

PRESS RELEASE

PR 08/2014

7 July 2014

EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union in 2013

Today EASO released its **yearly reference report: The Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2013**. The Report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of asylum in the EU, by examining requests for international protection to the EU, analysing application and decision data, and focusing on some of the most important countries of origin of applicants for international protection. In particular, **the report focuses on three asylum flows that underline the very different characteristics of asylum applicants in the EU: Syria, Russian Federation and Western Balkans countries**.

In 2013, 435,760 persons applied for international protection in the European Union - the highest number of applications for international protection since the beginning of EU data collection in 2008 – and represented an increase of 30% compared to 2012. The **highest numbers** of asylum applicants were recorded for citizens of **Syria, Russian Federation and the Western Balkan countries** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro and Serbia) while the main receiving Member States (MS) were Germany, France, Sweden, United Kingdom and Italy.

The **overall recognition rate** at first instance at EU 28 level (including humanitarian protection) stood at **34.4%**, with refugee status being granted to 49,710 persons, subsidiary protection to 45,535 persons and humanitarian protection to 17,665 persons. The highest recognition rates were noted for Syrians, Eritreans and stateless persons. At the end of 2013, more than 352 000 persons were awaiting a decision on their asylum application in the EU 28; the volume of pending applications therefore increased by +33% compared to the previous year.

With a 109% increase in the number of applications for international protection, **Syria** became the main country of origin of asylum seekers in the EU 28 in 2013 (applications for international protection from Syria have also been analysed by EASO in its previous annual reports in 2011² and 2012³). The increase was widespread; the volume of Syrian applicants increased in nearly all Member States in 2013.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

² 2011 *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union and on the Activities of the European Asylum Support Office*, p. 24, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/european-asylum-support-office/docs/easo_annual_report_final_en.pdf.

³ *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2012*, pp. 30-33, available at: <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>.

Applicants from the **Russian Federation** increased significantly to become the second largest citizenship of origin for asylum claims in the EU28. Although the number of applicants from the Russian Federation had been relatively stable since 2008 at around 20,000 applicants annually, 2013 saw a significant rise with 71% more applicants registered than in 2012, reaching a volume of 41,485 applicants. The vast majority of these persons were from the Northern Caucasus region, who applied in Poland and Germany.

In 2013, the **Western Balkan countries** continued to represent a very significant workload for the asylum systems of the EU-28. The number of Western Balkan applicants registered in the EU28 increased by 36% from 2012 to 2013 and, when considered together, represented (with 72,840 total asylum applicants) 17% of the EU total (more than for Syria) in 2013 despite a very low recognition rate of only 3.8% on average across Member States⁴.

The report also highlights major developments with regard to EU/national policies, legislative changes and jurisprudence. In particular, 2013 saw the adoption of the asylum *acquis* package in June including the revised Reception Conditions Directive, revised Asylum Procedures Directive, revised Dublin Regulation, and the revised Eurodac Regulation, completing the review process (as the revised Qualification Directive was adopted in 2011).

Among key points of the new package, the recast Dublin Regulation in Article 33 envisages an Early Warning, Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism, whereby EASO will have a role in providing information to the Commission concerning a risk of particular pressure on a Member State's asylum system or problems in its functioning, as well as the analysis of preventive and crisis management action plans elaborated by the MS.

EASO provided **operational support to Greece, Bulgaria and Italy** in 2013 in areas including training, Country of Origin Information and statistics and has recently signed a Special Support Plan with Cyprus.

The EASO Annual Report also serves as a useful tool for national and EU policy-makers helping to identify areas where improvement is most needed (and thus where EASO and other key stakeholders should focus their future efforts), in line with its declared purpose of improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the CEAS.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu

⁴ In November 2013 EASO published a report *Asylum applicants from the Western Balkans. Comparative analysis of trends, push-pull factors and responses*. The Report is available online at: <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/BZ0213708ENC.pdf>