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Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015

Recent wave accounts for about one-in-ten asylum applications since 1985

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Terminology

The terms “**asylum seekers**,” “**asylees**” and “**asylum applicants**” are used interchangeably throughout this report and refer to individuals who have applied for asylum after reaching Europe. As of 2008, all family members, whether male or female, children or adults, file applications for asylum. Seeking asylum does not mean applicants will necessarily be permitted to stay in Europe. However, if an asylum application is approved, the asylum seeker is granted refugee status and given the right to remain in Europe.

“**Refugees**” denotes both the group of people fleeing conflict and those whose asylum application in Europe has been approved. For the latter group, the term “refugee” denotes a legal status.

“**Migrants**” refers to people moving across international borders, regardless of their motivation for movement. Someone moving from one European country to another European country within the European Union would be considered a migrant, for example. The term “migrants” also refers to newcomers who are citizens of countries outside of the EU-28, Norway or Switzerland.

The term “**Europe**” is used in this report as a shorthand for the 28 nation-states that form the European Union (EU) as well as Norway and Switzerland, for a total of 30 countries. At the time of the production of this report, the UK was still part of the European Union even though the country voted on June 23, 2016, to leave the EU. EU member states, Norway and Switzerland are bound by the Dublin Regulation: Asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first EU country they enter, and if they do not they can be returned to the first country they enter for the processing of their applications. Most EU countries, Norway and Switzerland are also part of the Schengen agreement, which permits people to cross between countries without border stops.

The terms “**origin country**” and “**source country**” are used interchangeably throughout this report. These terms refer to the country of citizenship for asylum seekers, not the most recent country asylum seekers passed through prior to reaching their country of application.

The term “**destination country**” refers to the country of application where an asylum seeker first applied for asylum in Europe. Although the Dublin Regulation calls for asylum applicants to apply for asylum in the first European country they enter, the destination country where they apply is not always the same as their first entry point into Europe.

“**Corridor**” refers to the migration flow from a particular origin to particular destination country, even if migrants cross through several transit countries before reaching their final destination. The Syria-Germany corridor, for example, refers to Syrians migrating to Germany, even though many Syrian refugees in 2015 passed through other countries such as Turkey or Greece before finally reaching Germany.

Table of Contents

About Pew Research Center	1
Terminology	2
Overview	4
1. Asylum seeker origins: A rapid rise for most countries	15
2. Asylum seeker destinations: Germany again Europe's leading destination	17
3. Europe's asylum seeker flows: Uneven dispersion across Europe	20
4. Asylum seeker demography: Young and male	23
Acknowledgments	26
Methodology	27
Appendix A: Asylum applications 1985 through 2015	29
Appendix B: Asylum seeker origins	32
References	33

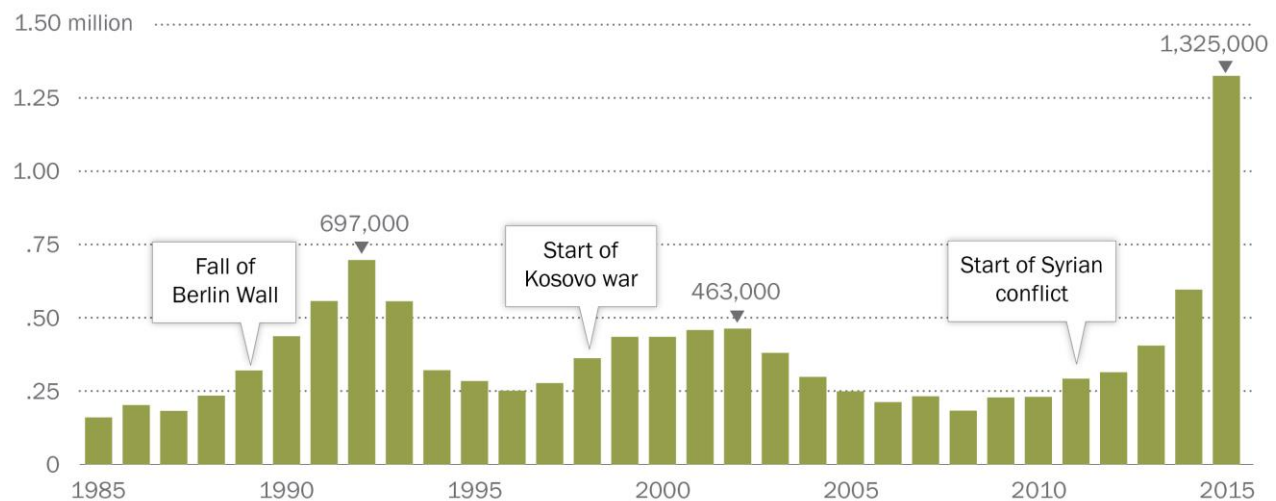
Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015

Recent wave accounts for about one-in-ten asylum applications since 1985

A record 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in the 28 member states of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland in 2015 – nearly double the previous high water mark of roughly 700,000 that was set in 1992 after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of data from Eurostat, the European Union’s statistical agency.

Number of asylum seekers in Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015



Note: “Europe” consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. See [methodology](#) for more details. Data on asylum applications is missing for some countries in some years. See [Appendix A](#) for list of countries with missing data. All countries that are part of the EU today are included in previous years’ data even though several were not part of the European Union in earlier years. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

“Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015”

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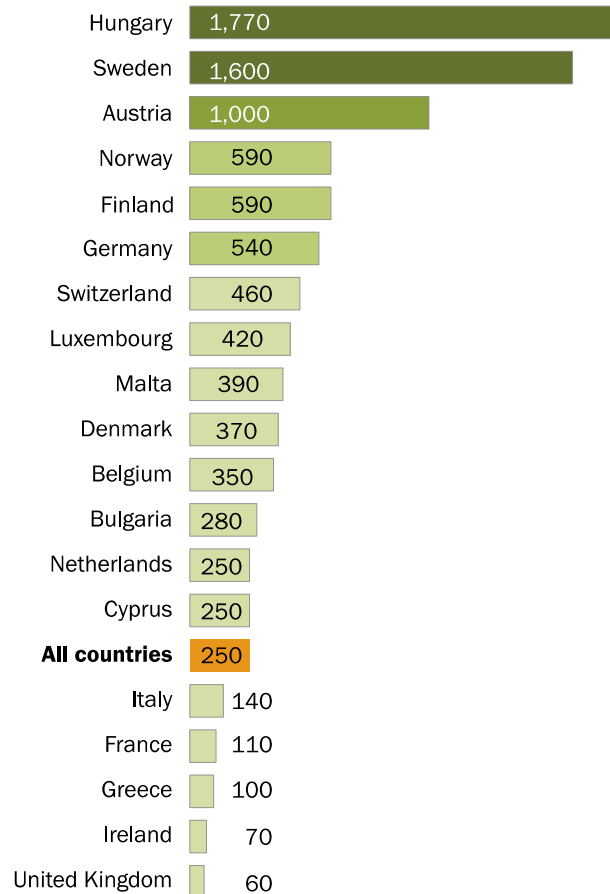
Today, Eastern European countries like Kosovo and Albania still contribute to the overall flow of asylum seekers into the EU, Norway and Switzerland, but about half of refugees in 2015 trace their origins to just three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Conflicts, both fresh and long-standing, in each of these states have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Some have been displaced within their homelands; others have sought refuge in neighboring countries; and still others have made the often perilous journey to Europe (and elsewhere) to seek asylum.

Since 2012, Germany has been the primary destination country for asylum seekers in Europe, receiving 442,000 asylum applications in 2015 alone. Following Germany, Hungary (174,000 applications) and Sweden (156,000) received the highest number of asylum applications in 2015. Meanwhile, France (71,000) and the UK (39,000) received roughly the same number of applications in 2015 as in years just prior to the refugee surge in 2015.

Refugees did not disperse equally across Europe, with some countries taking in more asylum seekers than the European average. In 2015, the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland as a whole had 250 asylum applicants per 100,000 residents. By comparison, Hungary had 1,770 applicants per 100,000 people (the highest of any country) and Sweden had 1,600 applicants per 100,000 people. Meanwhile, Germany had 540 applicants per 100,000 people, still well above the total European rate. By contrast, France had only 110 applicants per 100,000 people in its total population in 2015 and the UK had only 60 asylum seekers per 100,000 people.

Europe's asylum seekers did not equally disperse across countries

Number of first-time asylum applications in 2015 per 100,000 people in the country's population



Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Numbers rounded to nearest 10. Limited to countries with 50 or more asylum seekers per 100,000 in country's population.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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The 2015 surge marked the largest annual flow of asylum seekers to Europe since 1985. By comparison, the second largest came in 1992, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, when 697,000 applied for asylum to the nations that make up current EU countries, Norway and Switzerland.¹ Europe again experienced an uptick in asylum applications during conflicts in Kosovo in the late 1990s, with asylum applications peaking at 463,000 in 2002. However, 2015's surge stands out not only as a record year for asylum applications, but for the fact that it had more applicants than the previous peak years of 1992 and 2002 combined. Since 1985, Europe received about 11.6 million asylum applications – meaning that last year's 1.3 million amounted to about one-tenth of all applications received during the past 30 years by current EU countries, Norway and Switzerland.

Earlier this year, the EU and Turkey reached an agreement that has largely halted the flow of migrants from points east through Turkey, on to Greece and eventually to other parts of the EU. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), about 8,000 migrants [arrived in Greece](#) between April and July 2016 after the agreement with Turkey was put into full effect. Before the agreement, about 150,000 migrants had arrived in Greece between January and March 2016.

At the same time, some of the movement toward Europe is shifting to a southern Mediterranean route to Italy, with flows of largely sub-Saharan African migrants (not Syrians, Afghans or Iraqis) on the rise. Italy has received about [90,000 migrants](#) on its shores since the start of 2016, roughly similar to the first half of 2015. The UNHCR also estimates that over [2,500 people have lost their lives](#) in the Mediterranean between January and May of 2016.

Refugee? Asylum seeker? Migrant?

Much [debate](#) has focused on the terms used to describe the rapid rise in the number of people moving into Europe from other countries, many of whom are from the Middle East. Should these people be described as refugees? Asylum seekers? Or as migrants? Since the principal data source for this report is asylum-seeker application data as published by Eurostat, Europe's statistical agency, the report mostly uses the terms *asylum seekers* or *asylees* to describe this population. However, the report also uses the term *migrant* interchangeably with asylum seeker and asylee to describe the migration process. The term *refugee* is also used in the report to describe the internationally-recognized status many had before arriving in Europe. (For more on the asylum application process in Europe, see the textboxes in this overview).

¹ Even though a record number of asylum seekers have arrived recently in Europe, this current wave is small compared with the millions of ethnic Germans who fled to Western Germany the first few years following the conclusion of World War II. Upon the fall of the Berlin Wall, several thousand people also migrated from East to West Germany, but these individuals were not considered asylum seekers because of Germany's reunification in 1990.

Europeans disapprove of how the EU has handled the refugee issue

[European publics](#) have been far from satisfied with how the EU has handled the historic number of refugees arriving there. A spring 2016 Pew Research Center survey conducted across 10 EU member states following the EU-Turkey agreement found that majorities in each country disapproved of how the EU was dealing with the refugee issue.

Disapproval was generally greatest in countries with the highest number of asylum seekers in 2015. For example, 94% of Greeks and 88% of Swedes said they disapprove of how the EU has handled the refugee issue. Sweden received the third highest number of asylum applications in 2015. And while Greece was not the final destination for most refugees in 2015, it was their main point of entry, with about [850,000 arrivals in 2015 alone](#).

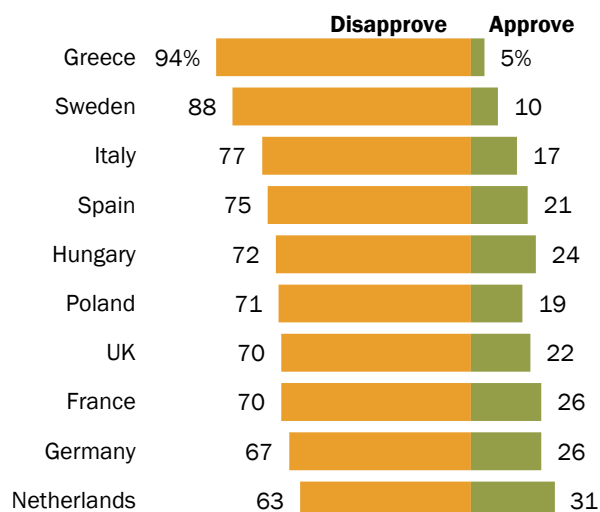
Even in countries with a lower number of asylees, disapproval of the EU's handling of the refugee issue was widespread, including in France (70%), the UK (70%) and the Netherlands (63%). And in Germany, which had the most asylum applications in 2015, fully two-thirds faulted the EU's approach to the refugee crisis.

At the same time, half or more in eight of the 10 EU countries Pew Research Center surveyed this spring believe that [incoming refugees increase the likelihood of terrorism](#) in their country. Many Europeans are also worried that refugees will be an economic burden, with half or more in five nations saying that refugees will take jobs and social benefits.

NOTE (April 2017): After publication, the weight for the Netherlands public opinion data was revised to correct percentages for two regions. The impact of this revision on the Netherlands public opinion data included in this report is very minor and does not materially change the analysis. For a summary of changes, see [here](#). For updated demographic figures for the Netherlands, please contact info@pewresearch.org.

Overwhelming majorities unhappy with EU's handling of refugees

Do you ___ of the way the European Union is dealing with the refugee issue?



Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey.

"Euroskepticism Beyond Brexit"

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How Europe's asylum process works

When an asylum seeker [travels through one of Europe's external borders](#) (such as a seaport, a land border or an airport), they can apply for asylum at the first European country they enter. When that happens, applicants are fingerprinted by authorities and given necessary food, medicine, legal aid and shelter as they wait for their case to be reviewed by immigration personnel.

If the decision is positive, asylum applicants are deemed refugees and are given certain legal rights for residency in Europe, including access to the job market and other social benefits such as government provided health care. If the decision is negative, asylum applicants can appeal the decision and have the case reviewed again. Or, if no appeal is taken by the asylum seeker, they are returned to their country of citizenship or the last country they left before entering Europe.

The European Union's 28 member states operate under the Asylum Procedures Directive – a common set of rules and regulations for handling asylum seekers that was revised in 2013 and took full effect in July 2015. The law sets standards for processing and evaluating asylum cases as well as the minimum welcome aid (food, medicine, shelter) given to applicants while they wait for their cases to be reviewed.

The cornerstone of the Asylum Procedures Directive is the first-country rule or more formally titled the Dublin Regulation (named after the city where the earliest agreement was reached in 1990). Asylum seekers are to apply for asylum in the first country they enter, and can be transferred back to that first country for processing if they are found in another country. This first-country rule, however, is not always followed in practice. Germany, for example, waived this provision during 2015 when Greece was overwhelmed by the sudden surge of migrants.

With thousands of new asylum requests through the first part of 2016, along with over 1 million in 2015, first-instance decisions can now take several months or up to a year to process. These delays do not include appeals asylum seekers may make after a negative first-time decision. Appeals can take up to an additional year to be adjudicated.

Rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers from non-European and European countries alike between 2013 and 2015

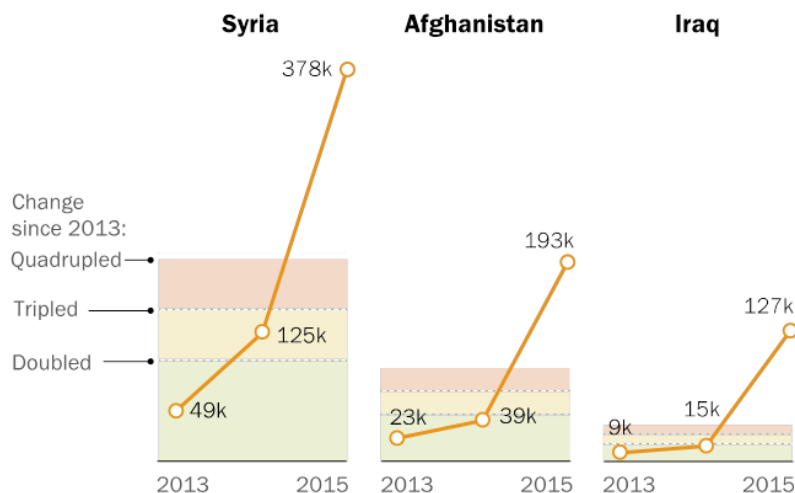
In 2014, nearly 600,000 asylum applications were filed in the EU, Norway and Switzerland, a 47% increase over the more than 400,000 applications filed in 2013. In 2015, the number of asylum applications grew again, this time more than doubling 2014's record to reach about 1.3 million (a 122% increase). The overall increase from 2013 to 2014 and again between 2014 and 2015 was reflected in the trajectory of new asylum seekers arriving from each of the three leading origin countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Refugees from Syria numbered 378,000 in 2015, accounting for 29% of all of Europe's asylum seekers – the highest share of any nation. This was up from 125,000 in 2014 and 49,000 in 2013, helping to drive the recent surge in asylum applications. An additional quarter of asylum seekers in 2015 were from other relatively new origin countries, including 193,000 from Afghanistan (up from 23,000 in 2013 and 39,000 in 2014) and another 127,000 from Iraq (up from 9,000 in 2013 and 15,000 in 2014).

Some of the origins of Europe's asylum seekers in 2015 were regions that have sent past waves of migrants. Nearly one-in-five asylum seekers in 2015 (17%) came from European countries outside the EU, Norway and Switzerland, including asylum seekers from Kosovo (68,000 in 2015, up from 35,000 in 2014), Albania (67,000 in 2015, up from 16,000 in 2014) and Ukraine (21,000 in 2015, up from 14,000 in 2014), regions that had once sent migrants when they were a part of the former

Number of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq more than quadrupled between 2013 and 2015

Number of first-time asylum applications to Europe from each country of origin, in thousands



Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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Yugoslavia and USSR. (See detailed chart in [Appendix B](#) noting the increase in origin countries besides Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.)

Not all asylum seekers are allowed to stay in Europe

The [success rate for asylum seekers](#) varies dramatically by country of citizenship. In 2015, for example, nearly all asylum seekers from Syria (97%) whose applications were processed were given refugee status in the first decision round. The great majority of Eritreans and Iraqis also received positive decisions. And between 60% and 70% of Afghani, Iranian and Somalian asylum seekers were deemed refugees in 2015. All other leading nationalities of asylum seekers in Europe had positive decision rates well below 50%. Meanwhile, less than 5% of asylum cases from other European countries such as Kosovo, Albania and Serbia were given positive decisions in 2015.

Once an application and all appeals for asylum are denied, the state deports the asylum seeker, either by force or through voluntary means. These returns, however, are not always straightforward. Some asylum seekers fall below the radar and illegally remain in Europe. Others have their return orders halted due to worsening security in the origin country or for other humanitarian reasons.

Germany is leading destination; UK, France receive fewer asylum seekers

Germany received an unprecedented 442,000 individual first-time asylum applications in 2015 – the highest annual number ever received by a European country over the past 30 years. Asylum applicants to Germany alone accounted for about one-third of Europe’s 2015 asylum seekers.

Germany has long been a primary destination for asylum seekers. In the late 1980s and 1990s, it received nearly half of Europe’s annual asylum applications. And over the past 30 years, Germany has received at least 3.6 million asylum applications, or nearly one-third (32%) of all asylum applications in Europe over the period.

France and the UK were once leading destinations of Europe’s asylum seekers. Between 2000 and 2010, France was the leading destination of asylum seekers for five years and the UK was the leading destination for four years. However, in 2015, both the UK and France had far fewer asylum applicants than Germany, Hungary or Sweden. The UK received only 39,000 asylum applications last year, while France received 71,000 applications.²

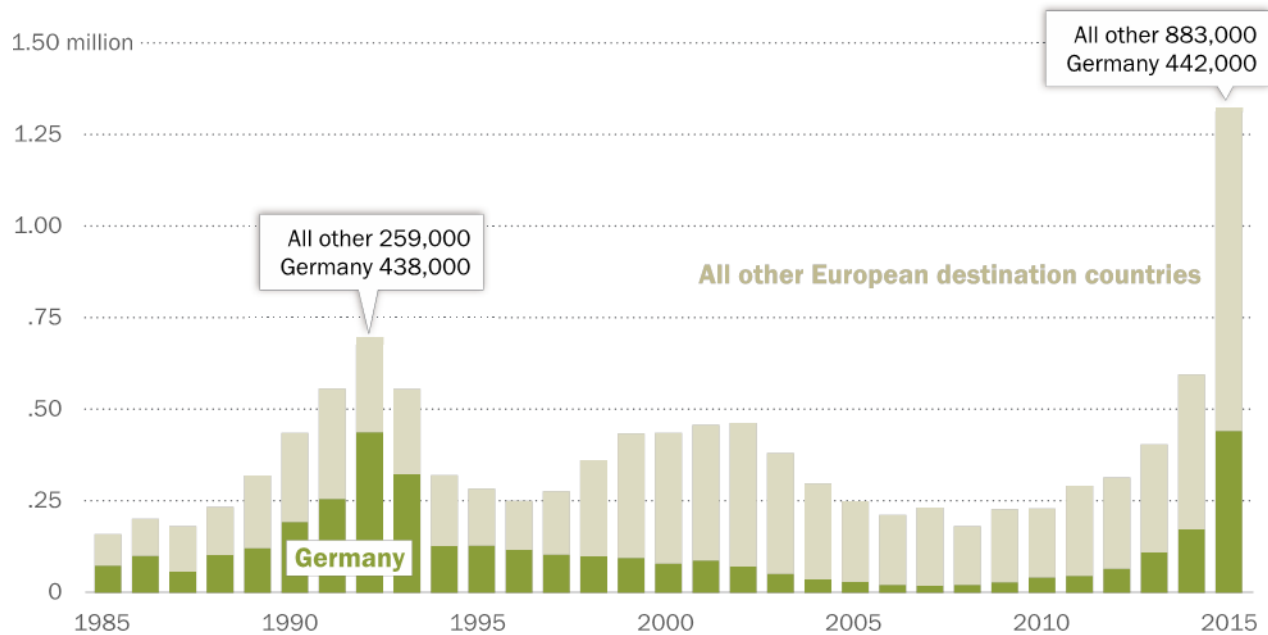
² The refugee issue was highly debated in the UK’s June vote to leave the European Union. The debate also focused on migration into the UK from other EU countries. Overall, about a [third of the UK’s immigrants](#) (2.9 million or 34%) were born in other EU countries, among the highest being Poland (700,000), Ireland (500,000) and Germany (320,000).

Hungary received the second largest number of asylum applicants in 2015. In all, Hungary received 174,000 asylum applications or about 13% of Europe’s asylum seekers in 2015.

Sweden received the third highest number of asylum applicants in 2015. Its share of Europe’s asylum seekers has grown to about 10% or more of all asylum seekers in recent years, posting a record 156,000 applicants in 2015. Sweden alone accepted more asylum seekers than France and the UK combined. Sweden was also the most popular destination country for [unaccompanied asylum seekers](#) under age 18, receiving 35,000 applicants from this group in 2015.

Germany again the leading destination of Europe’s asylum seekers

Number of asylum applications in Europe by year and application country



Note: “Europe” consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. See [methodology](#) for more details. Data on asylum applications are missing for some countries in some years. See [Appendix A](#) for list of countries with missing data. All countries that are part of the EU today are included in previous years’ data even though several were not part of the EU in earlier years. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

“Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015

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Asylum seekers to Europe are largely young and male

Over half (53%) of asylum seekers to the European Union, Norway and Switzerland in 2015 were young adults – those ages 18 to 34. This was also generally the top age group among asylum seekers in Europe from the three leading origin countries. Roughly half of those from Syria (50%), Iraq (56%) and Afghanistan (45%) were young adults in 2015.

In addition, men made up nearly three-fourths (73%) of Europe's asylum seekers in 2015. Refugees from leading origin countries such as Syria (71%), Iraq (75%) and Afghanistan (80%) were also predominately male in 2015. By contrast, asylum seekers from other top origin countries, such as Gambia (97% male), Pakistan (95% male) and Bangladesh (95% male), were almost entirely male.

As a result, about four-in-ten asylum seekers in Europe in 2015 (42%) were young men ages 18 to 34. This was also true for most leading origin countries: 39% of those from Syria were young men, as were 38% of those from Afghanistan and 47% of those from Iraq. Young adult males made up a larger share of asylum seekers from some origin countries. For example, roughly three-fourths of asylum seekers from Gambia (80%), Pakistan (76%) and Bangladesh (76%) were young adult men in 2015.

The demographic profile of asylum seekers in destination countries varies considerably. About four-in-ten asylum seekers applying in Germany (39%) in 2015 were young adult males, about the same level as asylum seekers to Europe (42%) as a whole. In Hungary, about half (51%) of asylum seekers were more young adult men. In Sweden, just 28% of asylum seekers were young men in 2015. Meanwhile, young adult men made up 74% of asylum seekers in Italy, the highest share of any country in 2015.

Europe has also seen a spike in the number of *unaccompanied minors* (children under 18 who arrived in Europe without adult guardians) applying for asylum in recent years. Between 2008 and 2015, 198,500 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in the European Union, Norway and

Young adult men make up 42% of all of Europe's asylum seekers in 2015

% of first-time asylum applications in each country that are males ages 18-34

	%
Italy	74
Bulgaria	53
Finland	52
Hungary	51
UK	46
Switzerland	46
All countries	42
Norway	41
Netherlands	40
Belgium	39
Germany	39
Denmark	39
France	38
Austria	37
Spain	33
Sweden	28

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Only destination countries with 1% or more (unrounded) of total applications in 2015 shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

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Switzerland, of which nearly half (48% or about 96,000) arrived in 2015. Among all first-time asylum applications in 2015, nearly 7% were from unaccompanied minors, the highest share since data on unaccompanied minors became available in 2008.

The impact of asylum seekers and migrants on Europe's population

European Union countries, Norway and Switzerland are leading destinations for asylum seekers and other migrants alike. Prior to the 2015 surge of asylum seekers, [35 million immigrants](#) born outside of the EU, Norway and Switzerland lived in these countries, representing fully 14% of the world's international migrants.

Even though a record number of asylum seekers arrived in Europe in 2015, the surge has had a limited impact on the share of the overall resident population in the EU, Norway and Switzerland that is foreign born. That share is up only 0.3 percentage points, from 11.0% foreign born in 2015 to 11.3% in 2016. It has had a large impact, however, in leading destination countries like Sweden, Hungary and Austria, whose [foreign-born shares rose](#) by more than 1 percentage point in a single year. By way of comparison, the foreign-born share of the U.S. population increased by 1 percentage point between 2005 and 2015. (The U.S. has about [one-fifth of the world's immigrants](#) and has historically been the world's top destination for international migrants.)

Although Europe has received a large number of Syrian asylum seekers since the Syrian conflict began, only about [one-in-ten displaced Syrians](#) worldwide are living in Europe. The vast majority is internally displaced within Syria or is living as refugees in countries that border Syria.

About the data

Asylum seeker data presented in this report are based on asylum applications as reported by European Union member states, Norway and Switzerland to [Eurostat](#), the EU's statistical agency. Since 2008, these countries have provided Eurostat with data on their asylum seekers using standardized definitions. So as to avoid duplication of asylum seekers, only first-time applications (not appeals) were used in the report's analysis for years 2008 through 2015.

Data prior to 2008 and reported by Eurostat were voluntarily provided by European countries, and were often based on definitions of asylum seekers that were inconsistent across countries and across years. Historical data from prior to 2008 are used only to put the current migration wave into a greater 30-year context. Asylum application data for 2016, while available, are incomplete and subject to Eurostat revisions. As a result, data on asylum applications for 2016 have not been included in this report. For more information on the report's data analysis and the Eurostat data, see the report's [methodology](#).

The number of European Union member states has grown since 1985, with significant increases in 1995, 2004 and 2007. Although data for some countries in some years are missing (see [Appendix A](#)), historical estimates of asylum seekers in this report include all 30 countries (EU-28 plus Norway and Switzerland), even though many of these countries were not considered part of the EU until recent years. At the time of the publication of this report, the UK was still part of the European Union, even though the country voted on June 23, 2016, to leave the EU.

This report focuses on the migration of first-time asylum seekers in Europe. The analysis does not include the net number of people who remain in Europe after asylum cases are decided. It also does not explore overall international migration patterns to Europe. Although applying for asylum has become a common way for migrants to enter Europe, migrants also enter via family ties or employment visas.

Road map to the report

Chapter 1 looks at the origins of asylum seekers, both in 2015 and in earlier years. Chapter 2 examines the changing destinations of asylum seekers. Meanwhile, Chapter 3 puts origins and destinations together to track the geographic flows between countries. Finally, Chapter 4 is a demographic profile of recent asylum seekers, including their age and sex, and includes a special focus on unaccompanied minors.

1. Asylum seeker origins: A rapid rise for most countries

In 2015, a record 1.3 million individuals applied for asylum in the European Union, Norway and Switzerland. This was more than a twofold increase from 2014, when nearly 600,000 people applied for asylum. This dramatic rise in asylum applications followed a relatively stable period of about roughly 200,000 applicants each year between 2005 and 2010 and around 300,000 annual applicants in 2011 and 2012.

The leading country of citizenship for Europe's asylum applicants in 2015 was Syria, which accounted for 378,000 asylum seekers, or 29% of all applicants. Second was Afghanistan, with 193,000 asylum seekers in 2015. Well over half (53%) of all asylum seekers in 2015 held citizenship from one of these countries or Iraq.

A mixed group of source countries represent the remaining leading points of origin for asylum seekers in Europe during 2015. Kosovo and Albania were each the country of origin of about 5% of asylum seekers. In fact, Europe received about the same number of asylum applications from Kosovo and Albania combined as from Iraq in 2015. Slightly fewer than 50,000 asylum seekers had Pakistani or Eritrean citizenship in 2015. Asylum applicants from Iran, several sub-Saharan countries like Nigeria, Somalia and Gambia, as well as European countries such as Ukraine, Serbia and Russia rounded out the leading countries of citizenship for Europe's asylum seekers.

Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis were over half of all Europe's asylum seekers in 2015

Citizenship of first-time asylum applicants in Europe, 2015

	Total	% of all asylum applications
Syria	378,000	29
Afghanistan	193,000	15
Iraq	127,000	10
Kosovo	68,000	5
Albania	67,000	5
Pakistan	47,000	4
Eritrea	46,000	3
Nigeria	31,000	2
Iran	27,000	2
Somalia	21,000	2
Ukraine	21,000	2
Serbia	19,000	1
Russia	19,000	1
Bangladesh	18,000	1
Gambia	13,000	1
Other	230,000	17
TOTAL	1,325,000	100

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Only origin countries with 1% or more of total asylum applicants (unrounded) shown. Numbers rounded to nearest thousand. Percentages calculated from unrounded numbers. "Other" includes stateless applicants and those with unknown citizenships.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

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The EU, Norway and Switzerland saw large increases of asylum seekers in 2014 from some of the largest countries of origin in 2013 and again for the same countries between 2014 and 2015, when the latest wave of asylum seekers reached Europe. For several leading source countries, the volume of asylum applications doubled in 2014 (from 2013) and doubled again for many countries in 2015 (from 2014).

Syria had the greatest annual asylum applicant increase between 2013 and 2015, with about 49,000 asylum seekers in 2013, 125,000 in 2014 and 378,000 in 2015.

But it was Ukraine, Iraq and Afghanistan that saw the greatest annual *percentage* increases between 2013 and 2015 among the top 15 source countries of asylum seekers in 2015. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of asylum seekers from Ukraine increased nearly 24-fold, while Iraq increased nearly 14-fold. Meanwhile, the number of Afghan applicants increased nearly nine fold between 2013 and 2015, and Syria's number of annual asylum seekers increased nearly eightfold during the same period.

Number of all asylum applications grew by about half in 2014 and more than doubled in 2015

Citizenship of first-time asylum applicants in Europe

	2013	2014	2015
Syria	49,000	125,000	378,000
Afghanistan	23,000	39,000	193,000
Iraq	9,000	15,000	127,000
Kosovo	18,000	35,000	68,000
Albania	11,000	16,000	67,000
Pakistan	19,000	21,000	47,000
Eritrea	20,000	46,000	46,000
Nigeria	12,000	20,000	31,000
Iran	11,000	10,000	27,000
Somalia	18,000	16,000	21,000
Ukraine	1,000	14,000	21,000
Serbia	15,000	20,000	19,000
Russia	36,000	14,000	19,000
Bangladesh	7,000	10,000	18,000
Gambia	4,000	12,000	13,000
Other	151,000	182,000	230,000
TOTAL	405,000	596,000	1,325,000

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Only origin countries with 1% or more of total asylum applicants (unrounded) in 2015 shown. Numbers rounded to nearest thousand. Percentages calculated from unrounded numbers. Sorted by total number of asylum seekers in 2015.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

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2. Asylum seeker destinations: Germany again Europe's leading destination

Of the 1.3 million asylum seekers entering the European Union, Norway and Switzerland in 2015, over half applied for asylum in just three countries: Germany, Hungary and Sweden. Among these three nations, Germany received more asylees than the other two combined and retained its status as Europe's leading destination for asylum seekers – a distinction it has held since 2012.

Germany received about a third (or 442,000) of Europe's asylum applications in 2015. This was well over twice as many applicants as it received in 2014 (174,000).

Finland, however, had the largest annual increase in asylum applicants of any EU country. The number of asylum seekers increased more than 800%, from more than 3,000 in 2014 to 32,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, Hungary also saw a rapid rise in the number of asylum seekers, more than quadrupling from 41,000 in 2014 to 174,000 in 2015.

In 2015, about 12% (156,000) of all of Europe's asylum seekers applied in Sweden, making it the third-ranked country in the number of asylum applications received. Asylum seekers have increasingly gone to Sweden in recent years to apply for asylum. Overall, roughly one-in-ten asylum seekers have applied in Sweden each year during the past decade. And, it was the leading destination of [unaccompanied minors](#) in Europe in 2015.

Germany, Hungary and Sweden together received over half of asylum seeker applications in 2015

First-time asylum seeker applications in 2015 by country of application

	Total	%
Germany	442,000	33
Hungary	174,000	13
Sweden	156,000	12
Austria	86,000	6
Italy	83,000	6
France	71,000	5
Netherlands	43,000	3
Belgium	39,000	3
UK	39,000	3
Switzerland	38,000	3
Finland	32,000	2
Norway	30,000	2
Denmark	21,000	2
Bulgaria	20,000	2
Spain	15,000	1
Greece	11,000	1
Poland	10,000	1
Other	15,000	1
TOTAL	1,325,000	100

Notes: Only destination countries with 1% or greater of total asylum applicants (unrounded) of total applications in 2015 shown. Numbers rounded nearest to thousand. Percentages calculated from unrounded numbers.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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The UK and France are no longer leading asylum seeker destinations

Prior to 2000, Germany annually had more asylum applications than any other European country – a pattern extending back, uninterrupted, to 1985. These asylum seekers were from a range of countries, and many came from other European countries after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the early 1990s and the destabilization of the former Yugoslavia in that decade. For several years in the 1980s and 1990s, Germany’s annual share of asylum applications was roughly half or more of all of Europe’s asylum applications.

A temporary shift in the leading countries of application occurred in the early 2000s. In 2000, 2002 and 2003, the UK became the leading destination country of asylum seekers in Europe, many of whom came from Iraq and Somalia. Between 2004 and 2011, France was often the leading destination. Many of these asylum seekers came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Russia, Turkey and countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Germany resumed its previous spot as the leading recipient of asylum applications in 2012, largely due to the growing number of asylum seekers from other European countries such as Kosovo, Russia and Serbia as well as countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria.

It is notable that the share of asylum seekers more recently applying in Germany is more on par with the shares of asylum applications for Germany prior to 2000.³ Since 2013, Germany

Germany has been lead destination for asylum seekers most years since 1985

Country with largest number of asylum applications in Europe, by year

	Destination	%
2015	Germany	33
2014	Germany	29
2013	Germany	27
2012	Germany	21
2011	France	18
2010	France	21
2009	France	18
2008*	UK	17
2007	Sweden	16
2006	France	15
2005	France	20
2004	France	20
2003	UK	16
2002	UK	22
2001	Germany	19
2000	UK	18
1999	Germany	22
1998	Germany	27
1997	Germany	38
1996	Germany	47
1995	Germany	45
1994	Germany	40
1993	Germany	58
1992	Germany	63
1991	Germany	46
1990	Germany	44
1989	Germany	38
1988	Germany	44
1987	Germany	32
1986	Germany	49
1985	Germany	46

Note: *Data for France unavailable in 2008. “Europe” consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by country prior to harmonization in 2008. Data after 2008 include first-time asylum seeker applications only. See [methodology](#) for more details. Some data missing for some countries; see [Appendix A](#).

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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³ The share of asylum seekers applying for asylum in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s may be lower if more data were available for all European countries. Nonetheless, data for countries with the largest recipients of asylum seekers (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK) were available for most years.

received more than a quarter of annual asylum seekers in Europe. France and the UK never had a quarter or more of Europe’s annual asylum applications when they were the leading countries of destination.

Germany is the largest recipient of asylum applications since 1985

When summed together for all years between 1985 and 2015, nearly one-third (more than 3.6 million) of Europe’s asylum applications were registered in Germany. And since 1985, the UK and France each received about one-in-ten (or more than 1 million) of Europe’s asylum applications.

Countries with smaller resident populations such as Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium also each received hundreds of thousands of asylum applications between 1985 and 2015.

About one-third of asylum applications since 1985 were filed in Germany

Leading 15 countries of application of all Europe asylum applications between 1985 and 2015

	Total	% of all asylum applicants
Germany	3,654,000	32
France	1,227,000	11
UK	1,151,000	10
Sweden	987,000	9
Netherlands	658,000	6
Switzerland	631,000	5
Belgium	517,000	4
Austria	498,000	4
Italy	490,000	4
Hungary	289,000	2
Norway	266,000	2
Denmark	210,000	2
Spain	182,000	2
Greece	169,000	1
Poland	123,000	1
Other	525,000	5
TOTAL	11,576,000	100

Notes: “Europe” consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Rounded to nearest thousand. Percentages calculated from unrounded numbers. Table lists countries with 100,000 or more applicants. Asylum seeker definitions varied by country prior to harmonization in 2008. First-time applications since 2008. See [methodology](#) for more details. Data missing for some countries; see [Appendix A](#) for list of countries with missing data.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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3. Europe's asylum seeker flows: Uneven dispersion across Europe

Asylum seekers make their way to Europe in fits and starts, by direct as well as indirect routes, by air, land and sea. Consequently, it is difficult to trace the precise paths taken by thousands of asylum seekers. However, by pairing the country where a migrant is seeking asylum with the country that same migrant lists as country of citizenship, it is possible to identify “bilateral migration corridors” – i.e., flows between points of origin and destination. These corridors can provide a sense for who is seeking asylum where.

In the case of Syrian refugees moving between the Middle East and Europe in 2015, fully 84% applied for asylum in just five countries (Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands). The Syria-Germany corridor was the most active one in 2015, with 159,000 Syrians seeking asylum in Germany. Other major corridors included Syria-Hungary (64,000 asylum seekers), Albania-Germany (54,000) and Syria-Sweden (51,000).

Syria has been the point of origin for the largest asylum seeker corridors during the past few years. This was true in 2015 as well as 2014, when Europe's largest asylum seeker corridor was also Syria to Germany, with 39,000 applicants or 7% of asylum applications in Europe. In 2013, the Syria-Sweden corridor was the largest asylum seeker flow, numbering 17,000 people or 4% of all asylum applications.

Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Albania and Nigeria were the leading source countries after Syria in 2015 for asylum seeker flows to specific countries within Europe.

Syria to Germany was the leading asylum seeker corridor in 2015

Asylum seeker corridors of all first-time asylum applicants in Europe, 2015

Corridor	Total	% of all asylum applicants
Syria-Germany	159,000	12
Syria-Hungary	64,000	5
Syria-Sweden	51,000	4
Syria-Austria	25,000	2
Syria-Netherlands	19,000	1
Afghanistan-Hungary	46,000	3
Afghanistan-Sweden	41,000	3
Afghanistan-Germany	31,000	2
Afghanistan-Austria	25,000	2
Iraq-Germany	30,000	2
Iraq-Finland	20,000	2
Iraq-Sweden	20,000	2
Kosovo-Germany	33,000	3
Kosovo-Hungary	24,000	2
Albania-Germany	54,000	4
Nigeria-Italy	18,000	1

Note: “Europe” consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Rounded to nearest thousand. Percentages calculated from unrounded numbers. Only top corridors for the top 50% of asylum seekers in 2015 shown. Sorted by leading origin countries of all Europe's asylum seekers in 2015.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data accessed June 22, 2016.

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The intensity of 2015's sudden migration of asylum seekers was felt more acutely in some European countries than in others. By far, Hungary (1,770 per 100,000 in Hungary's population), Sweden (1,600 per 100,000) and Austria (1,000 per 100,000) felt the effects of the asylum seeker surge the most in 2015. Germany (540 per 100,000) had a higher per capita number of asylum applicants than Europe (250 per 100,000) as a whole and was similar to other leading destinations such as Finland (590 per 100,000), Norway (590 per 100,000) and Switzerland (460 per 100,000). By contrast, France (110 per 100,000) and the UK (60 per 100,000) had a far lower per capita number of asylum seekers.

Syrian refugees did not evenly disperse in Europe

As suggested above, Syrian and other asylum seekers have tended to concentrate along specific migration corridors en route to Europe. This has contributed to the uneven distribution of asylum seekers across the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. In some countries, particular groups make up a sizable portion of all asylum seekers, even when the countries in question are not part of Europe's main asylee corridors.

In 2015, Syria was the leading source country of asylum seekers in 13 out of 30 European countries. Among these nearly dozen countries, Syrian asylees constituted a third or more of all asylum seekers in Romania (45%), Cyprus (43%), Netherlands (43%), Denmark

Syria was leading origin country for 13 out of 30 European countries in 2015

Top country of citizenship for first-time asylum applicants in each European country in 2015

Country of application	Top country of citizenship	% of all applications
Austria	Afghanistan	29
Belgium	Syria	26
Bulgaria	Iraq	34
Croatia	Syria	17
Cyprus	Syria	43
Czech Republic	Ukraine	46
Denmark	Syria	41
Estonia	Ukraine	42
Finland	Iraq	63
France	Sudan	8
Germany	Syria	36
Greece	Syria	29
Hungary	Syria	37
Ireland	Pakistan	41
Italy	Nigeria	21
Latvia	Iraq	26
Lithuania	Ukraine	22
Luxembourg	Syria	27
Malta	Libya	53
Netherlands	Syria	43
Norway	Syria	35
Poland	Russia	68
Portugal	Ukraine	42
Romania	Syria	45
Slovakia	Iraq	63
Slovenia	Iraq/Afghanistan	17
Spain	Syria	39
Sweden	Syria	33
Switzerland	Eritrea	26
United Kingdom	Eritrea	10

Notes: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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(41%), Spain (39%), Hungary (37%), Germany (36%), Norway (35%) and Sweden (33%). In no country did Syrians make up more than half of all asylum seekers.

Asylees from Ukraine were the largest group of asylum seekers in four countries last year: Portugal (42%), Estonia (42%), Czech Republic (46%) and Lithuania (22%), while Iraqis were the largest contingent of asylum applicants in Slovakia (63%), Finland (63%) and Bulgaria (34%). No other group, including Afghans, was the predominant source of asylum seekers in more than two European countries in 2015.

4. Asylum seeker demography: Young and male

Since 2013, the demographic profile of asylum seekers in the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland has become slightly more male (67% in 2013, 71% in 2014 and 73% in 2015), with a steady share of asylum seekers arriving under 35 years of age (80% in 2013 and in 2014, 83% in 2015).

Among all asylum seekers in 2015, about two-in-ten (19%) were male minors (0 to 17 years of age), compared with one-in-ten who were female minors. And while about four-in-ten (42%) asylum seekers were young adult males (18 to 34 years of age) in 2015, just about one-in-ten (11%) were young adult females in the same age bracket.

These age and gender patterns are largely consistent across some of the largest asylum seeker groups, including those from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Somalia. The large proportion of young males and comparatively smaller shares of young adult women and female children suggests that many refugees from these source countries are young men traveling alone. This situation seems especially

likely in the case of asylum seekers from Pakistan and Bangladesh, among whom three-quarters were males ages 18 to 34 in 2015. By contrast, data suggest that asylum seekers from countries like

Asylum seekers from non-European origins more likely to be young adult men

Age and gender percentage breakdown of first-time asylum applicants in Europe in 2015

Age	-----Females-----			-----Males-----			TOTAL
	0-17	18-34	35+	0-17	18-34	35+	
All	10	11	6	19	42	12	100
Non-European origins							
Gambia	1	2	0	12	80	4	100
Bangladesh	1	3	1	6	76	12	100
Pakistan	2	2	1	4	76	15	100
Nigeria	6	19	3	8	55	8	100
Iran	6	13	7	10	50	14	100
Iraq	10	10	5	16	47	13	100
Eritrea	8	19	2	18	46	6	100
Somalia	10	17	4	22	41	5	100
Syria	12	11	6	18	39	14	100
Afghanistan	9	7	3	38	38	5	100
European origins							
Kosovo	15	11	7	18	38	10	100
Albania	15	16	8	19	30	12	100
Ukraine	12	19	15	13	27	14	100
Serbia	24	14	10	25	15	12	100
Russia	24	15	12	26	13	10	100

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Only countries representing 1% or more (unrounded) of all Europe's asylum applications shown. Country rows may not add to 100% because of rounding. Sorted by 18-34 male.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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Russia, Serbia and Ukraine tend to relocate as families: Fully 30% to 50% of asylum seekers from these countries were minors accompanied by adults.

Unaccompanied minors have been largely teenage boys, most from Afghanistan

The percentage of unaccompanied minors among all asylum seekers to Europe [rose in 2015](#), reaching roughly 7% of all asylum applicants. Between 2008 and 2015, about 70% to 80% of these unaccompanied minors annually were boys ages 14 to 17. About 10% annually were girls in the same age cohort. Since data on unaccompanied minors have been tracked by Eurostat starting in 2008, about 10% of unaccompanied minors annually have been ages 13 and under in any given year.

Since 2008, 39% of all unaccompanied minor asylum seekers have come from Afghanistan. In all, about 77,000 unaccompanied minors, mostly teenage boys, have made the trek from Afghanistan to Europe. A further 19,000 unaccompanied minors from Syria have applied for asylum between 2008 and 2015. And an additional 13,000 unaccompanied minors from Somalia as well as 12,000 from Eritrea have sought asylum in Europe since 2008.

Since 2008, more than half of unaccompanied minors have arrived in Sweden, Germany or the UK. Indeed, about three-in-ten unaccompanied minor asylum seekers to Europe applied in Sweden, yet Sweden was the destination for only about one-in-ten (12%) of Europe's total number of asylum seekers during the period.

Over half of asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors have applied in Sweden, Germany, UK since 2008

Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Europe, 2008-2015

Country of application	Total	%
Sweden	59,000	29
Germany	30,000	15
UK	18,000	9
Austria	16,000	8
Norway	11,000	6
Hungary	11,000	5
Italy	10,000	5
Netherlands	8,000	4
Belgium	8,000	4
Switzerland	6,000	3
Denmark	5,000	3
Finland	5,000	2
France	4,000	2
Bulgaria	3,000	2
Poland	2,000	1
<u>Other</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	199,000	100

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Only destination countries of application with 1% or more of total asylum applications (unrounded) shown. Totals rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

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Methodology

The analysis of this report is based on asylum application data from [Eurostat](#), the European Union's statistical agency. Eurostat is a central repository of the European Union's economic, environmental and population data. Its goal is to provide high quality statistics that enable comparisons across countries.

Annual data were accessed on June 22, 2016. The asylum application by year files (2008 to 2015, first-time applications only) and (1985 to 2007, all applications) were used for annual estimates.

Data showing the origins, destinations, sex and age of asylum seekers between 2008 and 2015 use a standardized set of [definitions](#) for asylum seekers. Also, EU legislation on processing asylum seekers has become more consistent across member states in recent years. Consequently, data since 2008 are considered reliable and consistent across countries and years. There is a small chance that individual asylum seekers are recorded multiple times within and across European countries. But, these situations are rare because of centralized databases ([EURODAC](#)), used by EU member states in recent years. The analysis of data since 2008 in this report assumes that each case in the data file represents an individual person and is based on first-time applicants only, not appeals or asylum seekers applying again.

Data of asylum seekers between 1985 and 2007, however, are not consistent across countries and years. Countries voluntarily reported asylum applications to Eurostat before 2008 and did so in different ways. Some countries during these years, for example, counted a household as a single application, even though several individuals may be on one application. This way of counting would present a lower number of applicants seeking asylum. In the other direction, some countries counted application appeals in their total numbers of asylum seekers. This type of double counting would inflate the number of individuals seeking asylum. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether these two biases on how individual applicants are counted cancel each other out.

Consistent with previous publications produced by Eurostat on asylum seekers, application estimates between 1985 and 2007 are based on the total origins of asylum seekers, and therefore do not include detailed information about places of origin, only destinations.⁴ Data for destination countries with the largest volume of asylum seekers (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK) are available for most years.

⁴ Eurostat (2016), [Asylum Statistics](#), Statistics Explained, Eurostat (2007), "[Asylum Applications in the European Union](#)", Statistics in Focus. Eurostat (1996), "[Asylum Seekers in Europe 1985-1995](#)", Statistics in Focus.

A small share of data since 2008 (less than 5% for most years and countries) have unknown origins of asylum seekers. Also a small share of data since 2008 (again less than 5% for most years and member states) contain unknown gender and age of asylum seekers. These unknown cases were included in the calculations of percentages throughout the report, except where specified by footnotes.

Estimates presented in this report are rounded to the nearest thousand, except for per capita estimates which are rounded to the nearest ten. Although exact counts are available from Eurostat, there is the potential for numbers to be slightly incorrect as underlying data may consist of some provisional estimates or incomplete data. Percentages are also rounded to whole numbers for the same reason. Percentages were rounded from unrounded estimates.

Appendix A: Asylum applications 1985 through 2015

Number of asylum applications to Europe by country and year

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France
1985	7,000	5,000	--	--	--	--	9,000	--	<1,000	29,000
1986	9,000	8,000	--	--	--	--	9,000	--	<1,000	26,000
1987	11,000	6,000	--	--	--	--	3,000	--	<1,000	28,000
1988	16,000	5,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	--	<1,000	34,000
1989	22,000	8,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	--	<1,000	61,000
1990	23,000	13,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	--	3,000	55,000
1991	27,000	15,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	--	2,000	47,000
1992	16,000	18,000	--	--	--	--	14,000	--	4,000	29,000
1993	5,000	27,000	--	--	--	--	14,000	--	2,000	28,000
1994	5,000	14,000	--	--	--	--	7,000	--	<1,000	26,000
1995	6,000	11,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	--	<1,000	20,000
1996	7,000	12,000	--	--	--	--	6,000	--	<1,000	17,000
1997	7,000	12,000	<1,000	--	--	2,000	5,000	--	<1,000	21,000
1998	14,000	22,000	<1,000	--	<1,000	4,000	6,000	<1,000	1,000	22,000
1999	20,000	36,000	1,000	--	<1,000	7,000	7,000	<1,000	3,000	31,000
2000	18,000	43,000	2,000	--	<1,000	9,000	10,000	<1,000	3,000	39,000
2001	30,000	25,000	2,000	--	2,000	18,000	13,000	<1,000	2,000	47,000
2002	39,000	19,000	3,000	--	<1,000	8,000	6,000	<1,000	3,000	51,000
2003	32,000	14,000	1,000	--	4,000	11,000	4,000	<1,000	3,000	60,000
2004	25,000	12,000	<1,000	--	10,000	5,000	3,000	<1,000	4,000	59,000
2005	22,000	13,000	<1,000	--	8,000	4,000	2,000	<1,000	4,000	50,000
2006	13,000	9,000	<1,000	--	5,000	3,000	2,000	<1,000	2,000	31,000
2007	12,000	12,000	<1,000	--	7,000	2,000	2,000	<1,000	1,000	29,000
2008	--	11,000	--	--	4,000	1,000	2,000	<1,000	--	--
2009	--	17,000	--	--	3,000	<1,000	4,000	<1,000	--	42,000
2010	--	22,000	--	--	3,000	<1,000	5,000	<1,000	--	48,000
2011	--	26,000	<1,000	--	2,000	<1,000	4,000	<1,000	--	52,000
2012	--	18,000	1,000	--	2,000	<1,000	6,000	<1,000	3,000	54,000
2013	--	12,000	7,000	1,000	1,000	<1,000	7,000	<1,000	3,000	60,000
2014	26,000	14,000	11,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	15,000	<1,000	3,000	59,000
2015	86,000	39,000	20,000	<1,000	2,000	1,000	21,000	<1,000	32,000	71,000

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. Data on asylum applications is missing for some countries in some years, indicated by '--'. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

"Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015"

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Number of asylum applications to Europe by country and year, continued

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015

	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands
1985	74,000	1,000	--	--	5,000	--	--	<1,000	--	6,000
1986	100,000	4,000	--	--	7,000	--	--	<1,000	--	6,000
1987	57,000	6,000	--	<1,000	11,000	--	--	<1,000	--	13,000
1988	103,000	9,000	--	<1,000	1,000	--	--	<1,000	--	7,000
1989	121,000	7,000	--	<1,000	2,000	--	--	<1,000	--	14,000
1990	193,000	4,000	--	<1,000	4,000	--	--	<1,000	--	21,000
1991	256,000	3,000	--	<1,000	24,000	--	--	<1,000	--	22,000
1992	438,000	2,000	--	<1,000	3,000	--	--	<1,000	--	20,000
1993	323,000	<1,000	--	<1,000	1,000	--	--	<1,000	--	35,000
1994	127,000	1,000	--	<1,000	2,000	--	--	<1,000	--	53,000
1995	128,000	1,000	--	<1,000	2,000	--	--	<1,000	--	29,000
1996	117,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	<1,000	--	--	<1,000	--	23,000
1997	104,000	4,000	--	4,000	2,000	--	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	34,000
1998	99,000	3,000	7,000	5,000	13,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	45,000
1999	95,000	2,000	12,000	8,000	18,000	<1,000	<1,000	3,000	<1,000	39,000
2000	79,000	3,000	8,000	11,000	15,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	44,000
2001	88,000	6,000	10,000	10,000	17,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	33,000
2002	71,000	6,000	6,000	12,000	16,000	<1,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	19,000
2003	51,000	8,000	2,000	7,000	14,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	13,000
2004	36,000	4,000	2,000	4,000	10,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	10,000
2005	29,000	9,000	2,000	4,000	9,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	1,000	12,000
2006	21,000	12,000	2,000	4,000	10,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	1,000	14,000
2007	19,000	25,000	3,000	4,000	14,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	1,000	7,000
2008	21,000	--	--	4,000	30,000	<1,000	--	--	3,000	13,000
2009	28,000	--	--	3,000	18,000	<1,000	<1,000	--	2,000	15,000
2010	41,000	--	--	2,000	10,000	<1,000	<1,000	--	<1,000	13,000
2011	46,000	9,000	--	1,000	40,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	2,000	12,000
2012	65,000	10,000	--	<1,000	17,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	2,000	10,000
2013	110,000	8,000	19,000	<1,000	26,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	10,000
2014	173,000	8,000	41,000	1,000	64,000	<1,000	<1,000	1,000	1,000	22,000
2015	442,000	11,000	174,000	3,000	83,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	2,000	43,000

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. Data on asylum applications is missing for some countries in some years, indicated by '--'. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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Number of asylum applications to Europe by country and year, continued

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015

	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
1985	<1,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	2,000	15,000	--	6,000
1986	3,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	2,000	15,000	8,000	6,000
1987	9,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	3,000	18,000	11,000	6,000
1988	7,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	5,000	20,000	16,000	6,000
1989	4,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	4,000	30,000	24,000	17,000
1990	4,000	--	<1,000	--	--	--	9,000	29,000	36,000	38,000
1991	5,000	--	<1,000	<1,000	--	--	8,000	27,000	41,000	73,000
1992	5,000	--	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	--	12,000	84,000	19,000	32,000
1993	13,000	--	2,000	<1,000	<1,000	--	13,000	38,000	25,000	29,000
1994	3,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	12,000	19,000	16,000	33,000
1995	1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	6,000	9,000	17,000	44,000
1996	2,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000	5,000	6,000	18,000	30,000
1997	2,000	4,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	<1,000	5,000	10,000	24,000	33,000
1998	8,000	3,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	<1,000	5,000	13,000	40,000	46,000
1999	10,000	3,000	<1,000	2,000	1,000	<1,000	8,000	11,000	45,000	71,000
2000	11,000	5,000	<1,000	1,000	2,000	9,000	8,000	16,000	18,000	80,000
2001	15,000	4,000	<1,000	2,000	8,000	2,000	9,000	24,000	19,000	71,000
2002	17,000	5,000	<1,000	<1,000	10,000	<1,000	6,000	33,000	24,000	103,000
2003	16,000	7,000	<1,000	<1,000	10,000	1,000	6,000	31,000	20,000	60,000
2004	8,000	8,000	<1,000	<1,000	11,000	1,000	5,000	23,000	13,000	41,000
2005	5,000	5,000	<1,000	<1,000	4,000	2,000	5,000	18,000	9,000	31,000
2006	5,000	4,000	<1,000	<1,000	3,000	<1,000	5,000	24,000	9,000	28,000
2007	--	7,000	<1,000	<1,000	3,000	<1,000	7,000	36,000	10,000	28,000
2008	14,000	7,000	<1,000	--	--	<1,000	--	24,000	15,000	31,000
2009	17,000	10,000	<1,000	--	--	<1,000	--	24,000	14,000	31,000
2010	9,000	4,000	<1,000	--	<1,000	<1,000	3,000	32,000	14,000	23,000
2011	9,000	5,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	<1,000	3,000	30,000	19,000	26,000
2012	9,000	9,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	<1,000	2,000	44,000	26,000	28,000
2013	11,000	14,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	<1,000	4,000	54,000	19,000	30,000
2014	11,000	6,000	<1,000	2,000	<1,000	<1,000	5,000	75,000	22,000	32,000
2015	31,000	10,000	<1,000	1,000	<1,000	<1,000	15,000	156,000	38,000	39,000

Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Asylum seeker definitions varied by European country prior to 2008. Numbers for asylum applications since 2008 are based on first-time applicants and do not include appeals or transfer of applications between countries. Data on asylum applications is missing for some countries in some years, indicated by '--'. Rounded to nearest thousand.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

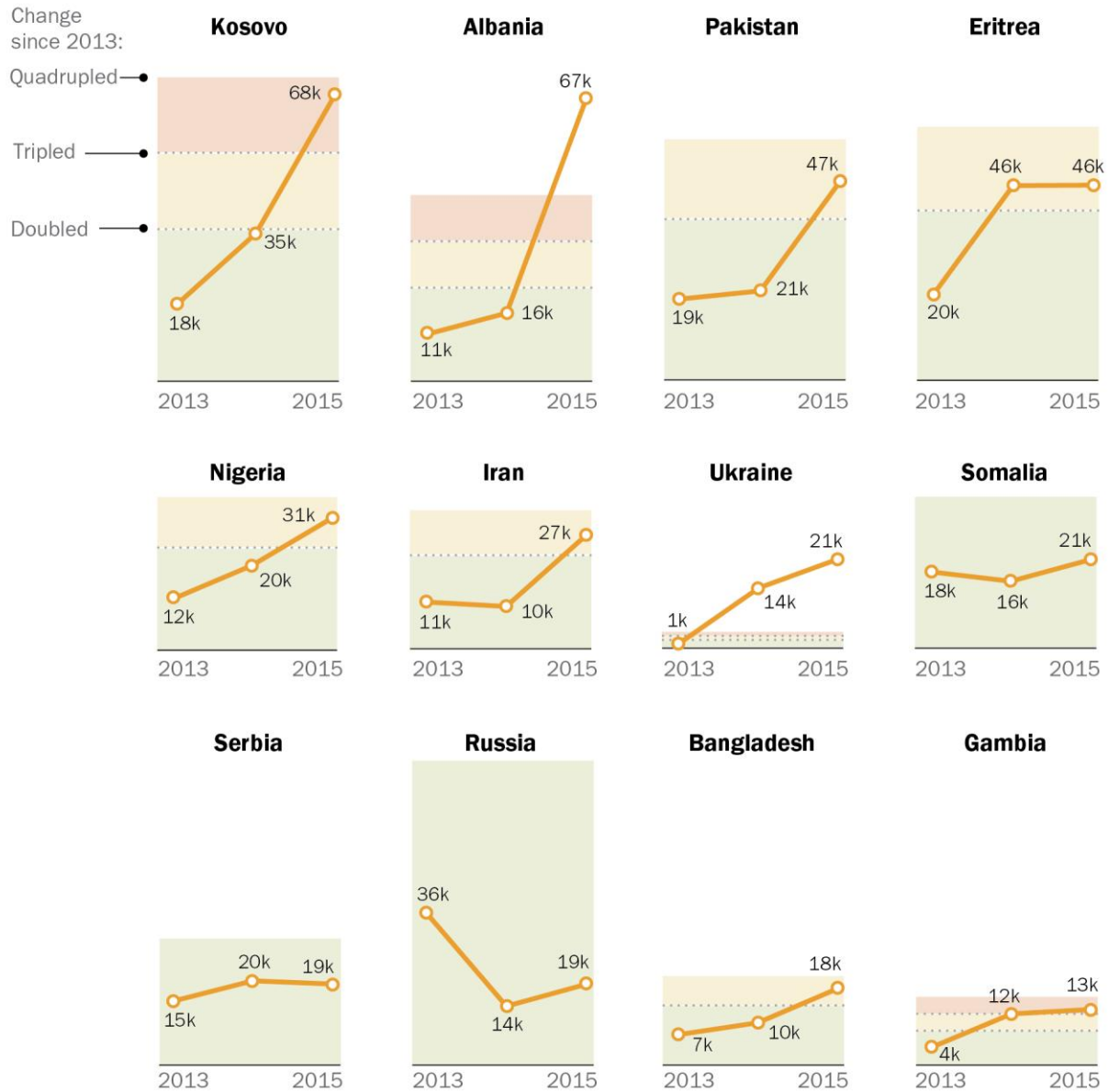
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Appendix B: Asylum seeker origins

Number of asylum seekers from many top countries doubled between 2013 to 2015

Number of first-time asylum applications to Europe from each country of origin, in thousands



Note: "Europe" consists of the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland. Rounded to nearest thousand. Only leading countries of origin in 2015 are shown. Charts are ranked by number of asylum applications from each country in 2015.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Eurostat data, accessed June 22, 2016.

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