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During 2015, 1,844 applications were received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner, an increase of 36.4 per cent over the preceding year.

World Refugee Day: 20 June 2016

During 2015, 106 irregular immigrants reached the Maltese shores, a decrease of 81.4 per cent over the preceding year. Of these persons, 99.1 per cent were of African origin (Table 2). Almost half of the African persons arriving by boat were Malian and Senegalese nationals (25.7 and 22.9 per cent respectively).

The Office of the Refugee Commissioner filed 1,844 applications for international protection in 2015 (Table 3). Nearly half (46.6 per cent) of these applicants were males aged between 18 and 34. The majority, 68.1 per cent, were Africans, of whom 71.7 per cent were Libyans. Another 26.2 per cent originated from Asia, predominantly from Syria (86.1 per cent) (Table 5).

During 2015, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner processed 1,491 applications: 83.8 per cent were granted a positive decision, while the remaining applications were rejected (Table 6). Nearly three-quarters (72.2 per cent) of the applicants who were granted asylum were of African origin while a further 23.4 per cent were Asians (Table 7).

A decrease of 20.9 per cent was registered in the number of persons residing in open centres and other institutional households. The majority, or 74.6 per cent, of these persons were residing in Hal Far, while a further 17.7 per cent were residing in Marsa (Table 8). The majority of the residents were males whereas 17.7 per cent were Ethiopians (Table 10).

During 2015, 577 persons were found to be present illegally in Malta, a decrease of 41.8 per cent over the previous year. The largest share, or 43.2 per cent, were Africans, while a further 36.0 per cent were Europeans (mainly of Serbian nationality). Moreover, 69.7 per cent of these migrants were between 18 and 34 years old. Of the persons who were found to be illegally present in Malta, 466 persons were returned to a third country, of which 44.0 per cent returned to European countries, predominantly Serbia (Table 11).

Last year, 570 third-country nationals were resettled in another country. Another 12 persons benefitted from assisted voluntary return programmes (Tables 12 and 13) ■

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Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2002-2015

Year	Number of boats arriving	Number of people on board*
2002	21	1,686
2003	12	502
2004	52	1,388
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

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

Table 2. Irregular immigrants arriving by boat* by nationality: 2015

Nationality	Number	Percentage total
Africa	105	99.1
Comoran	5	4.7
Gambian	5	4.7
Guinea-Bissauan	11	10.4
Ivorian	18	17.0
Malian	27	25.5
Senegalese	24	22.6
Somalian	5	4.7
Other African nationalities	10	9.4
Unspecified	1	0.9
Total	106	100.0

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

Table 3. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2002-2015

Year	Number of applications
2002	350
2003	455
2004	995
2005	1,165
2006	1,261
2007	1,386
2008	2,608
2009	2,387
2010	176
2011	1,891
2012	2,080
2013	2,246
2014	1,352
2015	1,844

Source: Eurostat.

Table 4. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by sex and month: 2015

Month	Males	Females	Total
January	76	17	93
February	140	29	169
March	107	22	129
April	88	26	114
May	131	48	179
June	89	32	121
July	107	38	145
August	100	28	128
September	126	48	174
October	169	68	237
November	144	53	197
December	109	49	158
Total	1,386	458	1,844

Source: Eurostat.

Table 5. Total applications for asylum by sex, country of citizenship and age: 2015

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	45	46	91
Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of	11	3	14
Ukraine	31	40	71
Other European countries	3	3	6
Africa	965	291	1,256
Algeria	11	1	12
Comoros	5	-	5
Egypt	18	9	27
Eritrea	36	42	78
Ethiopia	18	6	24
Gambia	8	-	8
Guinea-Bissau	12	-	12
Ivory Coast	18	3	21
Libya	709	192	901
Mali	28	-	28
Morocco	2	3	5
Nigeria	15	9	24
Senegal	25	-	25
Somalia	34	22	56
Sudan	10	-	10
Tunisia	5	3	8
Other African countries	11	1	12
America	4	10	14
Venezuela	3	7	10
Other American countries	1	3	4
Asia	372	111	483
Bangladesh	3	2	5
Iran	5	5	10
Iraq	8	7	15
Pakistan	7	2	9
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	12	3	15
Syria	328	88	416
Other Asian countries	9	4	13
Total	1,386	458	1,844
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	232	165	397
18-34	860	173	1,033
35 or more	294	120	414
Total	1,386	458	1,844

Source: Eurostat.

Table 6. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2002-2015

Year	Positive decisions			Rejections	Total
	Granted refugee status	Subsidiary protection or other forms of protection*	Total		
2002	22	111	133	286	419
2003	53	328	381	187	568
2004	49	560	609	259	868
2005	36	510	546	556	1,102
2006	22	481	503	542	1,045
2007	7	623	630	329	959
2008	19	1,397	1,416	1,281	2,697
2009	20	1,671	1,691	884	2,575
2010	43	179	222	126	348
2011	70	814	884	722	1,606
2012	35	1,398	1,433	157	1,590
2013	43	1,563	1,606	299	1,905
2014	191	1,068	1,259	476	1,735
2015	263	987	1,250	241	1,491

Source: Eurostat.

* Up to 2006, asylum decisions were taken in respect of 'temporary humanitarian status' in place of 'subsidiary protection status'.

Chart 1. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2015

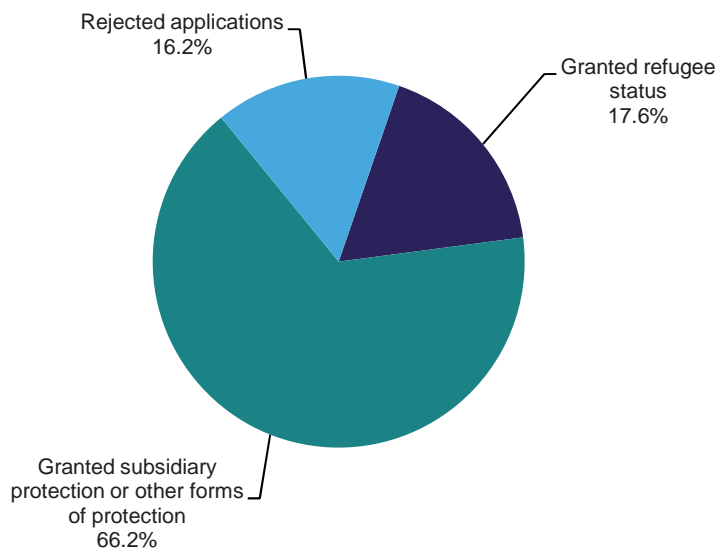


Chart 2. First instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2015

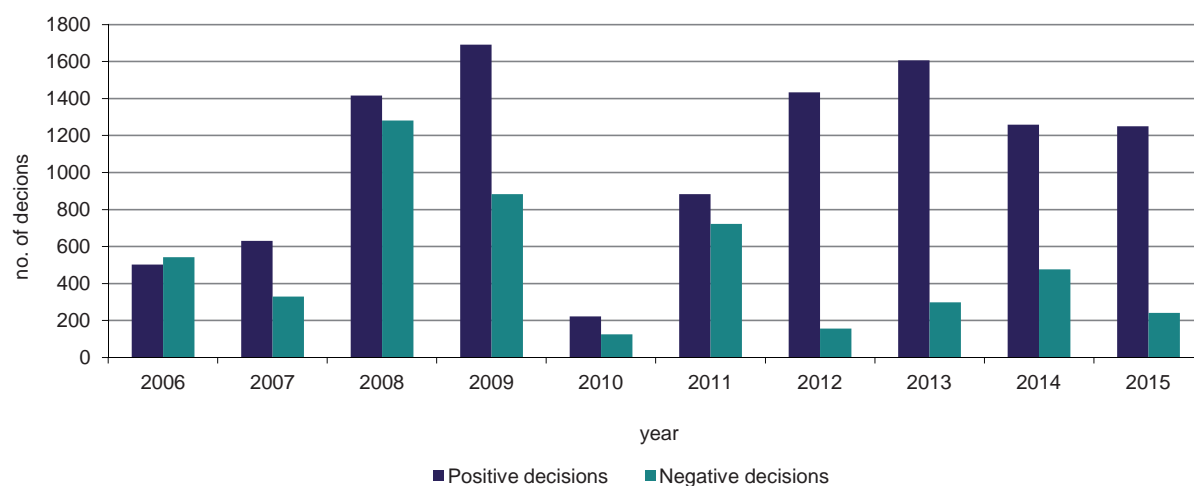


Table 7. Positive decisions (Refugee status, subsidiary status or equivalent decisions) taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by sex and country of citizenship: 2015

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
Europe	20	34	54
Ukraine	18	32	50
Other European countries	2	2	4
Africa	677	226	903
Egypt	5	6	11
Eritrea	22	31	53
Ethiopia	9	1	10
Libya	602	165	767
Mali	4	-	4
Nigeria	3	2	5
Somalia	23	17	40
Other African countries	9	4	13
America	-	1	1
Other American countries	-	1	1
Asia	235	57	292
Iran	3	4	7
Iraq	2	2	4
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	4	2	6
Syria	222	47	269
Other Asian countries	4	2	6
Total	932	318	1,250
Age	Males	Females	Total
0-17	156	130	286
18-34	599	111	710
35 or more	177	77	254
Total	932	318	1,250

Source: Eurostat.

Table 8. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by locality as at end of year: 2012-2015

Locality	2012	2013	2014	2015
Open centres	1,453	1,255	685	339
Birkirkara	24	20	12	-
Fgura	50	20	7	6
Floriana	26	15	3	20
Hal Far	1,091	905	460	253
Marsa	262	295	203	60
Other institutional households	295	244	79	265
Total	1,748	1,499	764	604

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 9. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex: 2012-2015

Year	Males	Females	Total
2012	1,291	457	1,748
2013	1,156	343	1,499
2014	649	115	764
2015	442	162	604

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 10. Migrants residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex and country of origin: 2015

Country of origin	Males	Females	Total
Europe	12	5	17
Turkey	12	5	17
Africa	398	148	546
Cameroon	3	1	4
Chad	3	1	4
Comoros	5	-	5
Eritrea	49	51	100
Ethiopia	60	47	107
Gambia	23	1	24
Ghana	6	-	6
Guinea	4	-	4
Guinea Bissau	15	-	15
Ivory Coast	14	2	16
Libya	44	3	47
Mali	46	-	46
Nigeria	28	18	46
Senegal	34	-	34
Somalia	40	23	63
Sudan	12	-	12
Other African countries	12	1	13
Asia	32	9	41
Bangladesh	2	2	4
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	4	-	4
Syria	19	4	23
Other Asian countries	7	3	10
Total	442	162	604

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

Table 11. Third-country nationals found to be illegally residing in Malta and subject to an obligation to leave by age and country of citizenship: 2015

Country of citizenship	Subject to an obligation to leave				Returned to a third country
	0-17	18-34	35 or more	Total	
Europe	-	149	59	208	205
Albania	-	4	1	5	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	5	3	8	8
Macedonia	-	26	5	31	31
Russia	-	8	1	9	9
Serbia	-	88	42	130	127
Turkey	-	6	1	7	7
Ukraine	-	9	5	14	14
Other European countries	-	3	1	4	4
Africa	15	181	53	249	148
Algeria	1	4	1	6	10
Comoros	-	3	2	5	-
Egypt	-	4	4	8	7
Gambia	-	6	1	7	2
Guinea-Bissau	-	11	-	11	-
Ivory Coast	1	16	1	18	1
Libya	1	60	33	94	82
Mali	7	21	-	28	4
Nigeria	1	12	4	17	22
Senegal	2	23	-	25	-
Somalia	-	6	-	6	1
South Africa	-	5	1	6	6
Other African countries	2	10	6	18	13
America	-	24	8	32	31
Brazil	-	14	1	15	15
United States	-	3	4	7	7
Other American countries	-	7	3	10	9
Asia	-	48	36	84	78
China (including Hong Kong)	-	6	13	19	18
Georgia	-	3	1	4	4
India	-	1	4	5	5
Iraq	-	2	2	4	3
Israel	-	9	-	9	9
Kazakhstan	-	1	3	4	4
North Korea	-	-	5	5	5
Philippines	-	4	2	6	6
South Korea	-	5	1	6	6
Uzbekistan	-	7	1	8	7
Other Asian countries	-	10	4	14	11
Oceania	-	-	4	4	4
Australia	-	-	4	4	4
Total	15	402	160	577	466

Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section.

Table 12. Total resettlements: 2010-2015

Year of resettlement	Number of persons resettled
2010	465
2011	344
2012	420
2013	428
2014	579
2015	570

Source: Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security.

Table 13. Total persons benefiting from assisted voluntary return programmes: 2010-2015

Year of return	Number of persons returned
2010	42
2011	31
2012	39
2013	55
2014	75
2015	12

Source: Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security.

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 the numerical data related to applications for asylum and asylum decisions in Malta.
- **Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS):** provides all the numerical information on open centres.
- **Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section:** the main source of statistics on illegal boat arrivals and on forced returns involving third-country nationals.
- **Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security:** the main source of statistics on resettlements and assisted voluntary returns.

2. 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 instruments (mostly under Article 1 of the Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees of 28th July 1951). 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 (e.g. as a tourist) 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 (including requests for refugee status or for subsidiary protection status) 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.
- **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.
- **Third-country national:** Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union.