

# EU reports significant increase in asylum applications

Figures have increased for the first time since the refugee influx in 2015. However, not all countries of origin have the same acceptance rates.



Asylum applications in the EU increased from 2018 to 2019 by 13%, according to figures released Wednesday by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

This marks the first year-on-year increase since 2015. More than 714,000 applications for asylum were lodged in the EU in 2019, compared to 2018, when fewer than 635,000 were registered.

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“Today’s figures highlight that while we remain well below the situation of a few years ago, we need to continue to be vigilant and strengthen our asylum practices,” said EASO Executive Director Nina Gregori.

“A sustainable, fair and crisis-proof asylum system in the European Union is needed,” she added.

## **Twice as many Venezuelan applicants**

The top three countries of origin for asylum seekers were Syria (72,000), Afghanistan (60,000) and Venezuela (45,000). The figure for Venezuela is more than twice that in 2018, reflecting the Latin American country's recent economic and political turmoil.

However, only 5% of Venezuelans who applied were granted asylum, compared to over 80% of Syrians, Yemenis, and Eritreans.

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The increase in applications was mostly accounted for by the large number of applications made by residents of countries who were exempt to visas. For example, residents of several Latin American countries can enter the EU without visa requirements.

This explains why while the number of applications has risen, illegal entries — for example on boats across the Mediterranean — have fallen in recent years.

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