

## Asylum Seekers in Europe

**Sept 2016**

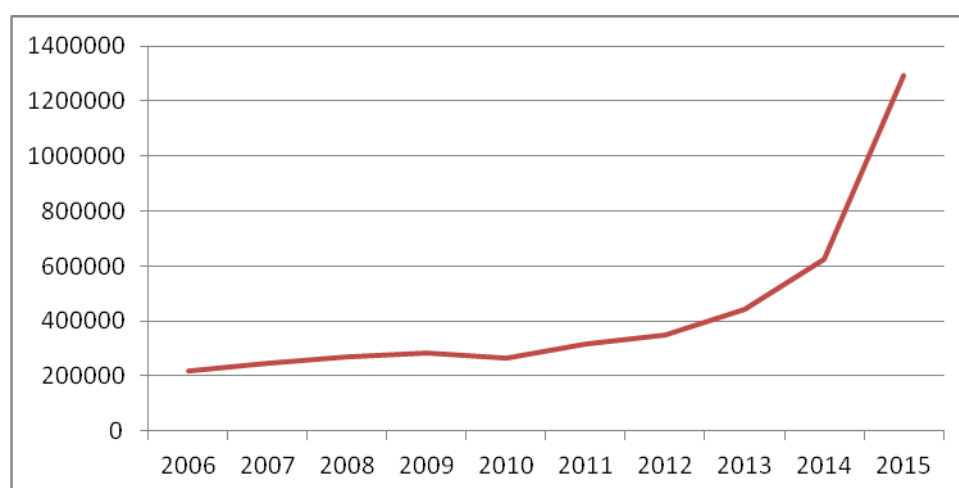
The main source of data covering Europe as a whole is the Eurostat database. Eurostat depends on statistics supplied by the equivalent of the Home Office in each country. The countries covered are the EU28, plus Norway and Switzerland.

The number of asylum seekers in Europe has increased in recent years with a particularly large increase in 2015. The table and chart below show the total number of first time applications in each year since 2008 as reported by Eurostat. Eurostat also publishes figures described as the total number of applications, which includes fresh claims as well as first time applications, and may also have some double counting as a result of applicants who having made an application in one country being removed to another country under the Dublin Regulation, and then making a claim in that country. The trends for these two sets of figures are similar.

In the first 6 months of 2016 there were 607,910 first time applications which suggests that the 2016 total will be quite close to the 2015 figure.

### *First Time Applications*

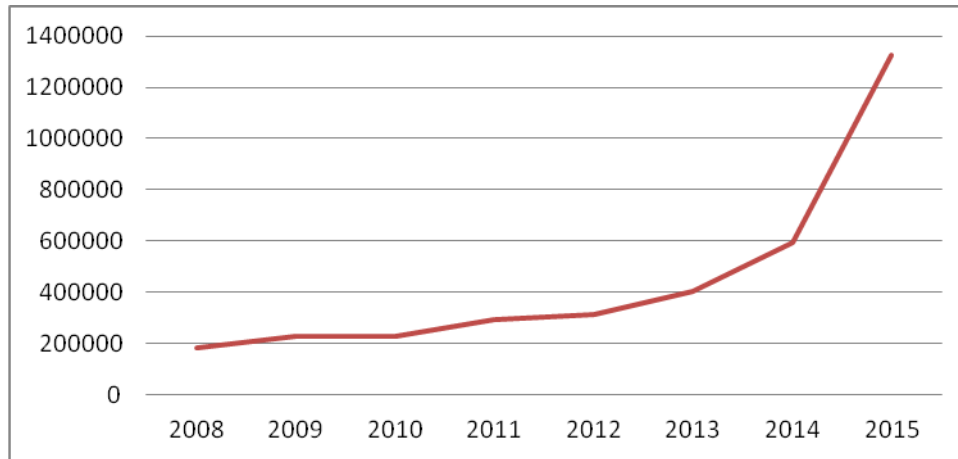
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
182,040	226,725	229,570	290,910	313,265	403,600	595,530	1,324,215



The Home Office also publishes some statistics for the number of asylum applications in Europe. For some countries these are sourced from the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees, and for others from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. They differ from the Eurostat figures by a few percentage points. Generally the Home Office figures are higher than the figure for first time applications quoted by Eurostat, but lower than the total number of applications

quoted by Eurostat, although in 2015 the Home Office figure was lower than both Eurostat figures. The differences are almost certainly due to differences in the methodology of collection of the data.

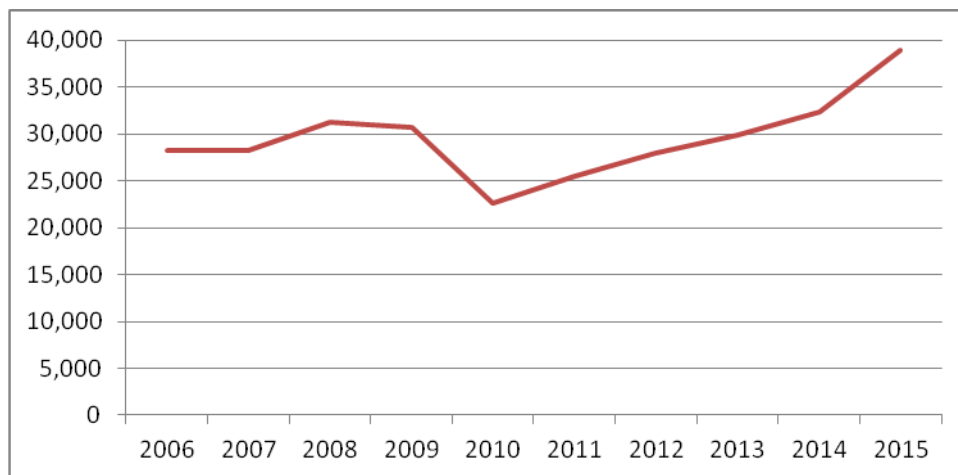
The chart below shows the trend in applications according to the Home Office statistics and it is obviously more or less identical to the trend shown by the Eurostat data.



### UK Figures

The numbers of asylum applications have increased in the UK, but not as steeply as in Europe as a whole. The table and chart below use Home Office statistics. These figures include dependants.

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
31,313	30,673	22,644	25,898	27,978	29,875	32,344	39,968

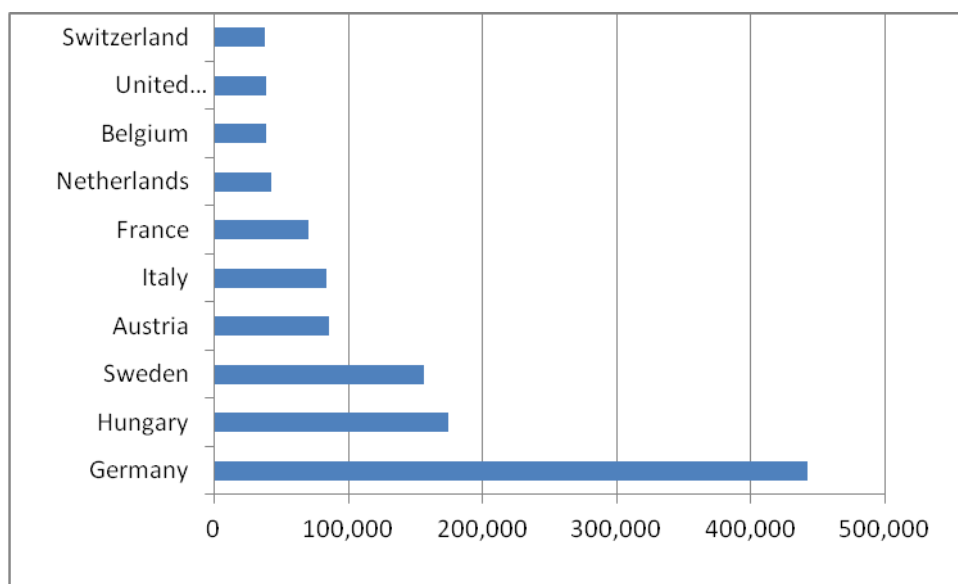


In the first 6 months of 2016 there were 19,978 applications in the UK, again including dependants.

In 2015 the UK was 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of the number of first time asylum applications.

Germany had easily the highest figure at more than 10 times the figure for the UK. Both Sweden and Hungary, with much smaller populations than the UK, had more than 4 times as many applications.

The chart below compares the Eurostat data for the top ten countries for first time applications in 2015.



For the first 6 months of 2016 the UK was 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of the number of first time asylum applications. However this appears to be because of a fall in the number of applications in some other countries rather than a rise in the number of applications in the UK. Eurostat data suggests that the number of applications in the UK in those 6 months is 52% of the total for 2015.

By contrast Germany has had 361,710 applications in the first 6 months of 2016, already 82% of the total for 2015, and more than 18 times as many as the applications in the UK.

In terms of the number of asylum seekers per 1000 population in 2015 the Europe average was 2.48. The corresponding figure for the UK was 0.60. This compares with 16.62 for Sweden, 16.60 for Hungary, 9.44 for Austria, and 5.31 for Germany. There were 18 countries in Europe with a higher figure than the UK. All these figures related to population are taken from Home Office statistics.

If the number of applications is looked at in relation to each country's GDP, again the UK is well below the Europe average. Of the 10 countries in the table above only Germany has a higher nominal GDP than the UK, and Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland have a considerably lower GDP.

### **Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum**

Eurostat data shows that there was a significant increase in applications from unaccompanied children in 2015 compared with earlier years.

From 2008 to 2013 the annual total for Europe as a whole (EU 28 plus Norway and Switzerland) varied between 11,465 and 14,435. However in 2014 it was 23,150 and in 2015, the total recorded is 95,995.

Sweden alone reported 35,250 applications in 2015, more than a third of the total. Germany reported 14,440 applications, Hungary reported 8,805, Norway reported 5,050, and Italy reported 4,070. For the UK the figure increased from 1,945 in 2014 to 3,045 in 2015.

## Countries of Origin of Asylum Seekers

In 2015 there were large increases in applications from several countries of origin compared with 2014. The figures for first time applications for the EU28 plus Norway and Switzerland, for the five countries of origin with the largest number of first time applications in 2015, are shown in the table below.

Country	2014	2015
Syria	124,750	377,960
Afghanistan	39,135	192,940
Iraq	15,290	126,755
Kosovo	34,590	67,530
Albania	16,465	66,780

The corresponding figures for the UK in 2015 were:

Country	2014	2015
Syria	2,025	2,609
Afghanistan	1,139	2,240
Iraq	588	2,185
Kosovo	24	24
Albania	1,576	1,504

Eritrea was the country of origin for the largest number of asylum applicants in the UK in 2015 with 3,729 applications.

## Decisions

Decisions made during 2015 do not necessarily relate to applications made during that year. In fact far fewer decisions were made than applications during 2015. Across Europe (EU 28 plus Norway and Switzerland) a total of 624,420 initial decisions were made in 2015, less than half the number of initial applications.

The table below shows the decisions for the top 10 countries in terms of initial decisions made. A positive decision means a decision to grant refugee status, or humanitarian protection, or a subsidiary protection status.

Country	Decisions	% Refugee	% Positive	% Rejected
Germany	249,280	55.0	56.5	43.5
France	77,910	21.6	26.5	73.5
Italy	71,345	5.0	41.5	58.5
Sweden	44,590	28.6	72.2	27.8
UK	38,080	31.7	36.4	63.6
Switzerland	21,840	28.8	64.0	36.0
Austria	21,095	59.7	71.3	28.7
Netherlands	20,465	32.5	80.4	19.6
Belgium	19,420	45.4	53.8	46.2
Denmark	12,225	62.1	80.9	19.1

It is clear that some countries are much more likely than others to grant humanitarian or subsidiary protection than others. Italy, for example, stands out as very low in terms of grants of refugee status but then has a large increase when all positive decisions are counted. No detail is available describing the type of positive decision described, other than refugee status.

In 2015 across Europe as a whole 39% of decisions were to grant refugee status and 53% were positive.

## Notes

Detailed figures for the UK can be found in Refugee Council briefings on asylum statistics, dealing with quarterly figures and annual trends.

The Eurostat data is as published in September 2016 and may be subject to later revision.

The most recent Home Office statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2016/list-of-tables#asylum>

Eurostat data can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node\\_code=tps00191](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=tps00191)

More information about asylum systems in Europe can be found in the Asylum Information Database:

<http://www.asylumineurope.org/>

Further international data can be found in UN High Commissioner for Refugees publications, especially the annual Global Trends, the most recent of which covered 2015.

<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/>

## About the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. We give help and support to asylum seekers and refugees, and also work with them to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed by decision-makers.