

Public Summary Migration Radar Tertile 2 2018

From this version, the Migration Radar will be published each tertile. Tertile 2 comprises the months May, June, July and August. Before this, the Migration Radar was published once each quarter.

Numbers and distribution of (first) applications for asylum in the Netherlands and Europe+

Applications for asylum in the Netherlands

The total number of first applications for asylum in the Netherlands in the second tertile of 2018 increased in comparison with the same period in 2017 (+1,771, +35%) and in comparison with the first tertile of 2018 (+1,365, +25%). Most applications were made by Syrians (17%), followed by Iranians, Eritreans, Turks and Algerians.

The total number of first applications by nationals of safe countries increased compared to the same period a year ago (+332, 29%), and also compared to the previous tertile (+162, +12%). Although applications from Tunisians increased the most compared to the same period in the preceding year (+97, +303%), a decrease was nevertheless observed compared to the previous tertile (-40, -24%).

The total number of first applications by nationals of countries that are not placed on the list of safe countries increased compared to both the same period a year ago (+1,439, +37%) and the previous tertile (+1,203, +29%). The first asylum applications by Turks increased the most compared to the same period a year ago (+357, +275%) and compared with the tertile before (+208, +75%). Only the applications by Iraqis decreased with respect to a year ago in the same period.

The share of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in the asylum procedure in the second tertile of 2018 increased in comparison with the tertile before (+139, +40%) and compared with a year earlier in the same period (+122, +33%). Eritreans were the largest group of unaccompanied minors (38%).

The total number of removed Dublin claimants in the second tertile of 2018 increased by 27 per cent (+782) compared to the first tertile of 2018 and by 37 per cent (+1,008) compared to a year ago in the same period. Most Dublin claims were made for Algerians (11%), Moroccans (95) and Syrians (8%). Claims were registered mainly for the countries Germany (30%), Italy (20%) and Greece (8%).¹

Applications for asylum in the EU+

In May to June 2018, there were 8 per cent fewer first applications for asylum in the EU+ compared with the year before in the same period. There were, however, 11 per cent more applications for asylum compared with February to April 2018. Most applications for asylum were submitted in Germany, France and Greece. Applications for asylum in Italy decreased most sharply compared to a year earlier (-60%) and the three preceding months (-9%). On the other hand, applications for asylum in Spain increased sharply with respect to a year ago (+195%) and the three preceding months (+53%). Mainly Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis made first applications in the EU+ in May to June 2018.

¹ Since the judgment of the ECHR of 21 January 2011 in the case *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece*, the Netherlands (and other European countries) have not implemented the Dublin Regulation with respect to Greece for asylum seekers with Dublin indications for Greece (Eurodac hit, EU Vis hit etc.). The only exception is if the foreign national is in possession of a valid (regular) residence permit in Greece. If, however, an asylum seeker has a Dublin indication for Greece, a date of sending of a claim is indeed recorded in INDIGO, while no claim-out request is actually sent to Greece. The underlying idea of such recording is that it provides insight into the number of Dublin claims that could have been sent to Greece.

Turkey

In August, the total number of first applications for asylum by Turks in 2018 (769) already substantially exceeded the total number of applications for asylum in 2017 (480). European figures (Eurostat) also show that there has been a great increase in the number of applications for asylum by Turks in the EU+. In April and May 2018 (2,615) Turks made 44% more applications for asylum in the EU+ than in 2017 (1,820). The top 3 receiving countries in the EU+ were Germany, France and Greece.

After Erdoğan won the presidential and parliamentary elections, the power of the president was substantially increased: the office of prime minister was abolished and the president has been given the power to issue decrees to manage ministries and dismiss public servants without approval by the parliament. In June 2018, the state of emergency was lifted but at the same time a counterterrorism act was enacted that was viewed as continuation of the state of emergency. Turkey has been in a financial crisis since the fall of the lira. Criticism is still expressed by NGOs of military operations of Turkey for the purpose of driving away Kurds.

Iran

In August, the number of first applications for asylum by Iranians in 2018 (868) already exceeded the total number of applications in the Netherlands in 2017 (718). European figures (Eurostat) also show that in April and May 2018 (2,995) approximately the same number of first applications for asylum were submitted by Iranians as in 2017 in the same period (3,020). An increase was, however, visible with respect to the two preceding months (+430, +17%). The top 3 receiving countries were Germany, the United Kingdom and Greece.

The declining economy and the rapid fall in the exchange rate of the Rial resulted in economic protests in several places that acquired a (cautious) political nature (more than a hundred persons were arrested for participating in the protests). The (re)introduction of American sanctions also made the economic prospects unfavourable.

Yemen

In August 2018, the number of first applications for asylum in the Netherlands from Yemenites (235) already exceeded the total number of applications in 2017 (171). The vast majority (80%) of the applications were made by men. The number of applications for asylum in the EU+ from Yemenites rose by 106% (+260) compared to the same period last year (April-May 2017 and April-May 2018). The influx in February-March and April-May 2018, however, remained about the same. The top 3 receiving countries were Germany, Greece and Spain.

Yemenites frequently stay in surrounding countries, but are not part of the top ten largest groups who travel across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

At present, the worst humanitarian crisis in the world exists in Yemen, in which 22 million people need humanitarian aid. The Houthis, who control the capital and the largest part of the west of Yemen, regularly fire long-distance rockets at the southern part of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi capital Riyadh or Saudi oil facilities. In September the first peace negotiations in two years will be conducted in order to guarantee peace between the Yemenite security troops supported by Saudi Arabia and the Houthis. In June 2018, the exiled president Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi returned to Yemen for the first time, presumably to strengthen his position in the country.

Venezuela

The political and other developments in Venezuela have influenced the migration flows to countries in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba and Curaçao) and to a special municipality of the Netherlands, Bonaire. The influx of Venezuelans to the Netherlands is low but seems to be increasing.

The number of first applications for asylum in the Netherlands by Venezuelans in August 2018 (92 applications) already exceeded the number of applications in 2017 (77 applications). Most applications (51%) were submitted by 18 to 34-year-olds and 20 per cent of the applicants were between zero and thirteen years of age. The number of applications by Venezuelans for asylum in the EU+ has increased substantially (+3,685, +211%) compared to the same period last year (April-May 2017). Spain receives the most Venezuelans by far (91%) and the other receiving countries in the top 3 are Italy and France.

The unstable economic situation has caused poverty in Venezuela to rise enormously. Maduro won the presidential election in May 2018 and started a second term. During a speech by Maduro on 4 August 2018, explosions could be heard, presumably caused by a drone attack. Maduro accused the rightist parties, and the Colombian and American governments. An estimated 1.5 million Venezuelans have left their country since 2014. Approximately 600,000 of them are in Colombia. Most applications were submitted in Peru, followed by the US and Brazil. Peru and Ecuador have meanwhile set the requirement that Venezuelans must possess a valid passport, but many Venezuelans do not have a passport and it is also difficult for them to obtain one.

Overview of routes and developments

Recorded irregular border crossings

The total numbers of irregular border crossings recorded on the four main routes to Europe up to now are almost 41% lower than in the same period in 2017. On the reference date of 31 August, the Western Mediterranean Route noted the highest influx of the four routes.

- Central Mediterranean Route: decrease (79%) in the number of irregular border crossings recorded. Libya remains the main country of departure to Italy, but the importance of Tunisia as a country of departure has increased.
- Eastern Mediterranean Route: increase (15%) in the number of irregular crossings recorded. The top 5 nationalities are the same as in previous periods (Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan and to a lesser degree Iranian and Pakistani).
- West Balkan Route: decrease (58%) in the number of irregular crossings recorded. There seems to be a shift of routes on the West Balkan Route to the so-called Western Corridor. Mainly Afghans and Pakistanis use this route.
- Western Mediterranean Route: increase (263%) in the number of irregular crossings recorded. Most migrants come from Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Ivory Coast and Gambia.
- Arrivals across land from Turkey to Greece: sharp increase in the number of irregular crossings recorded on the Greek side at the national border with Turkey. These migrants usually have Turkish nationality (46%).

Main socio-political developments in the regions

- North Africa and the Horn of Africa:

The political ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea seem to have been restored. As yet, it is not very well known what consequences this will have for the flows of refugees (probably stagnation of influx into neighbouring countries). Applications for asylum by Tunisians have risen with respect to last year, but seem to be decreasing in comparison with the preceding tertile. In Libya, rivalry between the different government leaders is increasing. The Libyan Coast Guard intercepts refugees and migrants. The refusal of migrant ships by Italy has resulted in a decrease of the influx of migrants into Italy. In Morocco, compulsory military service has been introduced again and pardons have been granted to a large group of Hirak activists. Closure of the Balkan Route has made the route via North Africa more popular. With that, Morocco has also become a transit country. Algerian authorities continue to deport migrants under inhumane circumstances.

- Middle East:

The Syrian authorities are recapturing increasingly more territory from opposition groups. The Syrian army is now expected to target the northern province of Idlib. Turkey has built a wall at the border with Syria. Turkey therefore no longer seems to be a possible escape route for the residents of Idlib during an attack by the Syrian army. There has been an increase in returnees in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the last tertile, there was a sharp increase in the number of first asylum applications by Moldavians. More recent figures however show that in the last few months the number of first applications for asylum by Moldavians has decreased again.

Policy developments

European Policy

Within the European Union (EU), various proposals have been made by the European Commission (EC) and several measures have been taken. In 2015 the EU established an EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The purpose of this emergency fund is inter alia to tackle the causes of irregular migration. In the past period the EC has approved a number of additional projects and programmes. In addition, in the proposal for the long-term budget for the period 2021-2027, the EC argued for a tripling of the budget for migration and border control to a total of €34.9 billion. On 28 June, the European Council held a meeting in Brussels. The leaders of the EU Member States concluded that: 'a precondition for a functioning EU policy relies on a comprehensive approach to migration.' This includes several measures aimed at the different Mediterranean Sea routes and development of the concept of disembarking platforms.

Dutch policy

On 18 May 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the policy memorandum for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS). One of the objectives of the policy memorandum is to improve the reception of refugees and displaced persons in the region and combat irregular migration.

Policy of EU Member States

In August, the German government concluded agreements with Spain and Greece. Early in September Germany also concluded a preliminary agreement with the Italian government. It was agreed in the bilateral agreements that Germany may send asylum seekers back to the first country of arrival within 48 hours. The agreements aim to speed up the return process.