

PRESS RELEASE

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Latest Asylum Trends in Europe

In the first 5 months of 2014, there was a **19% rise in the number of applications for asylum in the EU compared to the same period last year**. This follows the **30% increase seen in numbers of asylum applications in 2013 compared to 2012** (see also the press release on EASO's Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU).

Compared to 2013, in 2014 **new trends seem to be emerging**. Numbers of Syrian asylum-seekers continue to rise; **Syrians** have increased in absolute and relative terms compared to 2013 and are in **the top 3 countries of origin for 16 Member States**. There has been a **substantial increase** in the numbers of **Eritreans** in recent months – arriving in Italy and applying in a number of northern countries Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Applications from citizens of the **Russian Federation** have **declined** significantly since 2013.

Since March 2014, **there has also been a significant rise in the numbers of Ukrainian citizens applying for asylum** in the EU+ (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland). In the last 20 years the average number of applications was of roughly 100 applicants per month. **From March to May, over 2,000 applications were made**. The new applications are in large part (over 95%) from **first time applicants** (i.e. persons who have never applied before in the EU) and are **widely distributed throughout Europe**.

As part of its Early warning and Preparedness System, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has recently begun to collect operational data from Member States on various aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)¹. This has led to a much faster and more comparable data collection on the practical functioning of the Common European Asylum System. Better data leads to a greater common understanding between Member States, EASO and the European Commission. This is evidenced by increased requests for EASO operational support as a normal avenue of cooperation. Currently EASO is on the ground in 4 Member States, namely Bulgaria, Italy, Greece and Cyprus. All 4 plans include measures on improving statistical information.

EASO's role will be key in 2014-15 in ensuring the implementation in practical terms of the changes introduced in the Common European Asylum System via the recast of the asylum *acquis*.

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.

¹ Under 4 indicators focusing on first instance cases: applications, pending cases, withdrawals and decisions. Data has been collected from 1 March 2014.