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A total of 1,928 applications for international protection were received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2016 - an increase of 4.6 per cent over the preceding year. No boat arrivals with asylum seekers were registered during this period.

World Refugee Day: 20 June 2017

During 2016, no boat landings were recorded with only 24 persons being airlifted out at sea and brought to Maltese shores (Table 1). The absolute majority of these persons were citizens of African countries (Table 2).

A total of 1,928 applications were lodged with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner – an increase of 4.6 per cent over the previous year (Table 3). When analysing asylum applications in the context of the European Union, Malta ranks fourth after Germany, Austria and Greece when considering applicants per million population (Table 7). Almost three-fourths of the applicants were citizens of African countries, with over a third (34.5 per cent) being Libyan citizens. A further 17.1 per cent of the applicants were Syrian citizens. A large proportion of the applicants (42.4 per cent) were males aged between 18 and 34 (Table 5).

During 2016, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner processed a total of 1,435 applications: 83.1 per cent were granted a positive decision at first instance, while the remaining applications were rejected (Table 8). Nearly two-thirds (64.2 per cent) of the applicants who were granted asylum during the year under review were citizens of African countries, while a further 32.7 per cent were citizens of Asian countries (Table 9). Of all the applicants granted international protection during 2016, 44.5 per cent were of Libyan citizenship while 30.1 per cent were of Syrian citizenship (Table 10).

An increase of 11.4 per cent was registered in the resident population of open centres and other institutional households, when compared to the preceding year. Just over half of these persons were residing in Ħal Far while 28.4 per cent were living in Marsa. A further 272 persons were residing in other institutional households, excluding open centres (Table 11). The majority of the residents were males while almost a quarter were of Eritrean citizenship (Table 13).

Last year, 461 third-country nationals were resettled in another country – a decrease of 19.1 per cent over 2015. Another 14 persons benefitted from assisted voluntary return programmes (Table 15) ■

Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2005-2016

Year	Number of boats arriving	Number of people on board*
2005	48	1,822
2006	57	1,780
2007	68	1,702
2008	84	2,775
2009	17	1,475
2010	2	47
2011	9	1,579
2012	27	1,890
2013	24	2,008
2014	5	569
2015	1	106
2016	-	24

* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea
Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section.

Table 2. Irregular immigrants arriving by boat* by nationality: 2016

Nationality	Number	% total
Africa	23	95.8
Eritrean	3	12.5
Ghanaian	1	4.2
Guinean	1	4.2
Ivorian	4	16.7
Nigerian	3	12.5
Senegalese	2	8.3
Somalian	9	37.5
Unspecified	1	4.2
Total	24	100.0

* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea
Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section.

Chart 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2005-2016



* Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea

Table 3. Total applications for asylum and annual percentage change of applications filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2005-2016

Year	Number of applications	Year-on-year % change
2005	1,165	-
2006	1,261	8.2
2007	1,386	9.9
2008	2,608	88.2
2009	2,387	-8.5
2010	176	-92.6
2011	1,891	974.4
2012	2,080	10.0
2013	2,246	8.0
2014	1,352	-39.8
2015	1,844	36.4
2016	1,928	4.6

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Table 4. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2016

Month	Total	% total
January	111	5.8
February	142	7.4
March	181	9.4
April	117	6.1
May	142	7.4
June	184	9.5
July	157	8.1
August	189	9.8
September	174	9.0
October	241	12.5
November	167	8.7
December	123	6.4
Total	1,928	100.0

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Table 5. Total applications for asylum by sex, country of citizenship and age: 2016

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	63	46	109
Macedonia	2	2	4
Russia	1	4	5
Serbia	2	6	8
Turkey	4	2	6
Ukraine	53	31	84
Other European countries	1	1	2
Africa	996	382	1,378
Egypt	15	11	26
Eritrea	199	88	287
Ethiopia	29	17	46
Gambia	7	-	7
Ivory Coast	6	3	9
Libya	470	195	665
Morocco	3	6	9
Nigeria	20	13	33
Senegal	3	2	5
Somalia	202	41	243
Sudan	23	4	27
Tunisia	4	-	4
Other African countries	15	2	17
America	11	2	13
Venezuela	9	1	10
Other American countries	2	1	3
Asia	288	140	428
Afghanistan	3	5	8
Bangladesh	8	-	8
Iran	6	3	9
Iraq	40	3	43
Pakistan	5	1	6
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	11	5	16
Syria	211	119	330
Other Asian countries	4	4	8
Total	1,358	570	1,928
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	244	209	453
18-34	818	251	1,069
35 or more	296	110	406
Total	1,358	570	1,928

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Table 6. Top 5 countries of citizenship of asylum applicants: 2016

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total applicants
1	Libya	665	34.5
2	Syria	330	17.1
3	Eritrea	287	14.9
4	Somalia	243	12.6
5	Ukraine	84	4.4

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Table 7. Asylum applicants by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2016

Reporting country	Total applicants	Total applicants per million population
EU		
Austria	42,285	4,866
Belgium	18,325	1,620
Bulgaria	19,420	2,715
Croatia	2,225	531
Cyprus	2,940	3,466
Czech Republic	1,480	140
Denmark	6,195	1,085
Estonia	175	133
Finland	5,625	1,025
France	84,270	1,262
Germany	745,265	9,069
Greece	51,110	4,740
Hungary	29,430	2,994
Ireland	2,245	475
Italy	122,960	2,027
Latvia	350	178
Lithuania	430	149
Luxembourg	2,160	3,748
Malta	1,930	4,443
Netherlands	20,945	1,234
Poland	12,305	324
Portugal	1,465	142
Romania	1,880	95
Slovakia	145	27
Slovenia	1,310	635
Spain	15,755	339
Sweden	28,860	2,930
United Kingdom	38,870	595

Source: Eurostat [migr_asyappctza].

Chart 2. Asylum applicants in EU countries per million population: 2016

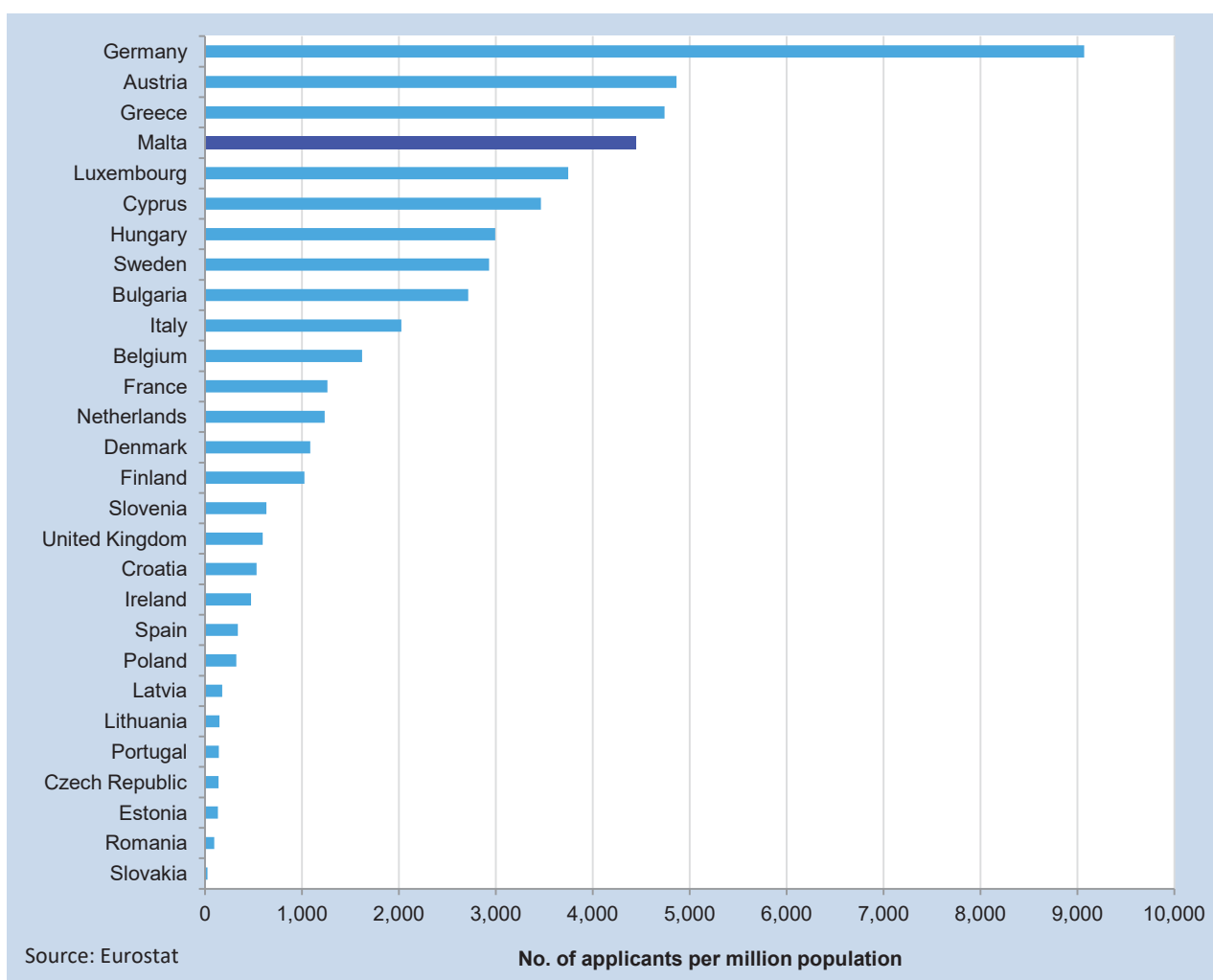


Table 8. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2005-2016

Year	Positive decisions				Rejections		Total
	Granted refugee status	Other forms of protection status	Total		Absolute	% total	
			Absolute	% total			
2005	36	510	546	49.5	556	50.5	1,102
2006	22	481	503	48.1	542	51.9	1,045
2007	7	623	630	65.7	329	34.3	959
2008	19	1,397	1,416	52.5	1,281	47.5	2,697
2009	20	1,671	1,691	65.7	884	34.3	2,575
2010	43	179	222	63.8	126	36.2	348
2011	70	814	884	55.0	722	45.0	1,606
2012	35	1,398	1,433	90.1	157	9.9	1,590
2013	43	1,563	1,606	84.3	299	15.7	1,905
2014	191	1,068	1,259	72.6	476	27.4	1,735
2015	263	987	1,250	83.8	241	16.2	1,491
2016	167	1,025	1,192	83.1	243	16.9	1,435

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Chart 3. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2016

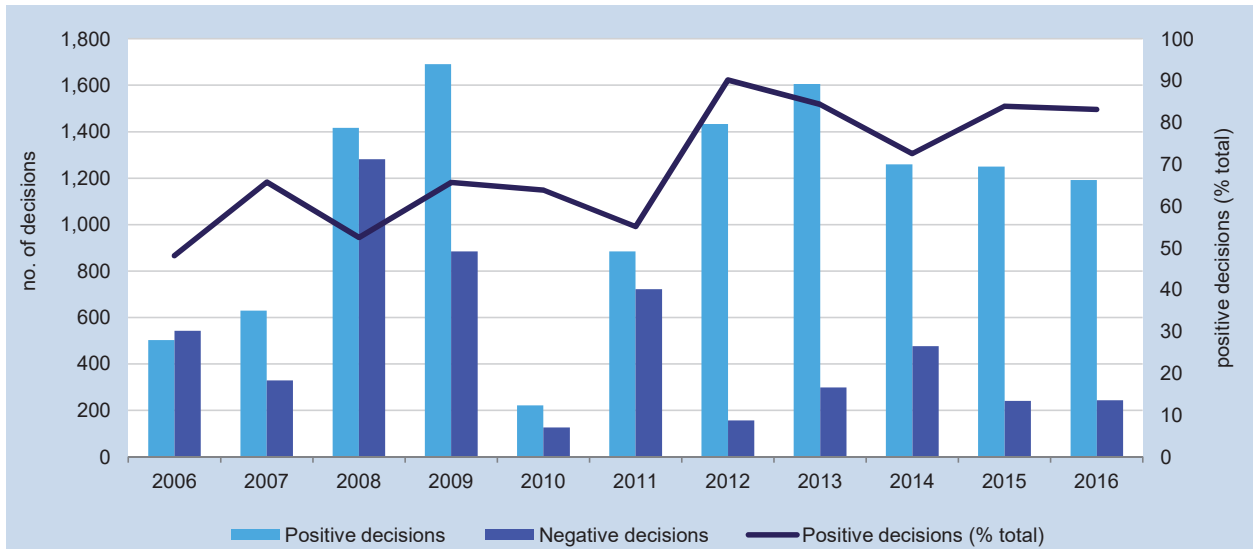


Table 9. Positive decisions (Refugee status, subsidiary status or equivalent decisions) taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by sex, country of citizenship and age: 2016

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	20	15	35
Ukraine	19	14	33
Other European countries	1	1	2
Africa	539	226	765
Egypt	2	6	8
Eritrea	67	35	102
Ethiopia	6	3	9
Libya	384	146	530
Morocco	1	3	4
Nigeria	4	2	6
Somalia	65	27	92
Sudan	6	1	7
Other African countries	4	3	7
America	1	1	2
Other American countries	1	1	2
Asia	259	131	390
Iran	4	3	7
Iraq	16	-	16
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	2	2	4
Syria	233	126	359
Other Asian countries	4	-	4
Total	819	373	1,192
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	210	170	380
18-34	445	127	572
35 or more	164	76	240
Total	819	373	1,192

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Chart 4. Applications filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner and first instance decisions: 2005-2016

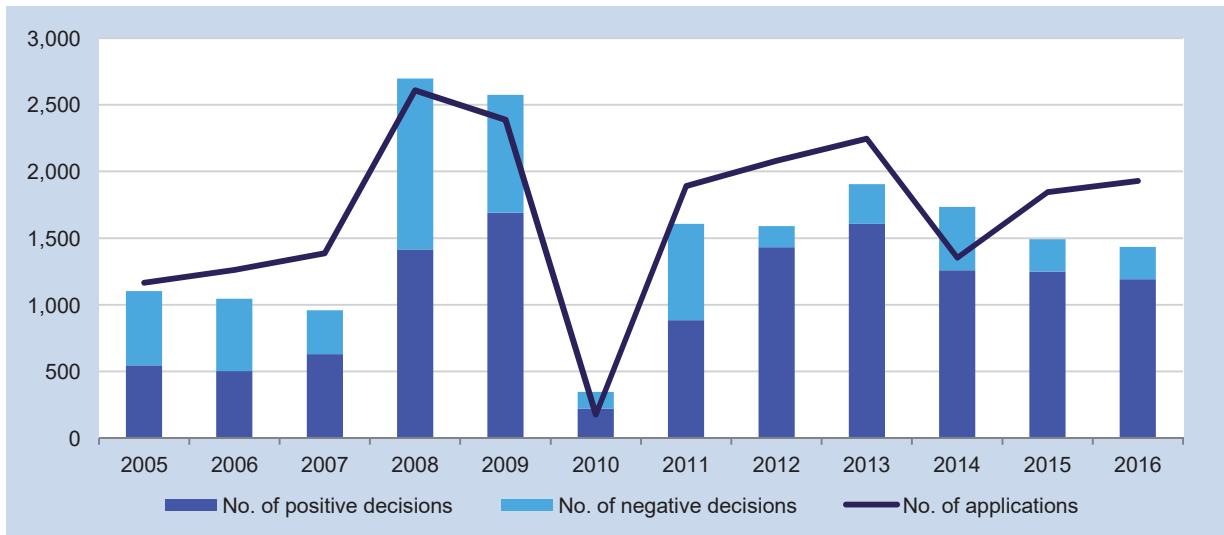


Table 10. Top 5 countries of citizenship of beneficiaries of protection status: 2016

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total beneficiaries
1	Libya	530	44.5
2	Syria	359	30.1
3	Eritrea	102	8.6
4	Somalia	92	7.7
5	Ukraine	33	2.8

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

Table 11. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by locality as at end of year: 2013-2016

Locality	2013	2014	2015	2016
Open centres	1,255	685	339	401
Birkirkara	20	12	-	-
Fgura	20	7	6	48
Floriana	15	3	20	30
Hal Far	905	460	253	209
Marsa	295	203	60	114
Other institutional households	244	79	265	272
Total	1,499	764	604	673

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 12. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex: 2013-2016

Year	Males	Females	Total
2013	1,156	343	1,499
2014	649	115	764
2015	442	162	604
2016	486	187	673

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

**Table 13. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households
by sex and country of citizenship: 2016**

Country of origin	Males	Females	Total
Europe	12	7	19
Turkey	12	6	18
Other European countries	-	1	1
Africa	402	158	560
Cameroon	3	1	4
Chad	3	1	4
Eritrea	94	69	163
Ethiopia	51	47	98
Gambia	8	-	8
Ghana	8	-	8
Guinea	4	-	4
Guinea Bissau	7	-	7
Ivory Coast	13	4	17
Libya	48	2	50
Mali	16	-	16
Nigeria	13	9	22
Senegal	15	2	17
Somalia	100	23	123
Sudan	8	-	8
Other African countries	11	-	11
Asia	72	22	94
Iraq	21	3	24
Palestine	4	-	4
Philippines	5	3	8
Syria	36	15	51
Other Asian countries	6	1	7
Total	486	187	673

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 14. Top 5 countries of citizenship of open centre residents: 2016

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total residents
1	Eritrea	163	24.2
2	Somalia	123	18.3
3	Ethiopia	98	14.6
4	Syria	51	7.6
5	Libya	50	7.4

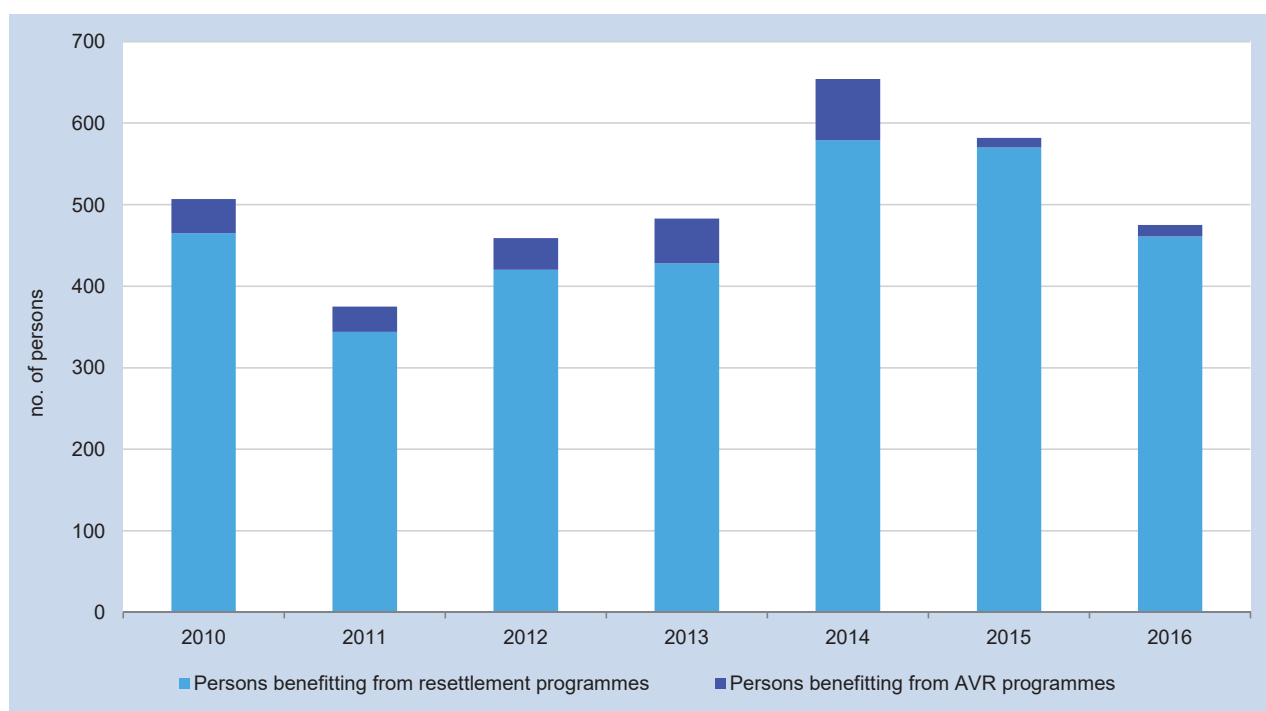
Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 15. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes: 2010-2016

Year of resettlement	Number of persons resettled	Number of persons returned
2010	465	42
2011	344	31
2012	420	39
2013	428	55
2014	579	75
2015	570	12
2016	461	14

Source: Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security.

Chart 6. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return programmes: 2010-2016



Methodological Notes

1. This news release makes reference to various sources available to the NSO, including:
 - **Office of the Refugee Commissioner:** the main source of data related to applications for asylum and asylum decisions in Malta.
 - **Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS):** the main source for data related to open centres.
 - **Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section:** the main source of statistics on boat arrivals and on forced returns involving third-country nationals.
 - **Third Country Nationals Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security:** the main source of statistics on resettlements and assisted voluntary returns.
2. Asylum data are being presented in alignment with Eurostat guidelines provided in relation to Regulation (EC) No. 862/2007. Methodological information regarding applications can be accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asyapp_esms.htm and methodological information regarding decisions on applications can be accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asydec_esms.htm

3. Definitions

- **Asylum seeker:** A person who has requested asylum in a country and is awaiting a decision on the application under relevant national and international processes. This definition generally refers to all who apply for protection on an individual basis, irrespective of whether they lodge their application on arrival at an airport or land border, or from inside the country, and irrespective of whether they entered the territory legally or illegally (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
- **Asylum applicant:** A person having submitted an application for international protection.
- **Application for asylum:** The application made by a third-country national or a stateless person which can be understood as a request for international protection from a Member State under the Geneva Convention. Any application for international protection is presumed to be an application for asylum unless a third-country national or a stateless person explicitly requests another kind of protection that can be applied for separately. An application for asylum is deemed to have been lodged once a form is submitted by the applicant for asylum or a report prepared by the authorities has reached the competent authorities.
- **Assisted voluntary returns (AVR):** Programmes which provide administrative and financial support to non-nationals residing in the country who wish to return permanently to their country of origin. Such support also ensures that their return is sustainable.
- **Geneva Convention status:** Refugee status granted within the meaning of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28th July 1951 to a person "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (*Source: Medstat-Euro-Mediterranean statistical cooperation*).
- **Person granted authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons:** A person covered by a decision granting authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons under national law concerning international protection. It includes persons who are not eligible for international protection but are nonetheless protected against removal.
- **Person granted subsidiary protection status:** A person who is eligible for subsidiary protection is a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his/her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his/her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and is unable or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country (Art.2(e), Directive 2004/83/EC).
- **Refugee:** A third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reason as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (Art.2(d), Directive 2004/83/EC).
- **Rejected applicant:** A person covered by a decision rejecting an application for international protection under consideration by the responsible national authority.
- **Resettlement:** The transfer of third-country nationals or stateless persons to another country where they are permitted to reside with a secure legal status.

- **Third-country national:** Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union.
- **Unaccompanied minor:** An asylum applicant considered to be an unaccompanied minor is a minor (aged less than 18) who arrives unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him. It includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he has entered the country. In the case that an age assessment procedure is required, the age reported shall be the age determined by the mentioned procedure.

4. Geographical information

- The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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