

Asylum: Germany processes more applications than other EU states combined

Just as it did the previous year, Germany handled more asylum applications in 2017 than all fellow EU members combined. The way Germany interprets the Dublin agreement suggests the discrepancy is set to continue.



German authorities decided on 524,185 asylum applications last year, more than the 435,070 cases being handled in all other EU states combined in 2017, according to report in German daily *Welt*, citing figures from the EU's statistics office, Eurostat.

The data was based on first instance decisions and gives a more accurate reflection of the number of migrants in a country than applications. Asylum seekers may travel illegally to their destination of choice after submitting an initial application.

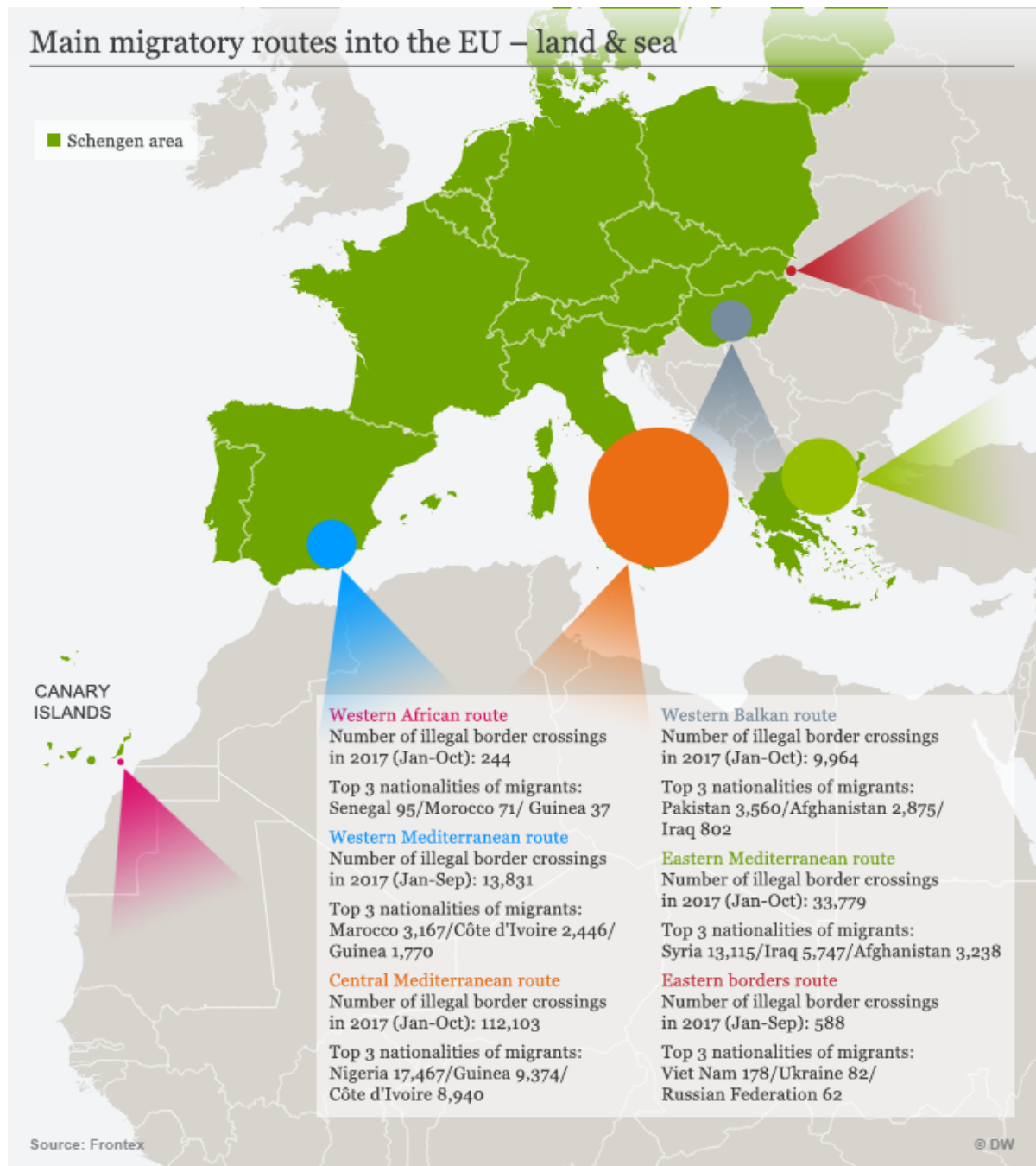
Read more: Almost half of rejected asylum seekers winning on appeal

The data broken down:

- Germany processed five times as many applications as Italy and Greece — two of the EU's border states — combined.
- Only one in 26 migrants arriving in Germany via another EU member is returned to the member state they first set foot in.
- In two-thirds of cases, Germany does not even attempt to return migrants to their point of entry.
- Germany is the most popular destination for asylum seekers in the EU, with 187,000 arrivals in 2017; more than Italy and Greece combined.
- On average, around 15,000 people sought protection in Germany each month between April 2016 and November 2017.
- The data did not include figures from the Czech Republic and Spain, but the combined total of applications from those countries has not yet exceeded 12,000 per year.

Why the discrepancy with other EU members? According to the EU's Dublin regulation, asylum seekers' cases have to be processed at the point of entry into the bloc. Germany, however, allows migrants to enter from other EU countries. Authorities then decide where each case will be handled. In cases where Germany had agreed on the transfer of an asylum seeker to another EU state, only 15 percent actually traveled — either because German judges blocked the move due to inhumane conditions in some member states or because migrants went into hiding.

Read more: The EU-Turkey refugee agreement: a review



What about Italy and Greece? As EU border states, Italy and Greece have seen migrants flock to their shores via the Mediterranean route since 2015. However, because of the way Germany interprets the Dublin regulation, it takes far more decisions on asylum applications than Italy and Greece together. In fact, German authorities did not send a single migrant back to Greece in 2017, and a mere 2,110 cases were referred back to Italy that year.

Read more: France presents new immigration bill

Will Germany's new government continue these policies? The new German government will continue to allow those seeking protection to

enter the country. However, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer taken a tough stance on asylum.

He has called for internal border checks to be extended when the suspension of the Schengen agreement runs out in May. He also wants to speed up deportations of rejected asylum seekers by hiring more judges and by closing loopholes used by some migrants to evade deportation.

Source: <http://www.dw.com/en/asylum-germany-processes-more-applications-than-other-eu-states-combined/a-43034222>

[Disclaimer]