



## BRIEFING PAPER

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# Asylum Statistics

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Cover page: [Syrian refugees in Kawar Gosk camp, Erbil, Iraq](#), 2014. Author: Anmarrfaat. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license / image cropped.

## Summary

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country. An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status. An asylum applicant who does not qualify for refugee status may still be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons. An asylum seeker whose application is refused at initial decision may appeal the decision through an appeals process and, if successful, may be granted leave to remain.

- Asylum seekers were around 5% of immigrants to the UK in 2018.
- The number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty year low point of 17,916 in 2010, before rising again to reach 32,733 in 2015. The number fell in 2018, to 29,380.
- The percentage of asylum applicants refused at initial decision reached its highest point at 88% in 2004. After that, the percentage of applicants refused at initial decision fell to 59% in 2014, before increasing to 67% in 2018.
- In the period from 2004 to 2017, around three-quarters of applicants refused asylum at initial decision lodged an appeal, but only around one quarter of those appeals was allowed.
- In 2018, 32% of asylum applicants were nationals of Asian countries, 29% were nationals of African countries, 26% were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, and 10% were from Europe.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 19,881 people were resettled to the UK, mainly from Syria and the surrounding region. Resettlement accounted for just over one quarter (27%) of the people granted humanitarian protection in the UK in the last five years.
- In 2018, there were 5 asylum applications for every 10,000 people resident in the UK. Across the EU28 there were 14 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. The UK is therefore below the average among EU countries for asylum applications per head of population, ranking 17<sup>th</sup> among EU28 countries on this measure.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 What is asylum?

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country. According to Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who:

... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;<sup>1</sup>

As a signatory to the Convention, the UK grants asylum to those who meet these criteria. The UK also adheres to the European Convention on Human Rights, which prevents the UK from sending someone to a country where there is a real risk they may be exposed to torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The UK can also grant other forms of humanitarian protection to people who the Home Office decides have a need for protection but who do not meet the criteria for refugee status. Prior to 2003, such people were granted exceptional leave to remain (ELR) and from 2004 onwards this was replaced with humanitarian protection (HP) or discretionary leave (DL).

In this briefing, humanitarian protection is used as a catch-all term for asylum and these other forms of leave, unless specified otherwise.

## 1.2 Who is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status. An asylum applicant who does not qualify for refugee status may still be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons. An asylum seeker whose application is refused at initial decision may appeal the decision through an appeals process. Asylum applicants initially refused refugee status may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

## 1.3 What percentage of migrants are asylum seekers?

A long-term international migrant is someone who changes their country of usual residence for a period of at least a year. In 2016, there

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, [United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#), Article 1. The UK signed the Refugee Convention in 1954 and the Protocol in 1967.

were around 644,200 long-term international immigrants into the UK; around 30,700 of these were asylum seekers, which was 4.7%.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.4 Sources of asylum statistics

Statistics on asylum seekers and refugees in the UK are published by the Home Office in their quarterly immigration statistics.<sup>3</sup> These statistics contain data on the number of people applying for asylum and the outcomes of asylum applications.

Home Office statistics distinguish between the number of main applicants for asylum, which represents the asylum caseload, and the number of main applicants and dependants, which represents the number of people covered by asylum applications.

Statistics on asylum seekers and refugees in European Union countries are published in the Home Office bulletin and by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees in two annual reports: *Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries* and *Global Trends*.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.5 What about resettled refugees?

Resettled people are granted refugee status or another form of humanitarian protection by the UK while abroad and then brought to live in the UK.

The UK does not have a large-scale, permanent resettlement programme but, historically, has introduced specific resettlement schemes in response to humanitarian crises. From 2014 onwards, the UK began resettling Syrians under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), with the aim of resettling 20,000 by 2020.

Given the scale of the VPRS (and other resettlement schemes currently in place), resettled people made up just over one quarter (27%) of those granted humanitarian protection in the UK in the last five years (2014-2018).

Resettled people are usually not included in asylum statistics and feature in a separate Home Office data series.

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<sup>2</sup> ONS, [Long-Term International Migration 2016](#), Table 1.01 LTIM Components and Adjustments

<sup>3</sup> Home Office, [Immigration statistics quarterly release](#)

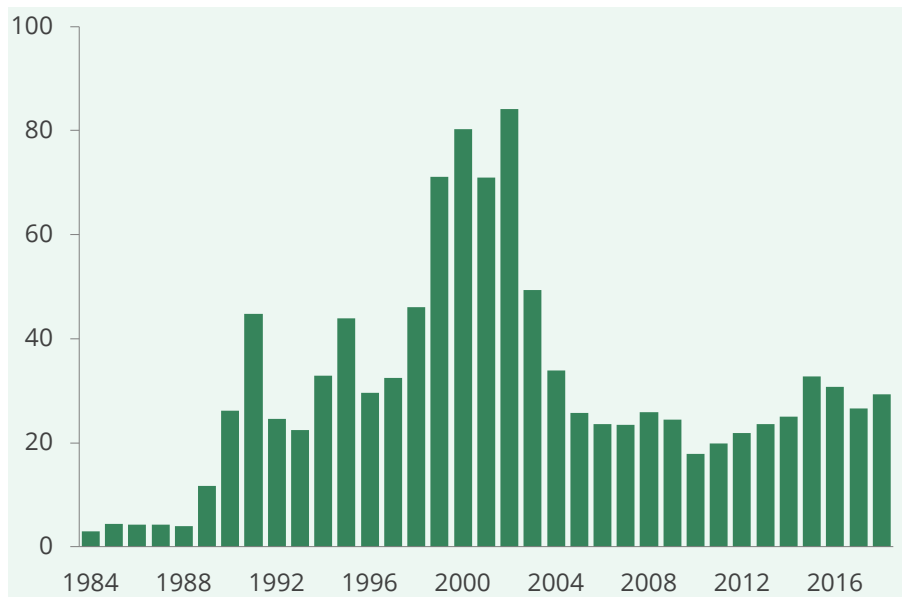
<sup>4</sup> The latest editions are [Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries 2014](#) and [Global Trends 2017](#).

## 2. Asylum in the United Kingdom

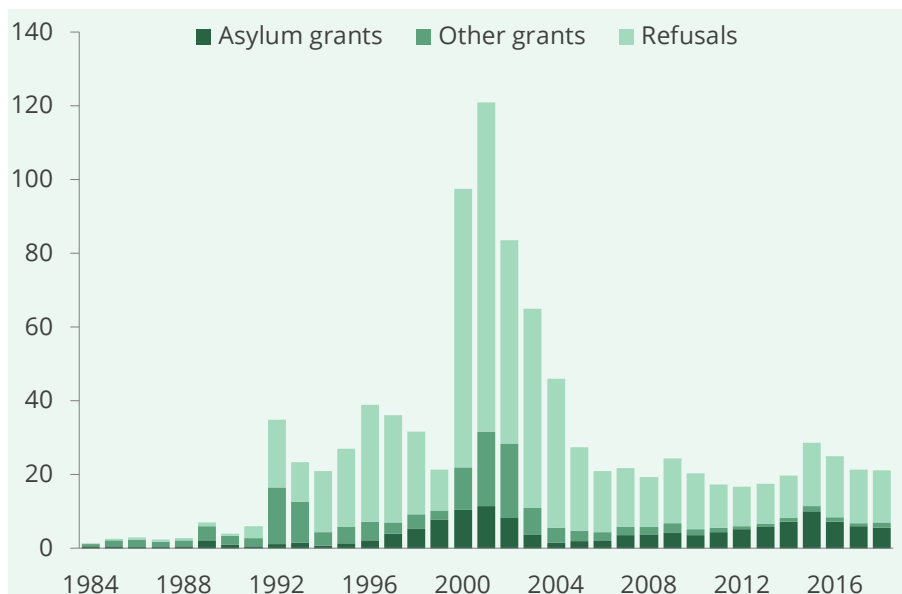
### 2.1 Asylum applications and initial decisions

The number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132. After that the number fell sharply to reach a twenty year low point of 17,916 in 2010, before rising slowly to reach 32,733 in 2015. The number fell in 2016, to 30,747 and was at 29,380 in 2018. These trends are illustrated in Charts 1 and 2 below.

**Chart 1: Applications for asylum in the UK, 000s**



**Chart 2: Initial decisions on asylum applications, 000s**



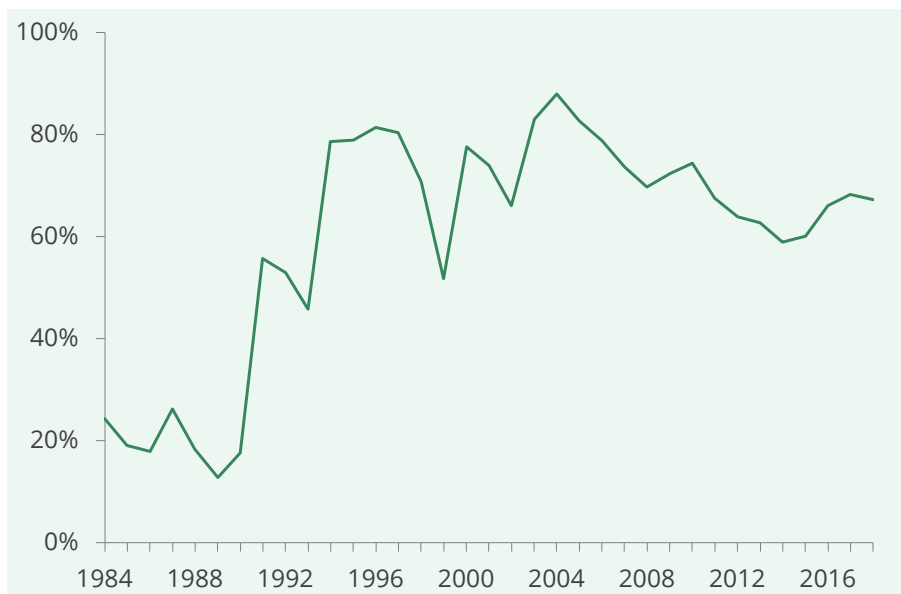
Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 3. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal. 4. The data shown in these charts is set out in Appendix Table at the end of this briefing.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_01

Chart 1 shows the number of applications for asylum by main applicants in each year from 1984 to 2018. Chart 2 shows the number of initial decisions during the same period, broken down into asylum grants, other grants, and refusals.

Chart 3 below shows the proportion of applications that were refused at initial decision for decisions made in each year from 1984 to 2018. The percentage of main applicants refused at initial decision reached its highest point at 88% in 2004. After that the percentage fell to 59% in 2014, before increasing to 67% in 2018.

**Chart 3: Percentage of asylum applications refused at initial decision**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 3. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_01

## 2.2 Final outcomes of asylum applications

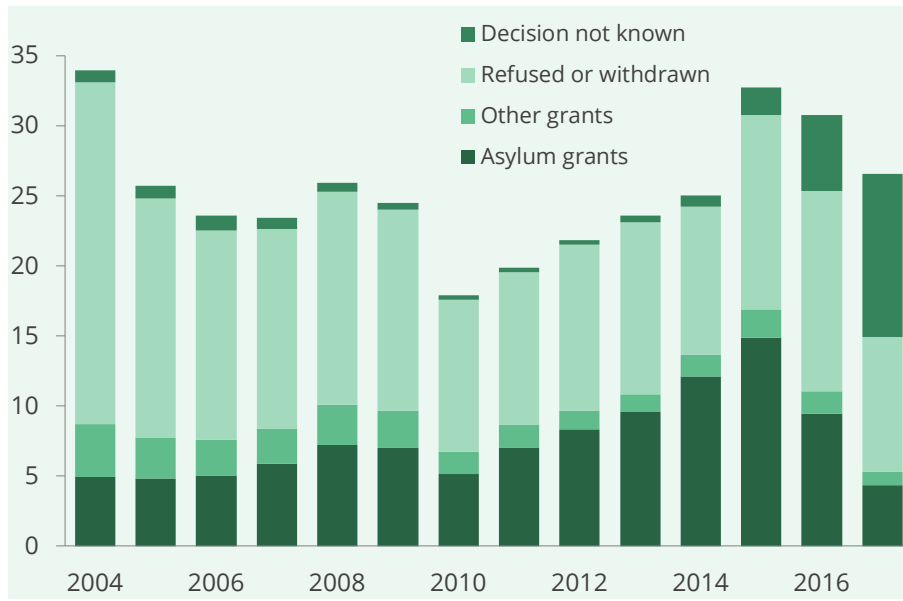
Because some asylum applicants who are initially refused asylum can appeal, the number of applicants granted leave to remain at initial decision does not reflect the number who are ultimately successful. For this reason, the Home Office publishes data on the final outcomes of asylum applications, which shows the outcomes for cohorts of asylum seekers applying in each year. Because it can take longer than a year for an asylum case to reach its final outcome, this data lags behind the data on initial decisions.

The table below shows the final outcomes for main applicants applying for asylum in each year from 2004 to 2017. This includes cases where the final outcome is not yet known (there are more of these cases in the most recent years). The data is illustrated in Charts 4 and 5. Chart 4 shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year by final outcome, while Chart 5 shows the percentage of all cases with a known

outcome that were either asylum grants, other grants, or were refused or withdrawn.

The percentage of cases with a known outcome that were refused or withdrawn fell from 72% in 2004 to 42% in 2014 and to 36% in 2017. Note that as at May 2018 there were still a large number of cases in 2016 and 2017 where the outcome was not yet known.

**Chart 4: Final outcomes of asylum applications, 000s, at May 2018**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made. 3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_06

**Chart 5: Final outcomes of asylum applications as a percentage of known outcomes, at May 2018**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made. 3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_06



FINAL OUTCOMES OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS MADE IN EACH YEAR								
As at May 2018								
Year	Number					As % of known outcomes		
	Main applicants	Asylum grants	Other grants	Refused or withdrawn	Outcome not known	Asylum grants	Other grants	Refused or withdrawn
2004	33,960	4,907	3,813	24,365	875	14.4%	11.2%	71.7%
2005	25,712	4,801	2,958	17,036	917	18.7%	11.5%	66.3%
2006	23,608	5,041	2,573	14,920	1,074	21.4%	10.9%	63.2%
2007	23,431	5,903	2,475	14,236	817	25.2%	10.6%	60.8%
2008	25,932	7,207	2,864	15,202	659	27.8%	11.0%	58.6%
2009	24,487	7,003	2,674	14,351	459	28.6%	10.9%	58.6%
2010	17,916	5,157	1,587	10,854	318	28.8%	8.9%	60.6%
2011	19,865	7,011	1,625	10,930	299	35.3%	8.2%	55.0%
2012	21,843	8,357	1,321	11,814	351	38.3%	6.0%	54.1%
2013	23,584	9,592	1,240	12,299	453	40.7%	5.3%	52.1%
2014	25,033	12,119	1,547	10,575	792	48.4%	6.2%	42.2%
2015	32,733	14,858	2,057	13,877	1,941	45.4%	6.3%	42.4%
2016	30,747	9,474	1,553	14,318	5,402	30.8%	5.1%	46.6%
2017	26,547	4,333	947	9,641	11,626	16.3%	3.6%	36.3%

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants only.
2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made.
3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_06

## 2.3 Asylum appeals

Home Office data on the outcomes of asylum applications also shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year that are refused at initial decision and go on to appeal.

The table below shows the number of main applicants for asylum in each year from 2004 to 2017, the number of these that were refused at initial decision, the number of those refused that appealed, and the number given each outcome, where the outcome is known.

In the period from 2004 to 2017, around three-quarters of main applicants refused asylum at initial decision lodged an appeal, but only around one quarter of those appeals were allowed.

**APPEAL OUTCOMES OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS MADE IN EACH YEAR**

As at May 2018

Year	Main applicants	Initially refused asylum, HP or DL	Appeals lodged	Appeal outcomes				Appeals lodged as % of refused	Allowed as % of known appeal outcomes
				Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed	Appeals withdrawn	Appeal outcome not known		
2004	33,960	27,266	21,283	3,950	16,506	766	61	78.1%	18.6%
2005	25,712	19,242	14,279	3,032	10,601	523	123	74.2%	21.4%
2006	23,608	16,463	11,589	2,565	8,417	497	110	70.4%	22.3%
2007	23,431	14,928	10,654	2,289	7,578	415	372	71.4%	22.3%
2008	25,932	15,199	12,179	3,163	8,235	503	278	80.1%	26.6%
2009	24,487	15,438	13,255	3,998	8,585	507	165	85.9%	30.5%
2010	17,916	11,594	9,318	2,497	6,237	443	141	80.4%	27.2%
2011	19,865	11,545	9,186	2,522	5,906	627	131	79.6%	27.9%
2012	21,843	12,108	9,026	2,678	5,581	622	145	74.5%	30.2%
2013	23,584	12,971	9,718	3,037	6,033	520	128	74.9%	31.7%
2014	25,033	12,511	9,935	3,767	5,454	444	270	79.4%	39.0%
2015	32,733	17,126	13,491	5,301	6,862	733	595	78.8%	41.1%
2016	30,747	16,236	11,577	3,806	6,275	343	1,153	71.3%	36.5%
2017	26,547	11,081	6,920	1,412	2,715	174	2,619	62.4%	32.8%

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants only.
2. Year relates to the period in which the application was made.
3. Excludes cases which were successful after appeal to the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

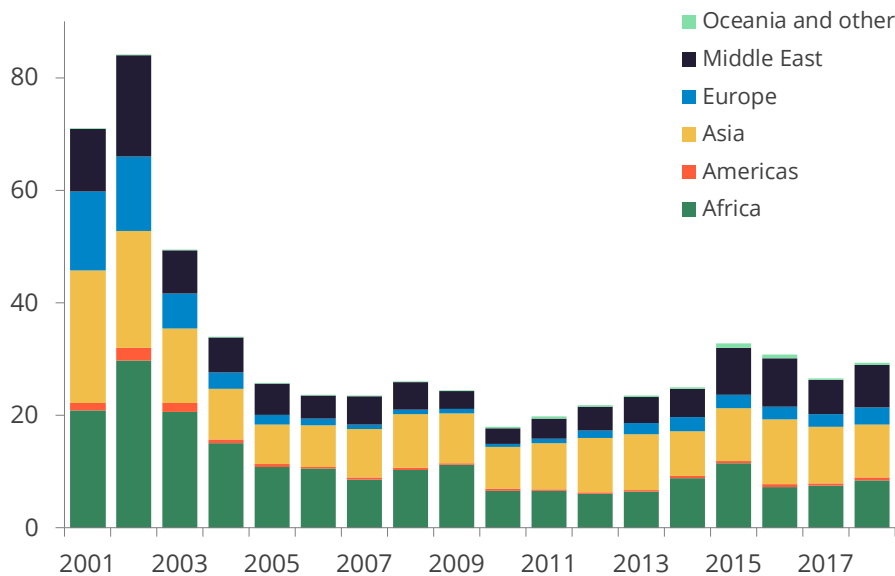
Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_06

## 2.4 From where do asylum seekers come to the UK?

In 2017, 32% of main applicants were nationals of Asian countries, 29% were nationals of African countries, 26% were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, and 10% were from Europe.<sup>5</sup> Less than 4% of main applicants were from countries in the Americas, Oceania, and other parts of the world.

Chart 6 shows the broad nationalities of main applicants for asylum in each year from 2001 to 2018. In 2017, the countries from which the largest number of asylum applicants came to the UK were Iran (3,327), Iraq (2,697), Eritrea (2,158), Pakistan (2,022), Albania (2,001) and Sudan (1,613).

<sup>5</sup> Afghanistan is included in figures for Asia, while Iran is included in the Middle East.

**Chart 6: Main asylum applicants by nationality, 000s**

Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_01

Syria's rank on this measure increased from 27th in 2010 to 4th in 2015. In 2010 there were 127 main applicants for asylum from Syria, compared with 2,539 in 2015. In 2018, Syria's rank on this measure fell to 13<sup>th</sup>, and the number of main applicants from Syria fell to 826.

Since the start of 2014, 15,000 Syrians have been resettled via the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This is separate to the UK's in-country asylum process and is described in more detail in section 3.

## 2.5 Grants of refugee status by nationality

Grants of refugee status or another form of humanitarian leave to remain by nationality follow a slightly different pattern to applications. This is partly due to a time lag between applications and decisions and partly because acceptance rates are higher for some nationalities than others, in particular years.

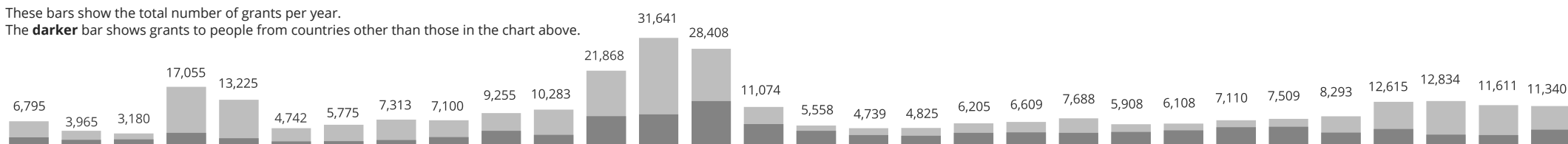
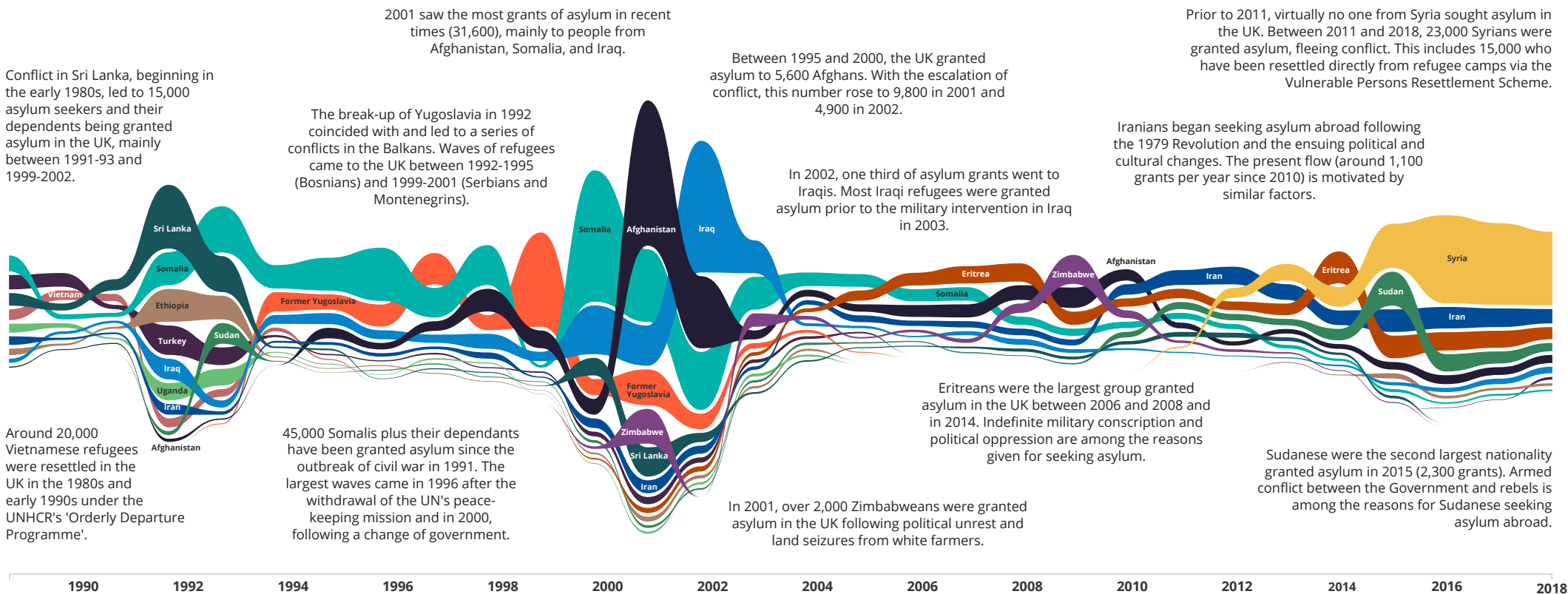
The diagram overleaf is a stylised representation of the number of grants of status, by nationality, in each year between 1989 and 2018. The chart flows horizontally from left to right, with an individual 'stream' for each nationality. Not all nationalities are shown; only those with high numbers of grants.

The height of each stream represents the number of grants in a given year. In each year, the streams are ordered from the nationality with the most grants at the top, to the one with the fewest at the bottom.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Meaning the fewest of the nationalities which are shown.

# WHICH COUNTRIES DO REFUGEES COME TO THE UK FROM?

This chart shows the number of grants of asylum or other forms of humanitarian protection, by refugees' country of origin, in each year since 1989. The height of each 'stream' represents the number of grants of asylum to that nationality in a given year. In each year, the streams are ranked from top to bottom, by number of grants. Not all nationalities are shown.



**Technical notes:** Grants here includes 1) grants of refugee status (under the 1951 UN Convention and 1967 Protocol) on initial decision, 2) grants of other humanitarian leave to enter and/or remain in the UK, and 3) people resettled to the UK under specific schemes. Humanitarian protection includes exceptional leave (ELR) (pre-2004), and humanitarian protection (HP) and discretionary leave to remain (DLR) (2004 onwards). Resettled people includes those resettled under the Orderly Departure Programme, the Mandate Scheme, the Gateway Protection Programme, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme. 'Refugees' here encompasses those granted other forms of humanitarian leave. 'Country of origin' is used synonymously with nationality. **Source:** Home Office, *Asylum statistics 1997, 2007* (archived); tables 3.1 and 3.2. Home Office, *Immigration statistics quarterly*: table as\_05 and as\_19\_q

## 2.6 How long do asylum applications take?

There are different measures of the time it takes to process asylum applications and the backlog of cases that has built up. Two measures that have been the focus of attention in recent years are the number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision and the number of cases awaiting conclusion. Since 2001 the attention shifted from the former to the latter, as a backlog of cases awaiting an initial decision in 2001 became a backlog of cases awaiting conclusion in 2006.

In June 2010, the Home Office introduced a new time series for measuring the backlog of asylum applications, based on the UK Border Agency (UKBA) administrative database. This new series counts the number of applications for asylum lodged since 1 April 2006 which are still under consideration at the end of each quarter. It includes cases pending an initial decision (whether for more or less than six months) and those pending further judicial appeal, but excludes those who have lodged a judicial review.

**Chart 7: Pending asylum cases received since April 2006, 000s**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. 'Pending' cases are those asylum applications, including fresh claims, lodged since 1 April 2006 which are still under consideration at the end of the reference period.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_01\_q

According to the new series, the total number of pending asylum cases received since 2006 was 29,016 at the end of December 2018. This was around 4,500 more than at the end of December 2017 and was the highest number of pending cases at the end of any quarter since the new series started in June 2010.

## 2.7 How many dependents accompany asylum seekers?

In 2018 the total number of dependants accompanying or subsequently joining main asylum applicants prior to an initial decision being made was 8,073, compared with 7,888 in 2017. Including dependants, the

total number of applicants for asylum received during 2018 was 37,453, up by 9% from 2017 (34,435) but down by 6% from 2015 (39,968).

In 2016 the number of main applicants and dependants was 1.27 times the number of main applicants alone. This ratio has been relatively stable over time: typically there is around one dependent for every four main applicants for asylum in each year.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.8 Where do asylum seekers live?

The only data available on the location of asylum seekers is for those who are receiving government support. Data is available by region and Local Authority.

These figures capture asylum seekers who are being supported by the state under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Section 95 support is a weekly stipend which is means-tested, so it is not received by asylum seekers who have sufficient means of their own.

Most of these supported asylum seekers are also provided with accommodation. The asylum seeker is not given a choice as to location and the Home Office's policy is to disperse them around the country.

At the end of December 2018:

- There were 44,258 asylum seekers receiving section 95 support in the UK, of whom 41,309 were living in dispersal accommodation.<sup>8</sup>
- The North East had the highest number of asylum seekers relative to its population (1 supported asylum seeker for every 550 inhabitants), while the South-East had the lowest relative number (1 for every 14,670 inhabitants).
- Glasgow was the local authority with the most supported asylum seekers (1 for every 153 inhabitants), followed by Stockton-on-Tees (1/215) and Middlesbrough (1/216).
- 190 of the 392 local authorities listed (48%) contained no supported asylum seekers.<sup>9</sup>

The full list of supported asylum seekers by region and local authority can be found in the online Annex (an Excel file).

<sup>7</sup> [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_01 and as\_02

<sup>8</sup> [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_16\_q

<sup>9</sup> Some local authorities in Northern Ireland have been grouped here so the total may not match other lists of local authorities.

## 3. Resettlement

### 3.1 What is resettlement?

The previous section dealt with applications for asylum by people already in the UK. The UK can also grant asylum or other forms of humanitarian protection to people living outside the UK, who are then resettled to the UK.

Resettlement to the UK operates through different schemes, rather than one overarching system. As at March 2018, there were four resettlement schemes in operation:

- Gateway Protection Programme (GPP) (2004- present)
- Mandate Resettlement Scheme (1995- present)
- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) (2014 – present)
- Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) (2016 – present).

All four schemes operate in partnership with UNHCR, which processes asylum applications and determines refugee status before passing candidates onto the UK Government for selection for one of the schemes.

The GPP and Mandate Scheme are worldwide and the latter is for recognised refugees who have a close family member in the UK willing to accommodate them.

The VPRS is specifically for Syrian nationals and the VCRS is for children from the Middle East and North Africa.

### 3.2 How many people are resettled to the UK?

Between the start of 2014 and the end of 2018, 19,881 people were resettled to the UK under the four schemes listed above. During the same period, 52,637 people were granted asylum or another form of humanitarian leave to remain through the UK’s in-country asylum process.<sup>10</sup>

This means that resettlement accounted for just over one quarter (27%) of the people granted humanitarian protection in the UK in the last five years (2014-2018).

Of those resettled since 2014, the majority (14,945 people) came through the VPRS. The VCRS resettled 1,258 people during this time. Half (49%) of all those resettled since 2014 were children.

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<sup>10</sup> [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, as\_20\_q and as\_02

The GPP and Mandate schemes have been in operation for longer: since 2004 and 2008, respectively. In total, the GPP has resettled 9,158 individuals (an average of 611 per year) and the Mandate scheme, 419 (an average of 38 per year).

Historically, the UK's policy on resettlement has been to introduce specific resettlement schemes in response to particular humanitarian crises. The Refugee Council offers a summary of previous resettlement schemes in the UK:

“The UK has also received refugees through specific programmes in response to emergency situations, including 42,000 Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda from 1972-74, 22,500 Vietnamese displaced persons from 1979-92, over 2,500 Bosnians in the early 1990s, and over 4,000 Kosovars in 1999.”

Refugee Council (2004) [Resettling to the UK: The Gateway Protection Programme](#)

The VPRS target is to resettle 20,000 Syrians by 2020. The VCRS target is 3,000 people from the Middle East and North Africa, including children and their families by 2020.<sup>11</sup>

### Calais clearance: the ‘Dubs amendment’

As at the end of January 2018, “over 220” unaccompanied children had been resettled from elsewhere in Europe under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the ‘Dubs amendment’). As at January 2018, had been resettled.<sup>12</sup>

Between October 2016 and the end of 2018, the UK resettled a further 549 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had family in the UK from elsewhere in the EU in response to the clearance of camps around Calais.<sup>13</sup>

## 3.3 Where do resettled people live?

The number of people resettled under the VPRS is available by region and Local Authority. These are Syrian nationals.

Northern Ireland had the most resettled Syrians, relative to its population (1 resettled for every 1,500 inhabitants), followed by Scotland (1 for every 2,100 inhabitants). Clackmannanshire was the local authority with the most resettled Syrians relative to its population: 1 for every 598 inhabitants).

The full list of Syrians resettled since 2014 by region and local authority can be found in the online Annex (an Excel file).

<sup>11</sup> [HC169822](#), 06 September 2018

<sup>12</sup> See, for example [HC208393](#), 21 January 2019.

<sup>13</sup> See [HC198760](#), 12 December 2018



## 4. Asylum in the European Union

### 4.1 Asylum applications in EU countries

The number of asylum applications in EU countries has increased during the last five years. This increase has been partly, but not wholly, driven by the refugee crisis arising from the Syrian civil war.

Chart 8 below shows the number of people applying for asylum in EU countries in each month from January 2009 to September 2018. These figures include both main applicants and dependents.

**Chart 8: Total monthly asylum applications in EU countries, 000s**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. Figures on asylum applications in Croatia are included from January 2013; however, the numbers are small (see table below). Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex: monthly data [[migr\\_asyappctzm](#)]

The total number of people applying for asylum in EU countries increased from a monthly average of 21,000 in the year ending September 2010 to 53,000 in the year ending September 2018.

Asylum applications in EU countries reached their highest level in October 2015 at 172,000, falling to 101,000 in January 2016. They increased again to 138,000 in August 2016 before falling to a low of 48,000 in December 2017.

The table below shows the number of asylum applications received in European Union countries during the last five calendar years. Total asylum applications in EU countries increased from 431,100 in 2013 to 1.32 million in 2015, but fell again to 712,200 in 2017.

In 2017, Germany received the largest number of asylum applicants among EU countries (222,600), followed by Italy (128,900), France (99,300), Greece (58,700), and Spain (46,600). Together, these top five countries received 77% of asylum applications in the EU28.

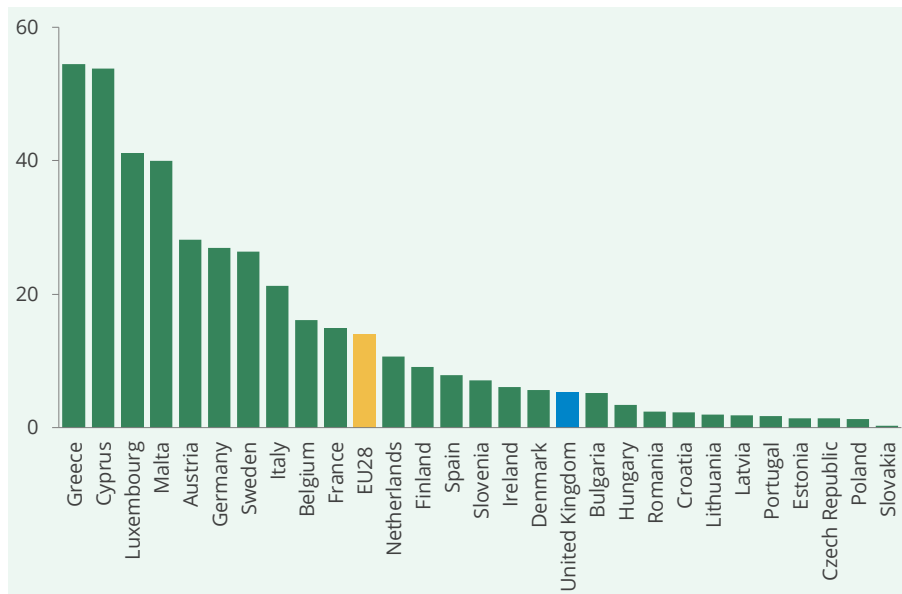
<b>ASYLUM APPLICATIONS</b>					
EU28 countries, 2013-17					
Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Austria	17,500	28,000	88,200	42,300	24,700
Belgium	21,000	22,700	44,700	18,300	18,300
Bulgaria	7,100	11,100	20,400	19,400	3,700
Croatia	1,100	500	200	2,200	1,000
Cyprus	1,300	1,700	2,300	2,900	4,600
Czech Republic	700	1,100	1,500	1,500	1,400
Denmark	7,200	14,700	20,900	6,200	3,200
Estonia	100	200	200	200	200
Finland	3,200	3,600	32,300	5,600	5,000
France	66,300	64,300	76,200	84,300	99,300
Germany	126,700	202,600	476,500	745,200	222,600
Greece	8,200	9,400	13,200	51,100	58,700
Hungary	18,900	42,800	177,100	29,400	3,400
Ireland	900	1,500	3,300	2,200	2,900
Italy	26,600	64,600	83,500	123,000	128,900
Latvia	200	400	300	400	400
Lithuania	400	400	300	400	500
Luxembourg	1,100	1,200	2,500	2,200	2,400
Malta	2,300	1,400	1,800	1,900	1,800
Netherlands	13,100	24,500	45,000	20,900	18,200
Poland	15,200	8,000	12,200	12,300	5,000
Portugal	500	400	900	1,500	1,800
Romania	1,500	1,500	1,300	1,900	4,800
Slovakia	400	300	300	100	200
Slovenia	300	400	300	1,300	1,500
Spain	4,500	5,600	14,800	15,800	36,600
Sweden	54,300	81,200	162,500	28,800	26,300
United Kingdom	30,600	32,800	40,200	39,700	34,800
<b>EU15</b>	<b>381,600</b>	<b>557,200</b>	<b>1,104,600</b>	<b>1,186,900</b>	<b>683,700</b>
<b>EU25</b>	<b>421,400</b>	<b>613,900</b>	<b>1,301,000</b>	<b>1,237,400</b>	<b>702,700</b>
<b>EU27</b>	<b>430,000</b>	<b>626,500</b>	<b>1,322,600</b>	<b>1,258,700</b>	<b>711,200</b>
<b>EU28</b>	<b>431,100</b>	<b>627,000</b>	<b>1,322,800</b>	<b>1,260,900</b>	<b>712,200</b>

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and may not sum to the totals shown due to independent rounding.

Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr\\_asyappctza](#)]

**Chart 9: Asylum applications per 10,000 population in EU countries, 2017**













Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. Population is for 1 Jan 2017. Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr\\_asyappctza](#)], Population by age and sex [[demo\\_pjan](#)]

Chart 9 shows the number of asylum applications in EU countries per 10,000 population in 2017. During this period Greece had the largest number of asylum applications per 10,000 people (54), followed by Cyprus (54), Luxembourg (41), Malta (40), and Austria (28).

In 2017, there were five asylum applications for every 10,000 people resident in the UK. Across the EU28 there were 14 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. The UK is therefore below the average among EU countries for asylum applications per head of population, ranking 17<sup>th</sup> among EU28 countries on this measure.

## 4.2 From where do asylum seekers come to the EU?

The table below shows the ten largest groups of foreign nationals applying for asylum in EU countries in 2017. The largest groups were nationals of Syria (105,000), Iraq (51,800), Afghanistan (47,900), Nigeria (41,100), and Pakistan (31,900).

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS BY NATIONALITY			
EU28 countries, 2017			
Nationality	Number	As % of all applications	
Syria	105,035	14.7%	
Afghanistan	51,790	7.3%	
Iraq	47,930	6.7%	
Pakistan	41,100	5.8%	
Nigeria	31,940	4.5%	
Iran	25,745	3.6%	
Eritrea	25,120	3.5%	
Albania	20,860	2.9%	
Russia	18,325	2.6%	
Somalia	17,000	2.4%	
<b>All applications</b>	<b>712,215</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	-

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Source: Eurostat, Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data [[migr\\_asyappctza](#)]

The top ten countries of nationality for asylum applicants in the EU accounted for 54% of all asylum applications in 2017.

## 4.3 Grants of asylum in EU countries

The table below shows first instance decisions on asylum applications in EU countries in 2017, including the number of grants and refusals. Here, grants include all positive decisions on asylum applications, not just those granted refugee status.

In 2017, Germany granted the largest number of positive asylum decisions among EU countries (261,600), followed by France (32,600), Italy (31,800), Sweden (26,800), and Austria (25,200).

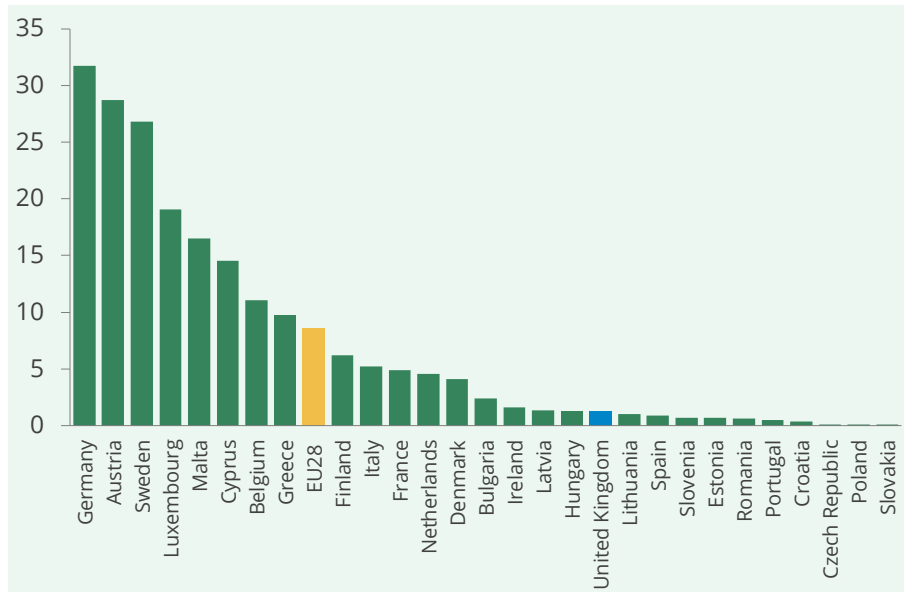
<b>FIRST INSTANCE DECISIONS ON ASYLUM APPLICATIONS</b>			
EU28 countries, 2017			
Country	Grants	Refusals	Total
Austria	25,200	20,000	45,200
Belgium	12,600	11,500	24,000
Bulgaria	1,700	3,000	4,700
Croatia	200	300	500
Cyprus	1,200	1,200	2,500
Czech Republic	100	1,000	1,200
Denmark	2,400	4,500	6,900
Estonia	100	100	200
Finland	3,400	3,700	7,200
France	32,600	78,400	110,900
Germany	261,600	262,600	524,200
Greece	10,500	14,100	24,500
Hungary	1,300	2,900	4,200
Ireland	800	100	900
Italy	31,800	46,400	78,200
Latvia	300	100	400
Lithuania	300	100	400
Luxembourg	1,100	600	1,700
Malta	800	300	1,100
Netherlands	7,800	8,100	15,900
Poland	500	2,100	2,600
Portugal	500	500	1,000
Romania	1,200	800	2,100
Slovakia	100	0	100
Slovenia	200	100	200
Spain	4,100	8,000	12,100
Sweden	26,800	34,300	61,100
United Kingdom	8,600	19,300	27,800
<b>EU15</b>	<b>429,600</b>	<b>511,900</b>	<b>941,600</b>
<b>EU25</b>	<b>434,500</b>	<b>519,900</b>	<b>954,300</b>
<b>EU28</b>	<b>437,500</b>	<b>524,100</b>	<b>961,600</b>

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and may not sum to the totals shown due to independent rounding.
3. First instance decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made during the same period.

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)]

**Chart 10: Positive first instance asylum decisions per 10,000 population in EU28 countries, 2017**



Notes: 1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants. 2. First instance decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made during the same period.

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)]

Chart 10 shows the number of positive asylum decisions granted at first instance per 10,000 population in EU countries in 2017. During this period Germany granted the largest number of positive first instance asylum decisions per 10,000 people (32), followed by Austria (29), Sweden (27), Luxembourg (19), and Malta (17).

In 2017, the UK granted two positive asylum decisions at first instance for every 10,000 people. Across the EU28 there were 13 such grants for every 10,000 people. The UK is therefore below the average among EU countries for positive first instance asylum grants per head of population, ranking 18<sup>th</sup> among EU28 countries on this measure.

## 4.4 Recognition rates by nationality in the EU

The table below shows recognition rates at first instance decision for the largest national groups whose asylum applications to EU countries were decided in 2017.

The recognition rate is the share of positive decisions in the total number of asylum decisions at a particular stage of the asylum procedure. As the Eurostat [glossary of statistics](#) explains:

Calculation of the overall recognition rate for all stages of the asylum procedure cannot be made due to lacking information linking the outcomes at first instance and final on appeal for each person concerned.

The figures here relate to the first instance decision and do not include decisions made on asylum appeals.

<b>RECOGNITION RATE AT FIRST INSTANCE ASYLUM DECISION</b>				
Top 20 nationalities by number of asylum decisions, EU28, 2017				
Nationality	Grants	Refusals	<i>Recognition rate</i>	Total FI decisions
Afghanistan	82,285	94,175	46.6%	176,460
Syria	136,595	8,340	94.2%	144,940
Iraq	55,655	42,840	56.5%	98,495
Nigeria	9,090	31,290	22.5%	40,380
Iran	21,825	18,360	54.3%	40,185
Pakistan	4,720	34,975	11.9%	39,700
Albania	1,600	27,530	5.5%	29,130
Eritrea	25,385	2,220	92.0%	27,605
Somalia	17,645	7,580	70.0%	25,225
Russia	3,830	17,125	18.3%	20,955
Bangladesh	2,815	13,175	17.6%	15,990
Turkey	5,220	9,775	34.8%	14,995
Unknown	8,050	6,100	56.9%	14,150
Guinea	4,035	9,990	28.8%	14,025
Gambia	3,165	10,755	22.7%	13,920
Ukraine	2,550	10,540	19.5%	13,095
Armenia	1,185	10,715	10.0%	11,900
Sudan	6,660	4,445	60.0%	11,105
Ethiopia	3,340	7,460	30.9%	10,800
Kosovo <sup>A</sup>	865	9,125	8.7%	9,990
<b>All nationalities</b>	<b>437,555</b>	<b>524,055</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>961,610</b>

**Notes**

1. Figures are for main applicants and dependants.
  2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five and may not sum to the totals shown due to independent rounding.
  3. First instance decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made during the same period.
  4. Excludes asylum applicants of unknown nationality.
- A. Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99.

Source: Eurostat, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex: quarterly data [[migr\\_asydcfstq](#)]

In 2017, 94% of Syrian nationals were granted a positive asylum decision at first instance. By contrast, less than 6% of Albanian nationals were granted a positive asylum decision at first instance. Among all nationalities the recognition rate at first instance was 46%.

## 5. Appendix

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS AND INITIAL DECISIONS, MAIN APPLICANTS 1984-2018						
Year	Applications	Initial decisions	Total grants	Grants		Refusals
				Asylum grants	Other grants	
1984	2,905	1,431	1,084	453	631	347
1985	4,389	2,635	2,133	574	1,559	502
1986	4,266	2,983	2,450	348	2,102	533
1987	4,256	2,432	1,797	266	1,531	635
1988	3,998	2,702	2,206	628	1,578	496
1989	11,640	6,955	6,070	2,210	3,860	890
1990	26,205	4,025	3,320	920	2,400	705
1991	44,840	6,075	2,695	505	2,190	3,380
1992	24,605	34,900	16,440	1,115	15,325	18,465
1993	22,370	23,405	12,715	1,590	11,125	10,690
1994	32,831	20,988	4,487	827	3,660	16,501
1995	43,963	27,006	5,705	1,294	4,411	21,301
1996	29,642	38,962	7,293	2,239	5,054	31,669
1997	32,502	36,044	7,100	3,986	3,114	28,944
1998	46,014	31,571	9,255	5,346	3,909	22,316
1999	71,158	21,307	10,283	7,816	2,467	11,024
2000	80,315	97,547	21,868	10,373	11,495	75,679
2001	71,027	120,949	31,641	11,449	20,192	89,308
2002	84,132	83,540	28,408	8,272	20,136	55,132
2003	49,407	64,941	11,074	3,863	7,211	53,867
2004	33,960	46,021	5,558	1,563	3,995	40,463
2005	25,712	27,393	4,739	1,941	2,798	22,654
2006	23,608	20,930	4,472	2,168	2,304	16,458
2007	23,431	21,775	5,743	3,545	2,198	16,032
2008	25,932	19,398	5,893	3,727	2,166	13,505
2009	24,487	24,287	6,742	4,188	2,554	17,545
2010	17,916	20,261	5,195	3,488	1,707	15,066
2011	19,865	17,380	5,649	4,312	1,337	11,731
2012	21,843	16,774	6,059	5,135	924	10,715
2013	23,584	17,543	6,542	5,736	806	11,001
2014	25,033	19,782	8,150	7,266	884	11,632
2015	32,733	28,622	11,421	9,975	1,446	17,201
2016	30,747	24,895	8,465	7,137	1,328	16,430
2017	26,547	21,269	6,779	5,957	822	14,490
2018	29,380	21,119	6,933	5,558	1,375	14,186



### Notes to Table

1. Figures are for main applicants only. 2. Other grants include humanitarian protection, discretionary leave, and grants under family and private life rules, which relate to the introduction of a new approach to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, from 9 July 2012; Leave Outside the Rules, which was introduced for those refused asylum from 1 April 2013; and UASC leave, which was introduced for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children refused asylum but eligible for temporary leave from 1 April 2013. From April 2003, exceptional leave to remain was replaced with humanitarian protection and discretionary leave. 3. Figures from 1989 to 1993 are rounded to the nearest five and may not sum due to independent rounding. 4. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. 5. Some people refused asylum at initial decision may be granted leave to remain following an appeal.

Source: [Home Office Immigration Statistics, year ending Dec 2018](#), Asylum Tables, Table as\_01

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