

As a result, Italy has the highest rate of positive decisions across the nationals of the three main countries seeking asylum in the EU (over 95%) while Hungary is at the opposite end (under 13%). France also maintains a high level of positive decisions across all three nationalities (over 82%), putting the country closer to Italy. Germany has a mixed rate of positive decisions across the three nationalities seeking asylum in the EU ranging from 99% for Syrians to 60% for Afghans which is somewhat similar to Belgium and Austria.

For the United Kingdom the rate of positive decisions differs significantly between the three nationalities, ranging from 86% for Syrians to 13% for Iraqis. Sweden has a similar rate of positive decisions with 96% for Syrians and 27% for Iraqi nationals, akin to the Netherlands at 97% for Syrians and 34% for Afghans. For Norway the rate of positive decisions for Syrians was 95%, Afghans 35% and Iraqis 18% making it similar to the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Sweden.

Figure 15: Rate of positive decisions for the main nationalities seeking asylum in the EU and Norway in 2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [migr_asydcfsta]

Note: The figure shows EU MS with over 100,000 asylum applications received in the period 2012 - 2016 and third country nationals by largest number of decisions issued in 2016

Table 7 shows a full breakdown of the number of decisions and the rate of positive decisions for the main nationalities seeking asylum in the EU and Norway in 2016 (i.e. Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq).

Table 7: Number of decisions and share of positive decision for the main nationalities seeking asylum in the EU and Norway in 2016

Member State	Syria			Afghanistan			Iraq		
	Decisions	Positive	Rate	Decisions	Positive	Rate	Decisions	Positive	Rate
Italy	1,185	1,170	99%	4,125	4,000	97%	925	880	95%
France	5,370	5,220	97%	4,535	3,735	82%	2,545	2,080	82%
Germany	290,965	288,985	99%	63,405	38,090	60%	62,750	48,150	77%
Austria	18,630	18,585	100%	7,035	3,870	55%	3,235	2,605	81%
Belgium	6,870	6,595	96%	2,455	1,485	60%	5,600	3,290	59%
Netherlands	13,295	12,895	97%	1,670	575	34%	2,035	980	48%
Sweden	45,985	44,180	96%	9,155	3,420	37%	6,215	1,675	27%
Norway	7,810	7,420	95%	4,325	1,495	35%	1,360	250	18%
UK	2,050	1,765	86%	2,350	825	35%	2,955	375	13%
Hungary	1,000	95	10%	1,585	100	6%	555	70	13%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24 October 2017 [*migr_asyappctza* & *migr_asydcfsta*]

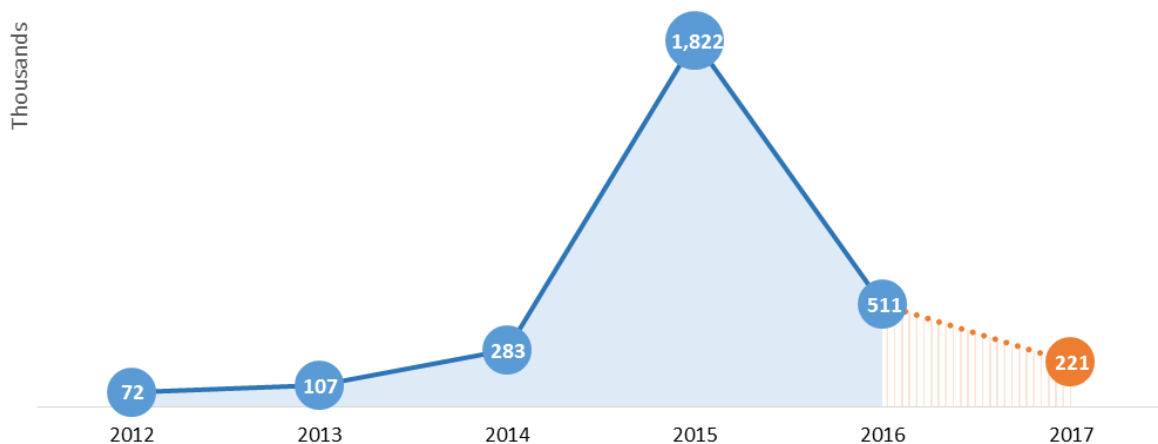
Note: The figure shows EU MS with over 100,000 asylum applications received in the period 2012 - 2016 and third country nationals by largest number of decisions issued in 2016. The table is sorted by the average rate of positive decisions across the three nationalities from high to low.

4 Migrant routes to Europe

This section presents the total number of detected illegal border crossings between 2012 and August 2017 for all the routes used to enter the EU. As presented in Figure 16, 2015 saw the highest level of detections with 1.8 million detections. This quickly decreased to half a million detections by 2016 and it is very likely that the figure for 2017 will decrease and be similar to 2014. The number of detections does not refer to the number of *persons* that have crossed into the EU, but rather the *number* (count) of detections. Double counting is possible if the same person is detected at different locations, and this occurs to some extent although the degree of double counting is difficult to estimate (the numbers of Dublin III cases as presented in Section 5 may provide some indication, although numbers will vary according to route, nationality and other factors). The figures also do not show the number of undetected crossings and data therefore may underestimate the full scale of irregular migration into the EU.

The sharp reduction in 2016 can be attributed in part to the EU–Turkey statement agreed upon in March 2016 that had an immediate impact on the number of detections on the Eastern Mediterranean route going from nearly 900 thousand in 2015 to just over 180 thousand in 2016 and this number is expected to decrease further in 2017. The Western Balkan route saw a similar decrease because of more stringent checks enacted by (Member) States around the same time. In 2015 there were over 750 thousand detections on the Western Balkan route, a number that dwindled to around 130 thousand in 2016. The more stringent checks also limited options for people to continue their journey to other (Member) States, resulting in an increase in asylum applications in Greece. While the overall number of asylum applications in the EU and Norway decreased in the same period (as shown in Figure 1), for specific Member States like Greece they increased (as highlighted in Figure 8).

Figure 16: Total number of detections along all EU entry routes, 2012 - 2017

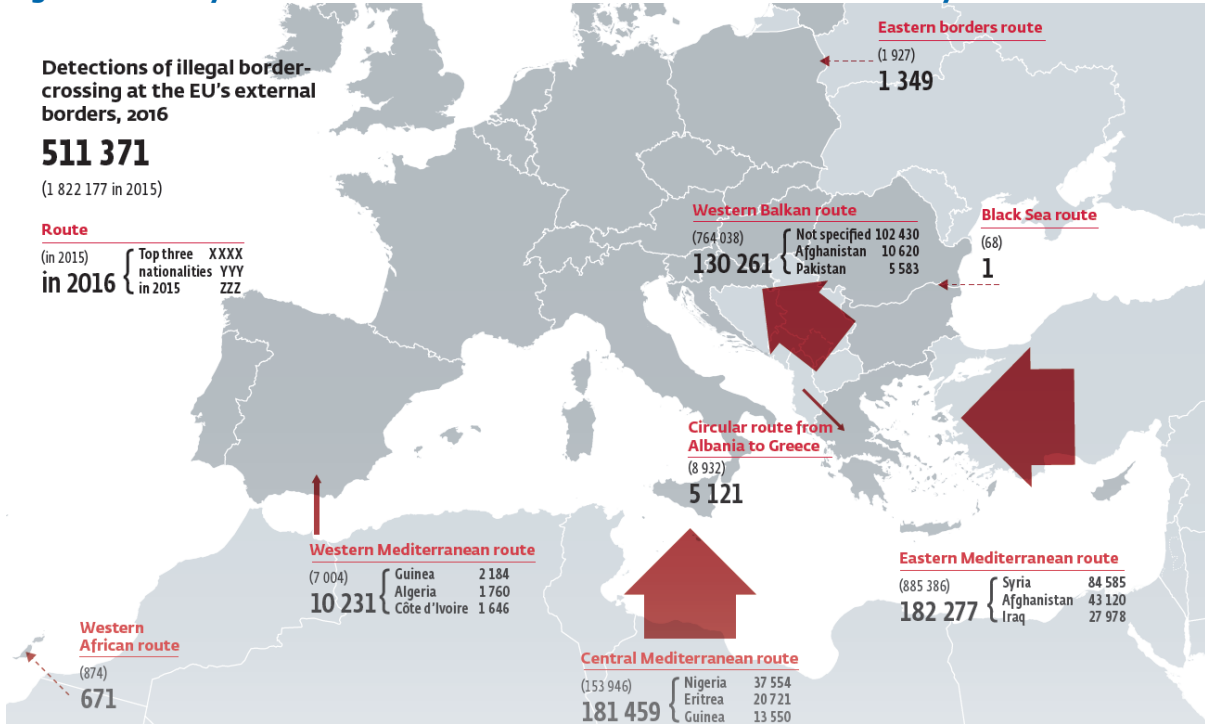


Source: Frontex data as of 24 October 2017

Note: The estimate for 2017 is given based on data from January-August 2017 when on average 18,432 detections were made each month.

The main entry routes in order of detections between 2012 and 2017 are presented in Table 8 and these were: Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkans and Central Mediterranean. Together they represent 97% of all detections since 2012. This percentage remained unchanged in 2016 with these three routes representing 97% of all detections as presented in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Entry routes to the EU and number of detections in 2016 by route



Source: Frontex Annual Risk Analysis 2017

However, in the first eight months of 2017 the Western Mediterranean route registered a higher number of detections than in any of the years from 2012 to 2016, thereby on course to overtake the Western Balkans as the third most popular route for 2017. Due to the increase in detections on the Western Mediterranean route the number of asylum applications in Spain has doubled in the first six months of 2017 (14,000) compared to 2016 (7,000).¹⁰

Consequently, the migratory movements in 2017 have changed in pattern similar to previous years when the main route of entry changed from Eastern Mediterranean to Western Balkans and then Central Mediterranean. Indeed, the Mediterranean Member States (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus) have registered an increase in asylum applications in the first seven months of 2017, while over the same period detections have gone down for Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Poland and Austria.¹¹

¹⁰ Eurostat, migr_asyappctzm

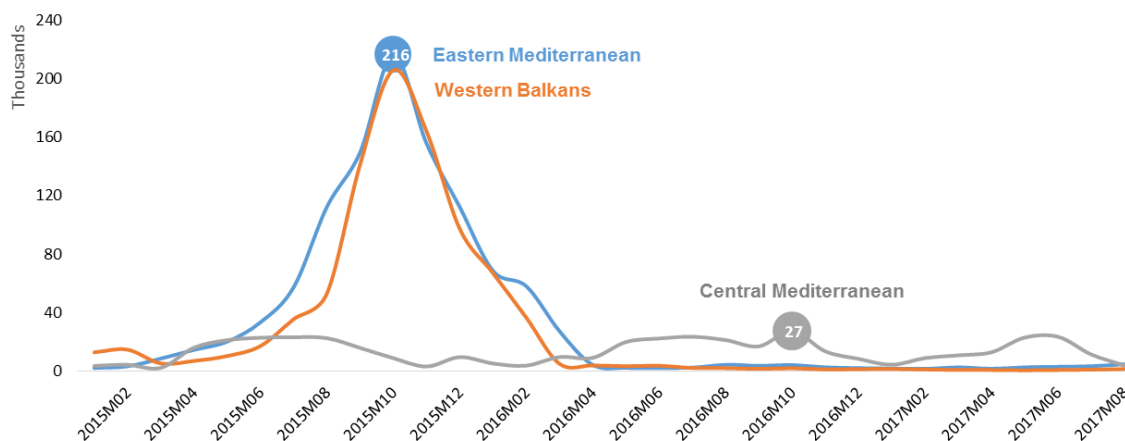
¹¹ Ibid

Table 8: Number of detections along EU entry routes, 2012 - 2017

Routes	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Jan-Aug 2017	Total
Eastern Mediterranean	37,224	24,799	50,834	885,386	182,277	21,664	1,202,184
Western Balkans	6,391	19,951	43,357	764,038	130,261	8,304	972,302
Central Mediterranean	15,151	45,298	170,664	153,946	181,459	99,149	665,667
Western Mediterranean	6,397	6,838	7,243	7,004	10,231	13,364	51,077
Circular route from Albania to Greece	5,502	8,728	8,841	8,932	5,121	4,177	41,301
Eastern Land Borders	1,597	1,316	1,275	1,927	1,349	531	7,995
Western African	174	283	276	874	671	133	2,411
Black Sea	1	148	433	68	1	137	788
Total	72,437	107,361	282,923	1,822,175	511,370	147,459	2,943,725

Source: Frontex data as of 24 October 2017

Figure 18 presents a monthly breakdown of detections between 2015 and 2017 for the three main entry routes. This shows that the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes recorded an enormous one-off spike in detections in October 2015 (over 200,000 detections each), though these quickly decreased and stabilised by 2016, and remaining at fewer than 5,000 detections on each route in 2017. On the other hand, the Central Mediterranean route has maintained a relatively stable trend whereby during the summer months the level of detections increased while in winter months detections decreased. The only exception is October 2016 for the Central Mediterranean route (27,000).

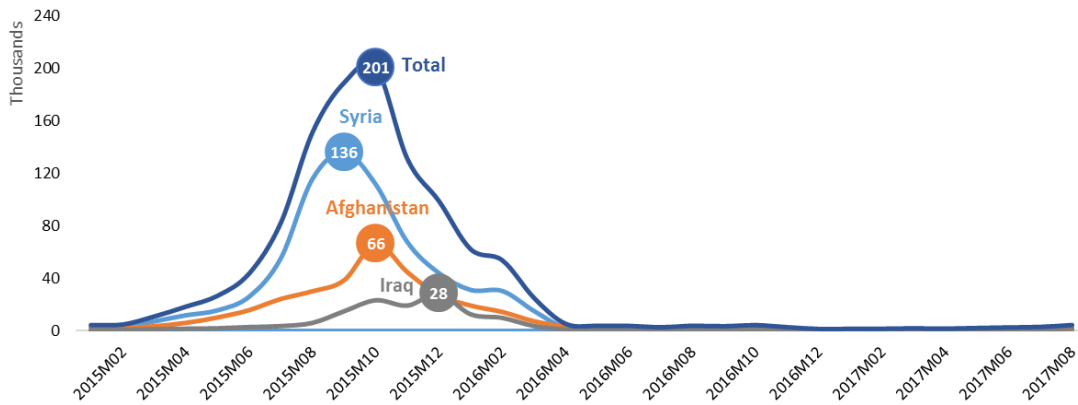
Figure 18: Monthly detections for the Eastern and Central Mediterranean route and the Western Balkan route between 2015 and 2017

Source: Frontex data as of 26 October 2017

Note: Peak values highlighted

A closer examination of the number of detections by nationality, as presented in Figure 19, shows that Syrians, Afghan and Iraqi nationals represented more than half of all detections in the peak year 2015 (960 thousands). All three nationalities registered a peak in 2015 at different intervals: Syrians in September (136 thousands), Afghans in October (66 thousands) and Iraqis in December (28 thousands). The Eastern Mediterranean route saw the majority of these detections, peaking in October 2015. This is shown in Figure 18.

Figure 19: Monthly detections of Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi nationals between 2015 and 2017



Source: Frontex data as of 26 October 2017

Note: Peak values highlighted

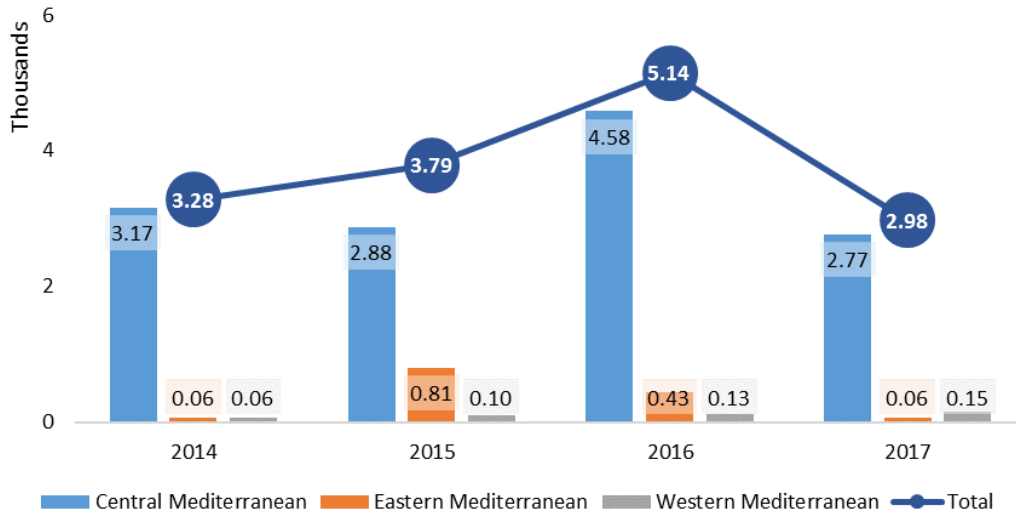
Due to the unprecedented increase in the number of irregular migrants arriving to the EU in 2015, criminal networks have substantially increased their involvement in migrant smuggling. According to Europol, more than 90% of the migrants travelling to the EU have used facilitation services provided by criminal groups who generate substantial profits from migrant smuggling.¹²

The routes crossing the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas have seen the highest number of irregular migrants trying to reach the EU. On the Eastern Mediterranean entry route, the largest number of irregular migrants arrived in Greece and then transitioned towards the Western Balkans. On the Central Mediterranean entry route, Italy received the largest number of migrants that then travelled towards destinations in Northern Europe. On the Western Mediterranean entry route migrants enter the EU via Spain. As a result, smuggling hotspots are located along the main migration routes and attract migrant smuggling networks. These activities put the life of refugees and migrants in danger and places their safety and well-being at risk.

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) the greatest number of deaths along the migratory routes were registered in the Mediterranean region, and more specifically on the Central Mediterranean route. This route has unfortunately seen a relatively constant and high number of deaths over the analysed period and not just in the peak migration crisis year of 2015 which was mainly impacted by the other routes, both into Europe (Eastern Mediterranean) and within Europe (Western Balkans). Figure 20 shows that the highest number of deaths in the Mediterranean region was registered in 2016 at over 5,000.

¹² Europol, Migrant smuggling in the EU, February 2016

Figure 20: Number of deaths by route in the Mediterranean region, 2014 – 2017



Source: IOM data as of November 2017

Note: The year 2017 covers the period January-November. Data sets are estimates from IOM, national authorities and media sources.

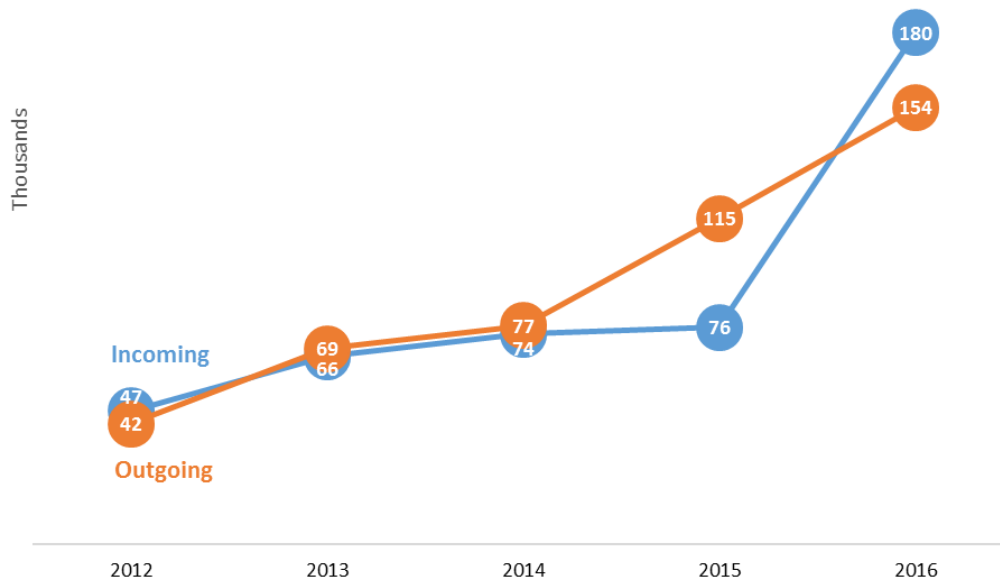
5 Secondary movements

The extent of secondary movements¹³ in the EU can be partially identified using Dublin III¹⁴ and Eurodac¹⁵ data. While these datasets can provide an indication of secondary movements, they should not be interpreted as being indicative of the total scale of secondary movements in the EU. Therefore, the information presented in this section should be treated with caution by bearing in mind the existing data limitations.

The main objectives of Dublin III are to (1) establish a clear and workable method to determine which Member State is responsible for examining an application for international protection, (2) to contribute to a fast access to the asylum procedure and (3) prevent applicants for international protection from pursuing multiple applications in different Member States (i.e. to reduce secondary movements of asylum seekers).

Figure 21 shows the number of incoming and outgoing Dublin requests as reported by (Member) States between 2012-2016. Incoming requests are received by a (Member) State from other countries while outgoing requests are sent to other (Member) States by a country in order to determine responsibility for an asylum application. Because of the historical high number of asylum applications in 2015 the number of Dublin requests has increased significantly, starting in 2015 and peaking in 2016. The trends in the two indicators (incoming and outgoing) are similar since they are expected to mirror each other.¹⁶ Their divergence can be explained by delays in reporting, data collection and methodological differences.

Figure 21: Total number of incoming and outgoing Dublin requests in EU + NO, 2012-2016



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 30 October 2017 [*migr_dubri & migr_dubro*]

Note: Dublin data has gaps for some Member States in certain years

¹³ The phenomenon of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, who for various reasons move from the country in which they first arrived, to seek protection or permanent resettlement elsewhere

¹⁴ The Dublin III Regulation provides a mechanism for determining which country is responsible for examining an application for international protection that has been lodged in one of the member states by a third country national or a stateless person

¹⁵ European Dactyloscopy (Eurodac) is the EU fingerprint database for identifying asylum seekers and irregular border-crossers

¹⁶ An incoming request reported by country A as received from country B is also reported by country B as an outgoing request addressed to country A.

Table 9 provides a detailed breakdown of incoming and outgoing requests by type (take back / take charge) and shows the percentage of requests out of total asylum applications.¹⁷ In general the majority of incoming and outgoing requests are take-back requests, meaning that asylum applicants have already applied for asylum in the country that received the request.

For example, in 2016 there were 180 thousand incoming Dublin requests, meaning that about 14% of all asylum applicants had already submitted an asylum application in a different (Member) State (take back) or that another (Member) State should take the responsibility for examining their asylum application (take charge). These numbers can be interpreted as instances of secondary movement, that is from the country of first arrival in the EU or point of first application to another (Member) State, prior to the applicant's status having been resolved.

According to the incoming Dublin requests, the level of potential secondary movements in the EU has remained relatively constant at between 12% and 15%, except for the year 2015. The same applies for outgoing requests, albeit with some minor variations. Since the number of asylum applications was highest in 2015, it may be assumed that the level of secondary movements in 2015 was higher than presented in the table. Due to the lack of data it is, however, impossible to estimate the real level.

Table 9: Incoming and outgoing requests as a share of the total number of asylum applications in EU + NO, 2012-2016

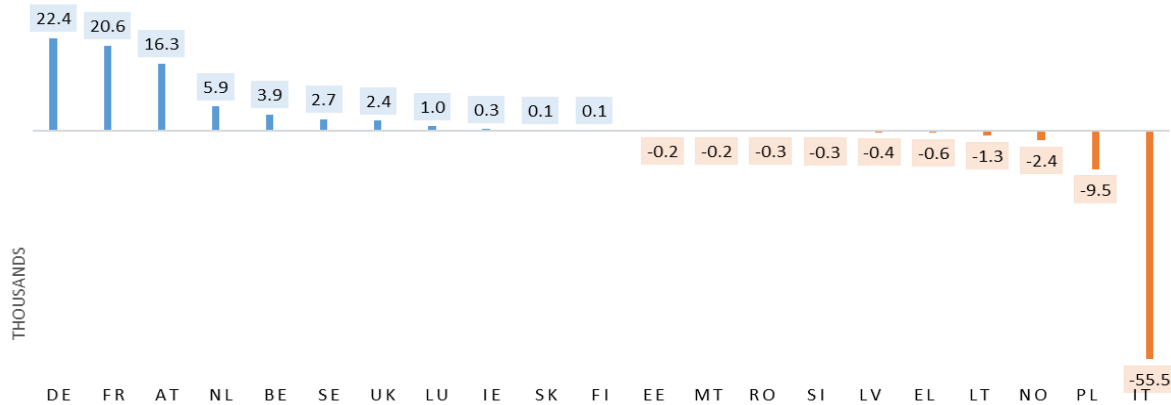
/		No. of incoming Dublin requests				No. of outgoing Dublin requests			
Year	Total no. of asylum applicants	Total	% of total asylum applicants	Take back requests	Take charge requests	Total	% of total asylum applicants	Take back requests	Take charge requests
2012	344,965	46,832	14%	32,828	11,813	42,371	12%	31,591	9,237
2013	443,020	66,080	15%	50,764	15,316	68,848	16%	54,874	13,974
2014	638,375	73,930	12%	49,705	24,225	76,892	12%	51,527	25,365
2015	1,353,935	76,476	6%	49,445	27,031	114,901	8%	83,293	31,608
2016	1,264,395	180,478	14%	132,959	47,519	154,105	12%	111,519	42,586

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 30 October 2017 [*migr_dubri, migr_dubro and migr_asyappctza*]

Note: Dublin data has gaps for some Member States in certain years

To have an overall broad indication of the direction of secondary movements it is possible to analyse the net Dublin requests by (Member) States (outgoing minus incoming) as portrayed in Figure 22 in 2016. The data shows that in 2016 Italy had the highest number of incoming requests having a net value of 56 thousand while Germany had the highest number of outgoing requests at a net value of 22 thousand. This implies that some asylum seekers that initially arrived in (Member) States such as Italy, Poland or Norway travelled to other (Member) States such as Germany, France or Austria where they applied for asylum and this triggered an outgoing request because they already applied for asylum or the responsibility for their request laid with another (Member) State. However, the nature of legal systems and administration in different member states may also significantly impact the comparability of numbers between different countries.

¹⁷ Take back requests - the asylum seeker in the requesting country has already submitted an application for asylum in the country receiving the request;
Take charge requests - the requesting country considers that other Member States should take over responsibility for examining the asylum application of individuals.

Figure 22: Net Dublin requests (outgoing minus incoming) for available (Member) States in 2016

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 30 October 2017 [migr_dubri & migr_dubro]

Note: Dublin data was missing or only partial for the missing Member States in 2016

An outgoing request can result in a transfer of the person concerned to the (Member) State of first entry or where the person first applied for international protection. The data in 2016 shows that the percentage of transfers out of total outgoing requests varies significantly by country. Table 9 shows that Germany had the highest number of outgoing requests in 2016 (54 thousand), though only 6% of these ended up in a transfer while Italy and Finland had no transfers despite the outgoing requests. On the opposite end Norway (87%), Sweden (51%) and Denmark (39%) had the highest rate of transfers for (Member) States with over 1,000 transfers. Overall, the total number of transfers in 2016 represented only 13% of all outgoing requests which meant that most asylum seekers identified in a (Member) State as being eligible for a transfer were not immediately transferred.

The reasons why the actual transfers represent a relatively low share of total requests can be explained by several factors:

- ★ Delays in transfers – the annual data presented in Table 10 may not capture transfers that took place in subsequent years (transfers often take longer than 6 months to conclude¹⁸);
- ★ (Pending) appeals against transfer decisions;
- ★ High rate of absconding¹⁹ of applicants during the Dublin procedure;
- ★ Operational obstacles in the coordination between (Member) States.

¹⁸ (Member) States often use the time limit extension permitted in Article 29(2) according to the Evaluation of Dublin III Regulation published in December 2015.

¹⁹ Action by which a person seeks to avoid legal proceedings by not remaining available to the relevant authorities or to the court.

Table 10: Total transfers and outgoing requests in EU + NO, 2016

(Member) State	Transfers	Outgoing request	% transfers out of total outgoing requests
NO	1,114	1,280	87%
EE	9	11	82%
LV	11	18	61%
SE	3,763	7,336	51%
DK	2,189	5,617	39%
SK	83	353	24%
NL	2,131	9,238	23%
BE	1,479	6,483	23%
HR	12	57	21%
LU	258	1,327	19%
RO	35	184	19%
EL	890	5,187	17%
AT	2,572	21,293	12%
SI	59	524	11%
MT	12	120	10%
UK	355	4,237	8%
IE	41	547	7%
DE	3,002	53,918	6%
FR	1,293	25,368	5%
PL	8	170	5%
IT	0	9,340	0%
FI	0	1,487	0%
HU	204	N/A	N/A
LT	N/A	10	N/A
Total	19,520	154,105	13%

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 30 October 2017 [migr_dubri & migr_dubro]

Note: Dublin data was missing for the missing Member States in 2016

Eurodac data can also provide an indication of secondary movements by looking at the categories of data and how they each compare. Specifically, there are three relevant categories of data:²⁰

- ★ Category 1 data – an applicant for international protection who lodged an application in a (Member) State;
- ★ Category 2 data – a third-country national or stateless person apprehended by competent authorities in connection with irregular border crossing;
- ★ Category 3 data – a third-country national or stateless person who is found staying illegally within a (Member) State territory (this transaction is not mandatory).

Table 11 shows the number of foreign hits (i.e. an application for international protection was already made in a different state) by category in the period 2012-2016. For example, in 2016:

- ★ 30% of all persons that applied for international protection in (Member) States made a new application in another (Member) State (CAT 1 to 1, foreign hits);
- ★ 32% of all persons that were apprehended at borders due to irregular crossing applied for international protection in another (Member) State (CAT 1 to 2, foreign hits);

²⁰ Detailed definitions and additional data are available in the Eurodac Annual Reports

- ★ 49% of persons found illegally staying in (Member) States lodged an application for international protection in another (Member) State (CAT 3 to 1, foreign hits).

The data from 2016 shows an increase compared to 2014 and 2015 across all categories of data. These figures give another indication of how secondary movements appear to have increased towards 2016 according to Eurodac data.

Moreover, the largest proportion of foreign hits has always been registered for people apprehended as irregular residents in one (Member) State who were found to have lodged an application for asylum previously in another (Member) State (CAT 3 to 1, foreign hits).²¹ This implies that almost half of the persons that were returned were found to have made an application for asylum and then might have preferred to travel to another state rather than see through their asylum application.

Table 11: Total EURODAC foreign hits by category in EU + EFTA states²², 2012-2016

EURODAC			Subsequent application (CAT 1 to 1)		Irregular entry (CAT 1 to 2)		Illegal residence (CAT 3 to 1)	
Year	CAT 1 Transactions	CAT 3 Transactions	Total (foreign hits)	Share of total CAT 1 transactions (%)	Total (foreign hits)	Share of total CAT 1 transactions (%)	Total (foreign hits)	Share of total CAT 3 transactions (%)
2012	286,328	85,914	86,471	30%	17,319	6%	32,046	37%
2013	354,276	106,013	124,943	35%	26,145	7%	43,900	41%
2014	505,221	144,167	137,737	27%	52,391	10%	52,607	36%
2015	1,198,111	294,807	273,701	23%	293,581	25%	92,611	31%
2016	1,018,074	252,559	307,421	30%	324,816	32%	124,588	49%

Source: EU-Lisa Annual reports and Eurodac Central Units Annual Reports

At the level of individual (Member) States, according to the 2016 Eurodac Annual Report, 48% of all category 1 to 1 foreign hits (subsequent application) were generated in Germany followed by France (12%) and Italy (8%). Similarly, Germany registered 71% of all category 1 to 2 foreign hits (irregular entry) and 50% of these foreign hits were registered by Germany against data initially inserted by Greece. Lastly, Germany registered 32% of all category 3 to 1 foreign hits (illegal residence) followed by Belgium (15%), Italy and Austria (both at 13%).

²¹ Table V in the 2016 Eurodac Annual Report (pp. 23) presents a breakdown by (Member) State of CAT 3 to 1 foreign hits showing the states where irregular residents first applied for asylum.

²² Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

6 Humanitarian relief and resettlement

6.1 HUMANITARIAN AID

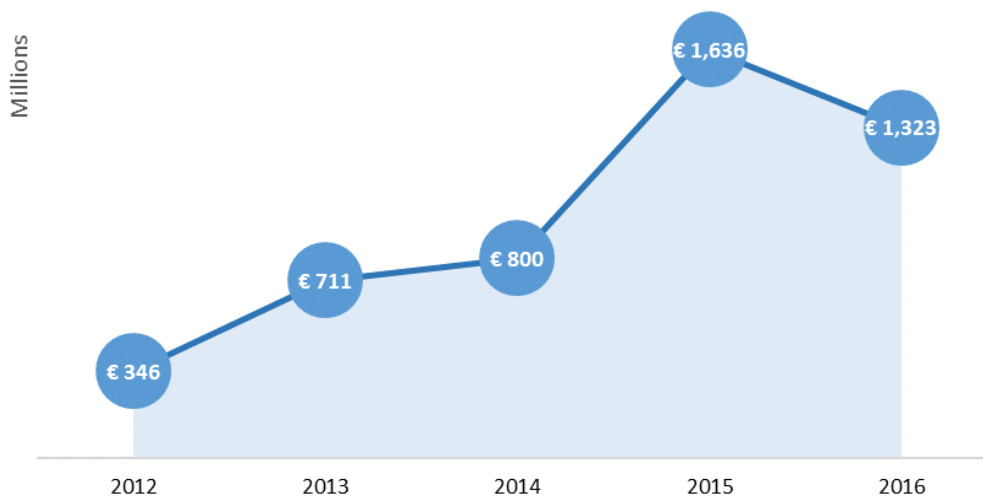
The EU recognises that addressing the plight of refugees is a shared responsibility of countries of origin, transit and destination. It aims to promote stability and find common solutions to challenges of mutual interest that can curb the causes of irregular migration and displacement. With over four million Syrian refugees living outside of Syria the EU has increased its support to provide humanitarian aid to those refugees living outside of EU borders, protect migrants and asylum seekers from smuggling and trafficking²³ and boost cooperation on return, and readmission and reintegration.

In the period 2012 – 2016 the EU increased the level of humanitarian aid provided to Syrian nationals (see Figure 23), reaching the highest figure at €1.6 billion in 2015. Support remained high with €1.3 billion provided in 2016, from which DG ECHO²⁴ provided €409 million and Member States the remainder at around 900 million.

EU support goes both to Syrians in their country as well as to supporting Syrian refugees found in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. Inside Syria the EU has provided safe access to water, sanitation and hygiene items to some two million people while around one million people received food and non-food items.²⁵

In Jordan, there are over 630,000 registered Syrian refugees of which half are children.²⁶ Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the European Commission has allocated more than €580 million to refugees located in Jordan. In Lebanon, there are an estimated 1.1 million refugees, equal to almost a quarter of the overall population of Lebanon, while Turkey hosts the largest overall Syrian population at over 2.5 million Syrian refugees. As a result, in November 2015, the EU announced the allocation of €3 billion to support Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, of which €2.9 billion were already allocated by mid-October 2017.²⁷

Figure 23: Humanitarian aid provided to Syrian nationals by the EU 2012-2016



Source: EDRIS, data extracted in May 2017

Note: The total includes aid from EU Member States and ECHO. ECHO aid was €151 million (2012), €110 million (2013), €201 million (2014), €377 million (2015) and €409 million (2016).

²³ In March 2016, the Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted Council Conclusions on migrant smuggling (6995/16)

²⁴ Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO)

²⁵ Factsheet - EU support in response to the Syrian crisis, available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-222_en.htm#_ftn1

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ See the Facility for Refugees in Turkey factsheet available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/frit_factsheet.pdf

As shown in Table 12, between 2012 – 2016 EU aid to Syrian nationals totalled €4.8 billion and the largest donors were Germany (€1.5 billion) and the United Kingdom (€1.2 billion), followed by the Netherlands (€258 million), Denmark (€175 million) and Sweden (€91 million). In total, these five Member States provided aid of €3.2 billion to Syrian nationals between 2012 and 2016. In 2016 (€543 million) and 2015 (€590 million) Germany was the largest donor, compared to the United Kingdom in 2014 (€310 million), 2013 (€249 million) and 2012 (€83 million).

In the case of Iraqi nationals, EU aid amounted to €799 million in 2016. The largest donors were Germany (€428 million), DG ECHO (€159 million) and the United Kingdom (€110 million). In the case of Afghan nationals, financial support totalled €198 million in 2016. The largest donors were the United Kingdom (€52 million), DG ECHO (€49 million) and Germany (€43 million).

Table 12: Humanitarian aid provided to Syrian nationals by the top 5 EU donor countries between 2012-2016 (in € millions)

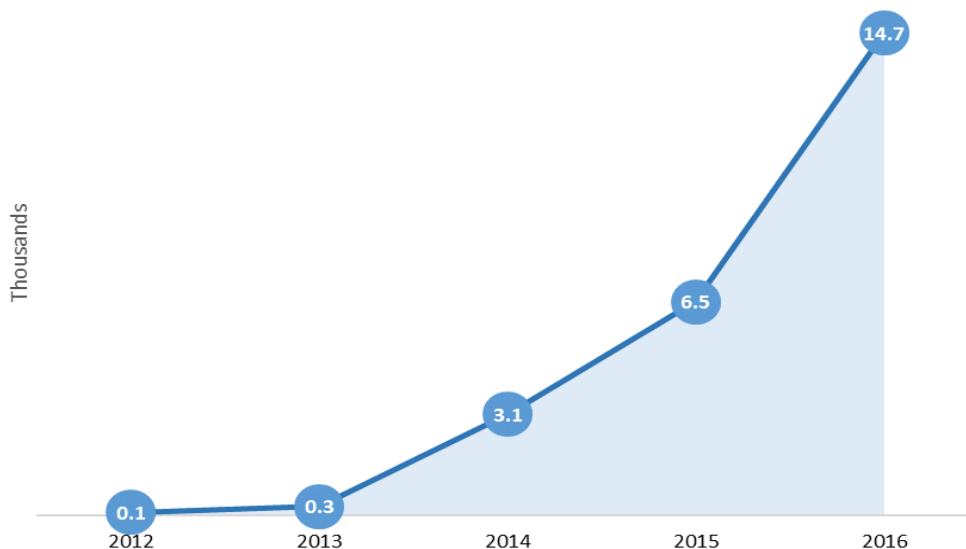
Member State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
DE	48.2	194.8	165.2	590.7	543.3	1,542.2
UK	83.1	248.5	310.2	373.9	158.2	1,173.9
NL	19.5	31.5	47.0	96.9	63.0	257.8
DK	4.8	31.1	12.7	68.8	57.1	174.5
SE	11.2	22.8	15.9	24.6	16.2	90.7
Others	178.9	182.1	248.6	481.5	484.8	1,576.0
Total	345.7	710.7	799.6	1,636.4	1,322.7	4,815.2

Source: EDRIS, data extracted in May 2017

6.2 RESETTLEMENT

Following a recommendation from the European Commission in July 2015 (Member) States agreed to resettle²⁸ 22 thousand people in clear need of international protection via both multilateral and national schemes.²⁹ As a result, the number of resettled Syrian nationals more than doubled from 2015 to 2016. Since 2012 nearly 25 thousand Syrian nationals have been resettled in the EEA (see Figure 24). Moreover, resettlement of Syrians showed an exponential increase over the period 2012 – 2016 from 75 in 2012 to just under 15 thousand in 2016.

Figure 24: Total number of Syrian nationals resettled in the EEA



Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24.05.2017 [migr_asyresa]

²⁸ Resettled persons are people who have been granted authorisation to reside in a Member State within the framework of a national or EU resettlement scheme.

²⁹ See the EMN Annual Policy Report from 2015: the 2015 European Resettlement Scheme was adopted by all EU Member States, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland

According to the EU–Turkey statement from 2015 it was agreed that for every Syrian national returned from the Greek islands another person would be resettled to the EU directly from Turkey, thus enabling a legal and safe passage to enter the EU. In July 2017, the European Commission indicated that under 8 thousand people in need of international protection were resettled from Turkey under the 1:1 mechanism of which most arrived in Norway (3,400), the United Kingdom (2,200) and Netherlands (1,000).³⁰ However, UNHCR reported in September 2017 that by their estimation at least 300,000 Syrians in Turkey are still in need of resettlement.³¹

According to Eurostat, between 2012 and 2016 the largest numbers of Syrian nationals were resettled in United Kingdom (5,700), Norway (5,400), Sweden (2,200), France (1,800) and Finland (1,400) as shown in Table 13. There has been a steady increase from 2014, with a peak in 2016 for most Member States. In United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Netherlands the number of persons resettled increased significantly from 2015 to 2016.

Table 13: Total number of resettled Syrian nationals in the EEA by state, 2012-2016

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total EEA
UK	0	0	145	1,200	4,370	5,715
Norway	0	0	785	1,685	2,900	5,370
Sweden	75	245	545	685	690	2,240
France	0	0	230	385	1,190	1,805
Finland	0	0	430	375	545	1,350
Austria	0	0	385	755	200	1,340
Germany	0	0	0	40	1,185	1,225
Italy	0	0	0	95	975	1,070
Switzerland	0	0	0	525	525	1,050
Netherlands	0	15	245	175	575	1,010
Other	0	0	300	580	1,540	2,420
Total EEA	75	260	3,065	6,500	14,695	24,595

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24.05.2017 [migr_asyresa]

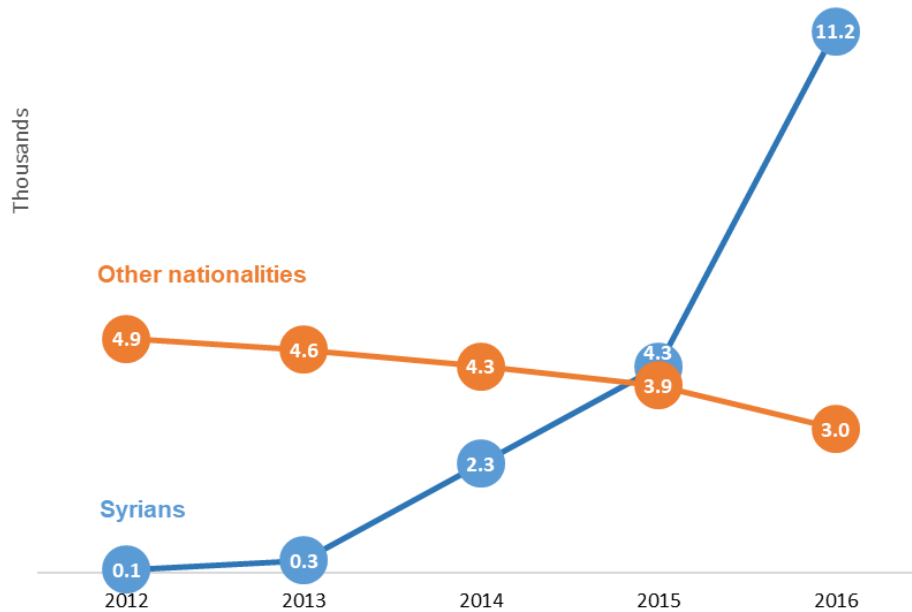
Note: The table shows states with over 1,000 resettled Syrians in the period 2012-2016

Figure 25 shows that the number of Syrian nationals resettled in the EU increased while the level of persons resettled for other nationalities slightly decreased, especially after 2015. Most refugees that were resettled by (Member) States arrived from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Congo or Somalia. The high increase of resettled Syrians can be explained in part by the EU – Turkey statement. At the same time, as of August 2017, 74% of resettlements conducted by UNHCR in Turkey were for Syrian nationals, followed by Iraqis (16%) and Iranians (6%) and most submissions for resettlement went to the Netherlands, Germany and France.³²

³⁰ European Commission Fact Sheet, 26 July 2017: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2103_en.htm

³¹ UNHCR Report on Turkey Resettlements: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/60271>

³² Ibid

Figure 25: Syrians and other nationalities with the largest numbers of beneficiaries of resettlement in the EU, 2012 - 2016

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24.05.2017 [migr_asyresa]

Since 2012 the nationalities with the highest number of resettled persons in the EU are Syria (18 thousand), Congo (4 thousand), Somalia (3 thousand), Afghanistan (3 thousand) and Eritrea (2 thousand). This is presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Nationalities with the largest numbers of beneficiaries of resettlement in the EU, 2012 - 2016

Third country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total EU
Syria	75	260	2,265	4,265	11,220	18,085
Congo	655	555	800	925	845	3,780
Somalia	580	835	535	630	390	2,970
Afghanistan	860	520	835	400	155	2,770
Eritrea	390	530	505	310	395	2,130
Iraq	420	360	345	250	250	1,625
Ethiopia	555	80	210	320	265	1,430
Sudan	295	245	180	440	195	1,355
Other	1,095	1,500	865	605	490	4,555
Total EU	4,925	4,885	6,540	8,145	14,205	38,700

Source: Eurostat, data extracted on 24.05.2017 [migr_asyresa]

Note: The table shows nationalities with over 1,000 resettled persons in the period 2012-2016

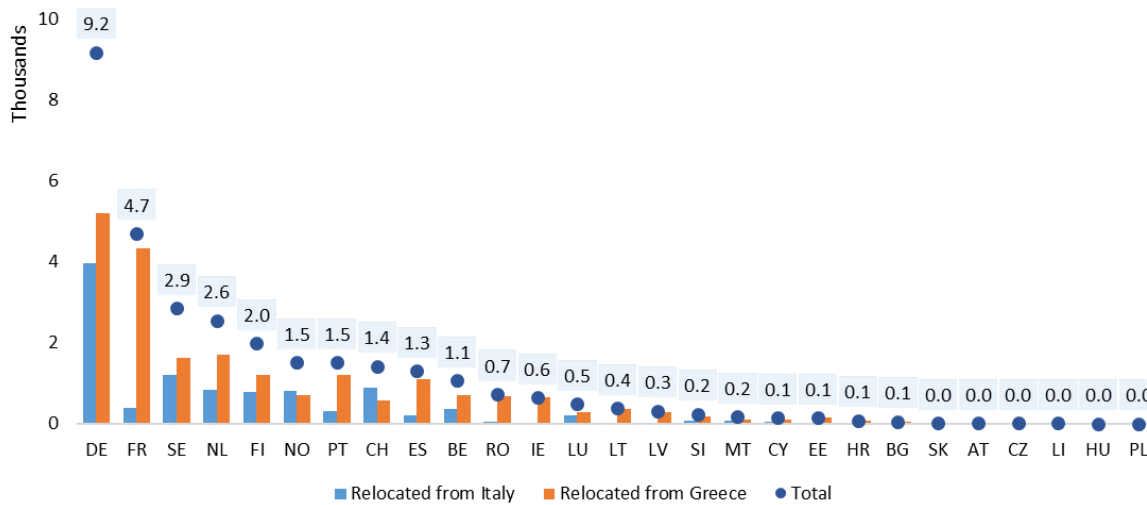
6.3 RELOCATION

The high volume of arrivals has put additional pressure on Member States at the external borders of the EU. As a result, a relocation mechanism was put in place in September 2015 as a temporary and exceptional mechanism that aimed to relocate up to 160,000 applicants in clear need of international protection from Greece and Italy over a period of two years (until September 2017).

However, following the EU-Turkey statement which reduced the flows to Greece by 96% and because the majority of migrants arriving to Italy were not eligible for relocation the total number of persons to be relocated was reduced to around 98,000.³³ Initially the nationalities eligible for relocation were Syrians, Eritreans and Iraqis, but this changed in May 2017 to Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, British overseas countries and territories, Eritrea, Grenada, Guatemala, Syria and Yemen.

As of November 2017, according to the European Commission, the number of relocations from Greece stood at 21,238 and Italy at 10,265. In total over 31,500 persons were relocated from these two (Member) States representing 32% of the total legal commitment in the revised figure.³⁴ The relocation from Italy and Greece by (Member) State is presented in Figure 26 and shows that Germany (9,200), France (4,700) and Sweden (2,900) received the highest number of persons while Hungary (0), Poland (0) and Czech Republic (12) are at the opposite end.³⁵ In the latest update from November 2017, the European Commission stated their committed to provide financial support to the (Member) States that will continue their relocation efforts of persons from Italy and Greece beyond the current relocation scheme.

Figure 26: Relocation from Italy and Greece by (Member) State, October 2015 – October 2017



Source: European Commission, DG HOME, data as of November 2017

³³ European Commission, DG HOME, European Agenda on Migration, see: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information_en

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ In 2017, the European Commission started infringement procedures against HU, PL and CZ because of non-compliance with their obligations under the 2015 Council Decisions on relocation: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release-IP-17-1607_en.htm

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