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Introduction

The EASO Quarterly Asylum Report is produced by EASO’s Centre for Information, Documentation and Analysis. It aims to provide an overview of key asylum trends by analysing data regarding applications for international protection made by asylum seekers and decisions\(^1\) made on those applications by European Member States and Associated countries\(^2\).

The analysis is based on validated, public data\(^3\) submitted to Eurostat as per Art.4 of European Regulation 862/2007.

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\(^1\) Data on first instance decisions is provided quarterly by Member States and Associated countries to Eurostat with a 2-month deadline for submission, explaining the delay with which EASO reports based on this data can be provided.

\(^2\) Referred to as “EU+” throughout the present document. Data are available for EU MS and NO and CH.

\(^3\) Unless otherwise specified.
Summary

Trends in applications for international protection

- The total number of asylum applicants in EU+ in the 1st quarter 2013 (94 560) was 15% lower than in the 4th quarter 2012, but significantly higher in comparison with the 1st quarter of 2012 (+17%) and 2011 (+23%).

- As in the last quarter of 2012, Western Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo and FYROM), Syrian and Russian citizens topped the ranking of those applying for asylum in Europe. In the 1st quarter of 2013, the total asylum applicants from Western Balkans were 11 810 (12% of the total), from Syria 8 760 (9%) and 8 645 from Russia (9%).

- In comparison with the previous quarter, in the 1st quarter of 2013 Western Balkan and Syrian applicants dropped (-44% for Western Balkans, -15% for Syria) while Russian applicants recorded a quarterly change of +1%. The drop in applications from Western Balkan countries was in line with a highly seasonal pattern seen in recent years.

- The largest increase in numbers of asylum applications in any EU+ country was in Hungary (+190% in the 1st quarter of 2013). The highest absolute numbers of asylum seekers was reported by Germany (21 115 – around 22% of the total asylum applications made in the EU+ overall), France (15 971 – around 17% of the total) and Sweden (9 740, around 10% of the total).

Trends in decisions on applications for international protection at first instance

- In the 1st quarter of 2013, the number of first instance decisions issued in EU+ reached 76 205. The highest number of decisions was recorded in: Germany (14 010, 19% of the total), France (12 875, 17%), Sweden (9 365, 12%), Italy (7 655, 10%), United Kingdom (6 695, 9%).

- The highest first instance protection rate (i.e. the proportion of positive decisions made under the Geneva Convention, subsidiary protection or national humanitarian legal regimes) was in Malta (88%, 535 decisions in total), followed by Italy (77%, 7 655 decisions in total), Portugal (62%, 65 decisions in total) and Bulgaria (64%, 255 decisions in total).

- The average first instance positive decision rate in EU+ was 35% overall in the 1st quarter (in line with the annual average for 2012 of 28%); yet, continued to vary considerably by country of origin: it was around 90% for Syrian applicants; 50% for Afghan applicants and 23% for Russian applicants.
Slovakia (67%), Poland (60%) and Italy (54%) were the only EU+ countries to use national humanitarian protection in a majority of the positive decisions they made.

The number of pending cases (i.e. applications for protection where a decision had not yet been made) at the end of March 2013 (295,887) showed a 2% increase compared to December 2012 (289,025) overall. Germany (85,395), Greece (39,870) and France (27,510) registered the highest number of pending cases in Europe at that date.

Key trends in focus

- **Western Balkans** – a large seasonal drop in applications took place, but the Western Balkan flow was still the largest in the EU (12% of all applications). Kosovars formed the largest component of the flow, with large numbers applying particularly in nearby Hungary.

- **Inflow from Syria** – There was a slight decrease of Syrian asylum applicants in European countries in the 1st quarter overall; however the application numbers remain quite high in comparison with the average for 2012.

- **Inflow from Russia** – A significant spike in applications occurred from Russian citizens in the 1st quarter. The vast majority of these new Russian applicants in Europe were from the Caucasus region and applied mainly in Poland and Germany.
Section 1: Trends in applications for international protection

Numbers of asylum applicants in EU+

The number of asylum applicants in Europe dropped 15% in Q1 2013 (94,560 applicants) from the very high peak of applications seen in the previous quarter (111,900). The upward trend observed throughout 2012 did not continue. However, in previous years (2008-2012) numbers of applications for international protection can be seen to regularly drop in the first quarter of the year compared to the last quarter. By comparing with the same quarter in previous years these seasonal effects can be mitigated. The number of asylum applicants registered by European countries was significantly higher Q1 2013 compared to the same quarter in 2012 (+17%) and 2011 (+23%).

Figure no 1: Total and new applicants; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013

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*Total applicants: all persons having submitted an application for international protection as defined in Art.2(h) of Directive 2011/95/EU or having been included in such application as a family member. New applicants for international protection (as defined by Art.2(h) of Directive 2011/95/EU) are those who lodged an application for asylum for the first time in a given Member State during the reference period.*
Figure no 2: Total asylum applicants, yearly trend; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013

Main countries of origin of applicants for international protection

Figure no 3: Composition of inflows by main countries of origin; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013

Nationals from Western Balkans countries, Syria, Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan were the five largest groups of asylum applicants registered in the first quarter of 2013 in Europe as a whole, as in Q4 2012. The number of applications from citizens of these countries dropped,
however, in Q1 2013 compared to Q4 2012 (except for Russia - +1%). The biggest drop was for the Western Balkans (-44%), which is far greater than average decrease from the previous quarter for all countries of origin (-15%). However, the absolute number of applicants from the Western Balkans was still higher compared to that registered the same quarter (Q1) in 2012 (+21%), so this sharp recent drop is probably a seasonal effect in a trend that is rising overall, as was the case in previous years (the WB flow has a small peak in March and a large one in October of each year since 2010). The drop in Syrian applicants was slightly lower (-11%) compared to the general trend (-15%).

![Figure no 4: Composition of inflows by main countries of origin, quarterly change; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013](image-url)
The profile (gender and age breakdown) of the asylum applicants differed significantly between countries of origin in the 1st quarter of 2013.

Afghani and Pakistani applicants for international protection in Europe were overwhelmingly young adult males. The vast majority of Pakistani applicants was male aged 18-34. Among Syrian applicants, a relatively high proportion of applicants were also young men, however, given that there was also a relatively large proportion of children and women also present, it is likely that there were also a significant number of families among Syrian applicants.

Among Afghan applicants there is a significant group of adolescent male children (age 14-17), possibly indicating a significant proportion of unaccompanied minors among those applying for asylum.

The profile of the Russian asylum applicants was very different: there were an equal number of men and women in each group which the largest number of persons composed of young children (0-13). This indicates that families make up a high proportion of the Russian applicants.
Where were asylum applications made in Europe?
The bar chart below shows which European countries received the greatest numbers of applications for international protection and the change in numbers of applications from the previous quarter. Germany, France and Sweden were the Top 3 countries of destination in Europe for asylum applicants in Q1. Hungary registered by far the biggest increase in asylum applicants among European countries in 1st quarter of 2013 compared to 4th quarter of 2012, (+1,520, +190%). Bulgaria (+245, +37%), Denmark (+30, +2%), Estonia (+15, +150%), Spain (+500, +75%), The Netherlands (+515, +14%) and Portugal (+20, +36%) registered more applicants as well.

2013 Q1 / 2012 Q4 change of asylum applicants in EU+

Figure no 6: Distribution of the total asylum applicants and change (%) in European destination countries, quarterly trend; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013
### Section 2: Trends in asylum decisions

The chart below indicates in sum the numbers of decisions issued by European countries, the recognition rate\(^5\) (%) and the type of protection afforded\(^6\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Decisions</th>
<th>Positive Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>2770</td>
<td>14.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>14.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>12.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>14.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>12.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>1.525</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>12.875</td>
<td>7.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>2.590</td>
<td>4240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>6.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>9.365</td>
<td>2.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>2.855</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>4.240</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>9.365</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>2.590</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>2.855</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>9.365</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>6.695</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>2.855</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure no 7: First instance decisions and positive decision rates; Source: Eurostat login: 8.8.2013\(^7\)**

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\(^5\) The recognition rate is the sum of the percentage of positive decisions made under one of the three legal regimes described in the next footnote.

\(^6\) The analysis takes into account the type of status granted in regard to Geneva Convention status, Subsidiary Protection status, which are forms of international protection subject to European legislation, and Humanitarian Protection – subject to national legislation.

\(^7\) No data available for NL and RO.
**Numbers of decisions**

In the first quarter of 2013, the number of first instance decisions issued by European countries reached 76,205, which is approximately 7% more than the first quarter of 2012 (71,175). Compared with the previous period however (Q4 2012) the number of first instance decisions decreased by 22% (Q4 2012 – 97,540 first instance decisions)\(^8\).

The highest number of decisions was recorded in: Germany (14,010, 19% of the total), France (12,875, 17% of the total), and Sweden (9,365, 12% of the total), Italy (7,655, 10% of the total), United Kingdom (6,695, 9% of the total), Belgium (5,770, 8% of the total), Austria (4,240, 6% of the total) and Switzerland (3,990, 5% of the total).

**Level of protection accorded**

While the overall level of protection accorded at first instance was 35% (above the annual average of 2012, which was 28%), the proportion of positive protection decisions at first instance made at the level of single states varies widely. This can be due to a number of factors: principally the different countries of origin of applicants requesting asylum and also the nature of the individual claims (and thus, often the profiles of the applicants). Four countries made positive decisions in over 60% of cases: PT (62% of 65 decisions), BG (65%, of 255 decisions), IT (77% of 7,655 decisions) and MT (88% of 535 decisions). Only in Italy were the absolute numbers of applications large, though in Malta the numbers of applications may be considered large compared to the population of the receiving country.

The countries of origin of the applicants may determine high levels of protection – in Malta, for example, applicants were overwhelmingly from states with serious security situations or fundamental rights problems (e.g. Eritrea, Somalia and Syria).

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\(^8\) Due to the time lag between application and decision and because the decision data are not based on cohort data, no estimate can be made as to what proportion of decisions made in Q1 2013 refer to applications made in the same quarter.
The graphs above illustrate the difference between the positive decision rates (Geneva Convention, subsidiary protection and national humanitarian status) afforded to the top countries of origin (based on total number of decisions), starting with first quarter of 2011 and including the period under analysis.

The main outcomes of this comparative analysis are:

1) significant differences in recognition rates for different countries of origin, based on the quite different situations of each;
2) the Syria graph shows that the evolving situation there led to major changes in response at EU level both in type of regime used and recognition rate afforded;
3) the other graphs show that in stable situations the rate and choice of regime does not change greatly over large periods of time but in the last two or three quarters, the rates have increased;
4) Afghanistan had the second highest recognition rate among the top 4, the rate increased to nearly 50% in the 1st quarter 2013.

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9 No data available for NL due to transition to a new information system and Romania
Type of protection given
Q1 saw an increase in the use of the Geneva Convention and Subsidiary Protection regimes compared to the average for 2012. In Europe overall positive Geneva Convention decisions were made in 17% of cases (the annual average in 2012 was 14%), Subsidiary protection 12% (up from 7%), and humanitarian 7% (the same as in 2012). Like recognition rates, the type of protection accorded by each European country varies widely.

Geneva Convention Decision

Slovenia (100%), United Kingdom (83%), France (88%), Ireland (83%), Luxembourg (75%), used the Geneva Convention in a very large proportion of the positive protection decisions they made. Table 1 shows some of the most significant countries of origin of asylum applicants who were granted refugee status during the 1st first quarter of 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European country</th>
<th>Positive decisions</th>
<th>Geneva Convention %</th>
<th>Asylum applicants granted refugee status</th>
<th>Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1.650</td>
<td>960 58%</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>175 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>145 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>80 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35 64%</td>
<td>Burma/Myanmar</td>
<td>25 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2.025</td>
<td>1.790 88%</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>260 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>230 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>155 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25 83%</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>10 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>5 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15 75%</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>5 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>5 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.340</td>
<td>990 74%</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>360 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>235 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>120 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>35 33%</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>15 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>5 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>5 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2.690</td>
<td>2.375 88%</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>450 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>430 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>310 13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table no 1: Proportion of positive decisions issued in selected destination countries using the Geneva Convention, by country of origin of asylum applicants

Subsidiary protection

10 The box on the right of the table shows the main countries of origin of those receiving a positive decision on protection made by Member States under the Geneva Convention
Bulgaria (97%), Latvia and Lithuania (100%) Malta (87%), Portugal (88%) and Sweden (65%) used Subsidiary protection in a large proportion of the positive decisions they made. Table 2 shows the main countries of origin of the applicants.

Table 2: Proportion of positive decisions issued in selected destination countries using Subsidiary Protection, by country of origin of asylum applicants

National protection for humanitarian reasons

Slovakia (67%), Poland (60%) and Italy (54%) were the only European countries to use humanitarian protection in a majority of the positive decisions they made as per their national rules on humanitarian protection.\(^\text{11}\)

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\(^\text{11}\) Slovakia: Act on Aliens, including family reunification with person granted asylum for humanitarian reasons; Poland: asylum applicants that do not meet the criteria for being granted the status of a refugee or the conditions for subsidiary protection may in some cases be covered by national humanitarian protection in the form of a permit for tolerated stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland. A permit for tolerated stay may also be granted if the expulsion might violate the right of family life within the meaning of the Convention for the Protection of Human Right and Fundamental Freedoms, or the right of child set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989 in a manner which may represent a serious threat to their psychophysical development (http://www.udsc.gov.pl/HUMANITARIAN_PROTECTION_-_PERMIT_FOR_TOLERATED_STAY_1736.html); Italy: According to Italian legislation, the art. 32 legislative decree n. 25 of the 2008 (confirmed by the following legislative decree n. 159 of the 2008), in application of European directive 2005/85/CE, assigns Local Commissions the task of deciding asylum claims. In the case of refusal of asylum but in presence of serious reasons, the Local Commission must send the documents to the Questore for the issue of humanitarian residence permit. Local Commission must evaluate the circumstances not only for the request of asylum but also for the acknowledgment of humanitarian permit; while the Questore has only the task to carry out the commission deliberations without some further margin of an independent appraisal on the “humanitarian condition” (http://www.giustizia-amministrativa.it/documentazione/studi_contributi/2009_9_Maddalena_Paliggiano_last_version%20_2.htm).
Backlog

The number of pending cases at the end of March 2013 (295 887)\textsuperscript{12} shows a 2% increase compared to December 2012 (289 025).

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{pending_cases_eu.png}
\caption{Stock of pending cases at the end of each month; Source: Eurostat login: 23.7.2013\textsuperscript{13}}
\end{figure}

At the end of March 2013, Germany (85 395), Greece (39 870) and France (27 510) registered the highest number of pending cases in Europe.

The total number of decisions issued by European countries has a direct impact on the stock of cases still pending at the end of each month (including temporary freezes of case-processing for certain caseloads). An upward trend in pending cases is visible since 2008.

\textsuperscript{12}Includes estimations for: Cyprus (Jan –March 2013), Norway (Jan –March 2013), Romania (February and March 2013) and Spain (March 2013)

\textsuperscript{13}No data available for The Netherlands (2012-2013), Cyprus (May 2011- 2013 Q1excluding Dec 2012), Norway (2013 Q1), Romania (February and March 2013) and Spain (March 2013) In order to present a reliable monthly trend (Q1 2013) we estimated the figures for: Cyprus (2013 Q1), Norway (2013 Q1), Romania (February and March 2013) and Spain (March 2013)
The bar chart above shows the most significant changes in terms of stock of applications by Top 10 countries of origin that occurred during the first quarter of 2013 compared with Q4 2012.

The number of Russian applicants with pending cases significantly increased in the 1st quarter 2013 in Europe as a whole by +17%, in: Germany (+55%), France (+18%) and Poland (+8%). This was caused by the large influx of Russian applicants, as shown in the 1st section of this analysis. A decrease was registered in Austria (-5%) and Belgium (-13%).

In terms of countries of origin the highest decrease in pending cases was registered for Serbian applicants in: Germany (-14%), Sweden (-30%) and Austria (-13%).
Afghanistan and Pakistan remained by far the largest caseload of persons that had not yet received a decision on their application at the end of March 2013, despite the fact that there were significant increases in applications from citizens of Syria and Russia in recent quarters.
Compared with the fourth quarter of 2012, Romania (+157%), Hungary (+126%), Portugal (+100%), Estonia (+67%) and Bulgaria (+38%) registered a significant increase in pending cases in the first three months of 2013. Most of those countries reported also a higher number of total asylum applicants in the first quarter of 2013.

In the period under review Malta (-71%), Slovakia (-41%), Lithuania (-24%), Latvia (-11%) and Belgium (-9%) registered the largest decreases in terms of pending cases.

15 No data available for The Netherlands, Cyprus, Norway, Romania (presented data concerns the end of January 2013) and Spain (presented data concerns the end of February 2013).
Section 3: Key trends in focus

Western Balkans
WB citizens continued as the largest group of Asylum applicants in European countries in the 1st quarter of 2013 at 12.9% of the total. This was a significant drop from the 19% of Q4 2012.

Figure no 13: Western Balkan applicants in European destination countries, quarterly trend; Source: Eurostat login: 1.8.2013

The sharp Q1 drop was in line with the historical seasonal trend of the last three years as shown in the graph above.
HU, UK, DK and SE were the only countries to see increases in numbers of applications of WB nationals compared to the previous quarter, where absolute numbers were significant. In the case of HU, the rise was very large (223%) and was overwhelmingly determined by applications from Kosovars (95%)\textsuperscript{16}. DE and SE saw a very significant drop in applications from WB citizens in line with the traditional seasonal trend and after focusing specifically on bringing down processing times for WB applicants begun in the previous quarter.

\textsuperscript{16} As Kosovo is the only non visa-liberalised WB state in the region, one factor determining this trend may be the abuse of the HU asylum system as a way of circumventing border controls to enter the Schengen area, after the entry into force of a law in HU at the beginning of 2013 which made detention of asylum seekers much less frequent. See Frontex FRAN Quarterly Q1 2013 http://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q1_2013.pdf
Figure no 15: Composition of Western Balkan inflows in European destination countries; Source: Eurostat login: 1.8.2013

While all WB countries saw drops in numbers of applications in Q1 2013, unusually, applications for asylum from Kosovars continued almost unabated.

In comparison with the last quarter of 2012, the proportion of Kosovars thus rose significantly (from 18% in the last quarter of 2012) to 30%, making it the single largest country of origin in the region. The proportion of Serbs dropped from 40% in Q4 2012 to 29% in Q1 2013 overall. Among the main European receiving countries, the proportion of asylum WB applicants from Serbia was still highest in Germany (48%) and Sweden (36%).
Figure no 16: Composition of Western Balkan inflows; Source: Eurostat login: 1.8.2013

Decision rates

Despite a rejection rate of 96% overall for claims from WB asylum applicants in 2012, some positive decisions continued to be made. Recognition of claims from WB citizens was higher in Q1 than the annual levels for the previous year, but with a different composition: a lower Geneva Convention rate and higher level of decisions issued for national humanitarian reasons.

Figure no 17: First Instance positive decision rate by type of protection accorded, quarter rate; Source: Eurostat login: 1.8.2013
Figure no 18: First instance positive decision rate by type of protection accorded, annual rate; Source: Eurostat login: 1.8.2013

Pending cases

At end of March 2013, 28 600 applicants from Western Balkans were still awaiting a decision. Although Albanian (+20%) and Kosovar cases increased (+11%) during the first three months of 2013), the comparison between the stock of pending cases by single country of origin at end of March 2013 with the stock of the end of December 2012 shows a general decrease of backlog related to Western Balkan applicants.
Western Balkan pending cases in EU+, at the end of March 2013

Montenegro FYROM Serbia Albania Bosnia and Hez. Kosovo

- 2.000 4.000 6.000 8.000 10.000 12.000

Figure no 19: Composition of pending cases; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013
Syria
In the 1st quarter of 2013, the numbers of applications from Syrians dropped off somewhat from the peaks reached at the end of 2012. This was despite a very large rise in the numbers of Syrians claiming asylum in countries neighbouring its borders (now approaching 2 million people in total). Unvalidated data for the 2nd quarter of 2013 would seem to indicate that the overall trend is one of continued decline from the high (in European terms) levels seen at the end of 2012. It is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding possible correlations between influx in the region and asylum claims made in Europe under current conditions and any significant change in the volatile situation in Syria itself could change trends seen so far very significantly. The situation thus merits continued attention.

![Graph: Syrian asylum applicants in EU+, Jan 2011 - May 2013](image)

Figure no 20: Syrian total and new asylum applicants; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013 and EASO unvalidated data for April and May 2013

According to Frontex, it has become more and more difficult for Syrians to access the EU and associated countries (mainly due to the difficulty of obtaining visas and travel

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17 Legend of events: • Deployment Army: First reports of the government deploying the army, including tanks, in order to suppress the opposition; • Damascus attack: by the end of 2011 the violence reached the capital, including an attack on a military base near Damascus, violence against foreign Embassies and a dual bombing in the capital killing 44 people, which was the first in a series of blasts in Damascus; • UN Civil War/ICRC Internal armed conflict: UN Official declares in June 2012 that Syria is in a state of Civil War; In July, ICRC officially declared the situation to be an internal armed conflict.

documents in the country itself), which is almost uniformly a pre-requisite of the ability to apply for asylum in the EU. This possibly explains the decline in numbers of applicants in Europe in the 1st quarter 2013, though the proportion of the asylum applications made in the EU immediately after crossing an external border is not, under current data collection practices, known.

![Total Asylum applicants in EU+ countries, Jan 2012 - May 2013](image)

**Figure no 21: Distribution of Syrian asylum applicants in European destination countries; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013**

In 2012, Germany and Sweden recorded around 64% of the total Syrian applicants in Europe. Comparing the monthly average in 2012 with 2013 (three months from January to March), in Germany it increased around 49% (from 517 to 773) and in Sweden, it increased around 29% (from 659 to 851).

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19 On the basis of the stock of valid residence permits at the end of 2011 (Eurostat, ER 862/2007 art.6), Germany had by far the largest Syrian diaspora in Europe (35%) followed at some distance by Greece (13%), Sweden (9%), Italy (8%) and France (7%).
**Decision Trends**

In the 1st quarter of 2013, the general overview shows a slight decrease of the recognition rate issued by European countries concerning Geneva Convention and subsidiary protection rates. This may be the result of a number of factors such as, *inter alia*, Dublin transfers and/or false claims of nationality by irregular immigrants from other countries of origin. In the first half of 2012, European countries started applying Article 15 b and c of the Qualification Directive, which caused a decrease in the Geneva Convention rate of positive decisions, but not in absolute numbers. In Germany, the Subsidiary Protection rate increased while the positive decision rate remained quite stable. In France, the Geneva Convention rate increased slightly and Subsidiary Protection rate decreased. In Switzerland, the recognition rate for Syrian nationals increased to 100% in the first quarter 2013.

European countries recorded a decreasing number of Syrian pending cases in March 2013 as a result of the decreasing number of Syrian applicants and the increasing number of decisions after a freeze of case-processing in a number of MS due to the uncertain evolution of the situation in Syria. In April-June the number of pending cases is estimated to have been stable.
Syrians subject of pending cases in EU+, Jan 2011 - June 2013

Figure no 23: Stock of pending cases related to Syrian asylum applicants at the end of each month;
Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013 and EASO unvalidated data for April to June 2013
After a gradual increase in total as well as new applicants over 2012, from January 2013, the numbers of applications by Russian citizens in the EU saw a considerable increase due to a spike in March 2013 and – according to unvalidated data – then rose exponentially after March with an additional 3 000 applicants in May 2013 - a 119% increase compared to February 2013.

Figure no 24: Russian total and new asylum applicants; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013 and EASO unvalidated data for April and May 2013

From January to March 2013, nearly half of Russian applicants lodged their applications in Poland or Germany – each of these receiving more than 2 500 applicants. This was considerably higher than in any of the other European countries: France, Austria, and Belgium followed with between 1 300 and 500 applicants.

According to information received from European countries and Frontex at a Practical Cooperation meeting organized recently by EASO on the subject, the vast majority of new Russian applicants in Europe were from the Northern Caucasus. However, despite continuing human rights concerns in Chechnya and a fragile stability and security situation in Dagestan, the situation in the Northern Caucasus does not seem to have changed drastically enough within the reporting period to explain the very significant increase in applications for asylum made in recent months. At the socio-economic level, the situation continues to be poor for the majority of the population in the Northern Caucasus, with very high
unemployment rates. It is possible that the new flow of applicants from the Caucasus are instead attracted by the benefits they believe are available in some European countries, particularly DE, and the relatively close physical proximity of PL and DE to the Russian border and relatively easy access by train.

**Decision rates**

In Q1 2013, a quarter (24%) of European first instance asylum decisions regarding Russian applicants resulted in positive outcomes, that is grants of refugee or subsidiary protection status, or protection for national humanitarian reasons.

![Decision rates on Russian asylum applicants in EU+, 2011 - 2013](image)

*Figure no 25: First instance positive decision rates by type of protection accorded, quarterly trend; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013*

Close to 18% of all first instance decisions resulted in grants of refugee status, while for subsidiary protection status the share was notably lower, at just 3%. In absolute terms, the highest number of asylum decisions (positive and negative decisions) in 1st quarter 2013 was recorded in France (865), followed by Germany (805), Austria (800), Belgium (350) and Poland (325). Altogether, these five EU Member States accounted for 84% of the total number of decisions issued in Europe related to Russian applicants.
In Germany, the overall recognition rate decreased in the first 3 months of 2013 as a large proportion of the asylum claims from the new influx from the Caucasus were judged to be unfounded.

Figure no 26: First instance positive decision rates by type of protection accorded, quarterly trend; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013
In Poland, the positive decision rate increased from 11% in 2011 to 30% in 1st quarter 2013. This increase derived from the increase of national humanitarian protection rate (22%, in comparison with the European level, which was 3%).

Pending cases

![Graph showing Russian pending cases in EU at the end of each month](image)

**Figure no 27: Stock of pending cases related to Russian asylum applicants at the end of in each month; Source: Eurostat login: 15.7.2013 and EASO unvalidated data for April and May 2013**

Despite a 2% decrease in March 2013, the general overview of backlog shows an increase from 15 000 pending cases in 2011 to 20 000 estimated pending cases at the end of May 2013. This is likely to be due to the fact that, though the most affected European countries increased resources dedicated to dealing with the increased applications from Russian citizens, the subsequent massive increase in this number from April reduced the effects of such measures. The pending cases of Russian applicants significantly increased in the 1st quarter 2013 in Europe as a whole by +17%, in: Germany (+55%), France (+18%) and Poland (+8%).