

A total of 2,131 applications for international protection were received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2018 – an increase of 15.9 per cent over the preceding year.

## World Refugee Day: 20 June 2019

During 2018, 16 boat landings (including persons air lifted from sea) were recorded in Malta with 1,445 persons being brought to Maltese shores (Table 1). The majority of persons brought to shore were citizens of African countries (80.1 per cent) while 19.9 per cent were citizens of Asian countries (Table 2).

A total of 2,131 applications were lodged with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2018 – an increase of 15.9 per cent over the previous year (Table 3). When analysing asylum applications in the context of the European Union – applications per million population – Malta ranked third after Cyprus and Greece (Chart 3). The majority of applications were lodged by citizens of African countries (60.2 per cent). When considering individual countries with regards to the total applications for asylum, the largest proportion of the applicants were Syrian citizens (22.8 per cent). A further 15.0 per cent and 14.5 per cent were Somali and Libyan citizens respectively.

During 2018, the Office of the Refugee Commissioner processed a total of 1,500 applications: 43.1 per cent were granted a positive decision at first instance, while the remaining applications were rejected (56.9 per cent) (Table 8). More than half of the applicants who were granted a form of protection status during the year under review were citizens of African countries (59.3 per cent) while a further 37.8 per cent were citizens of Asian countries (Table 9). Of all the applicants granted a form of protection status during 2018, 35.3 per cent were of Syrian citizenship while 34.5 per cent were of Libyan citizenship (Table 9).

An increase of 30.5 per cent was registered in the resident population of open centres and other institutional households when compared to the preceding year. The majority of this population was residing in Hal Far (71.9 per cent; Table 12). The largest share of residents were males (77.0 per cent; Table 13) while 13.8 per cent and 13.0 per cent were Sudanese and Somali respectively (Table 14).

During the year under review, 79 third-country nationals were resettled to another country – a decrease of 54.3 per cent over 2017. A further 22 persons benefitted from assisted voluntary return programmes (Table 16) ■

**Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2006-2018**

Year	Number of boats arriving	Number of persons on board <sup>1</sup>
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
2017	-	20
2018	16	1,445

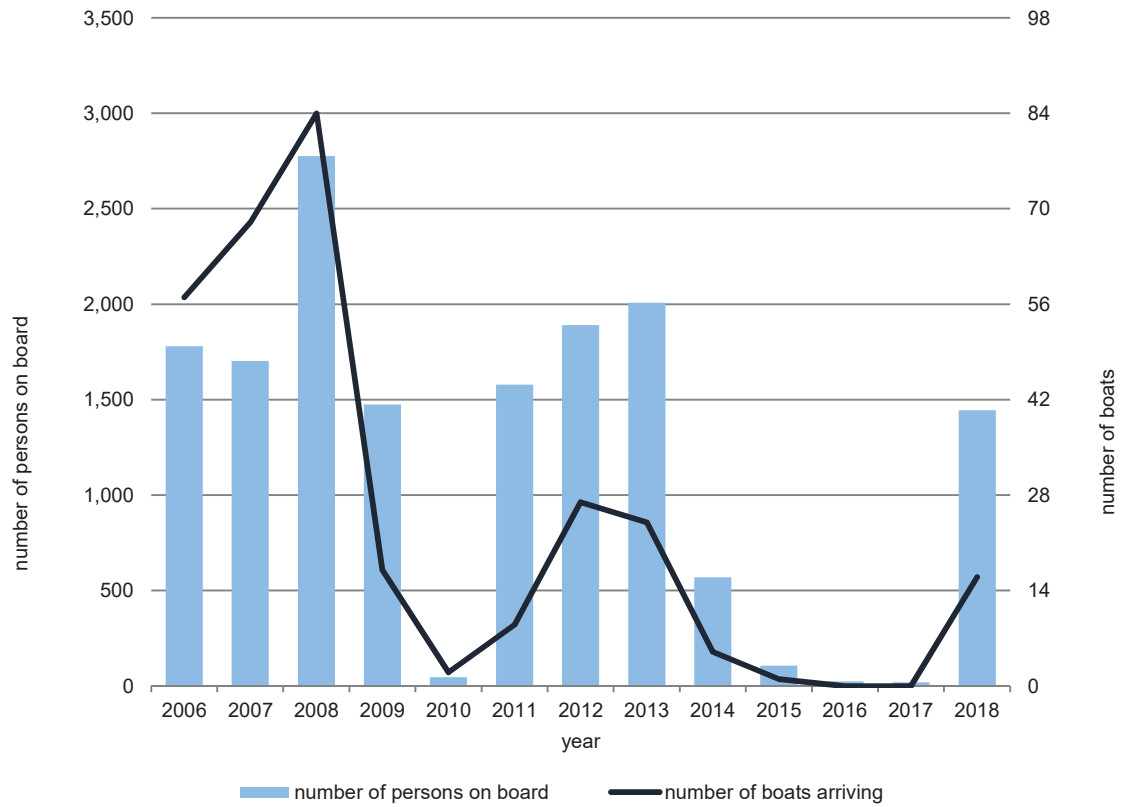
<sup>(1)</sup> Figures regarding irregular immigrants arriving by boat also include airlifted and evacuated persons who were found at sea.  
Source: Police General Headquarters - Immigration Section

**Table 2. Irregular immigrants arriving by boat<sup>1</sup> by country of citizenship: 2018**

Country of citizenship	Number	% total
<b>Africa</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>80.1</b>
Burkina Faso	6	0.4
Cameroon	16	1.1
Chad	11	0.8
Egypt	23	1.6
Eritrea	209	14.5
Ethiopia	7	0.5
Gambia	12	0.8
Ghana	5	0.3
Guinea	30	2.1
Ivory Coast	127	8.8
Libya	72	5.0
Mali	39	2.7
Morocco	52	3.6
Nigeria	12	0.8
Senegal	16	1.1
Somalia	106	7.3
Sudan	399	27.6
Togo	4	0.3
Other African countries	12	0.8
<b>Asia</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>19.9</b>
Bangladesh	243	16.8
Pakistan	12	0.8
Palestine	8	0.6
Syria	19	1.3
Yemen	4	0.3
Other Asian countries	1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> 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<sup>1</sup> arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2006-2018**



<sup>(1)</sup> 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 in applications filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2018**

Year	Number of applications	% change
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
2017	1,839	-4.6
2018	2,131	15.9

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Table 4. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2018**

Month	Total	% total
January	151	7.1
February	126	5.9
March	133	6.2
April	152	7.1
May	142	6.7
June	182	8.5
July	154	7.2
August	177	8.3
September	227	10.7
October	267	12.5
November	252	11.8
December	168	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,131</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Chart 2. Total applications for asylum filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by month: 2018**

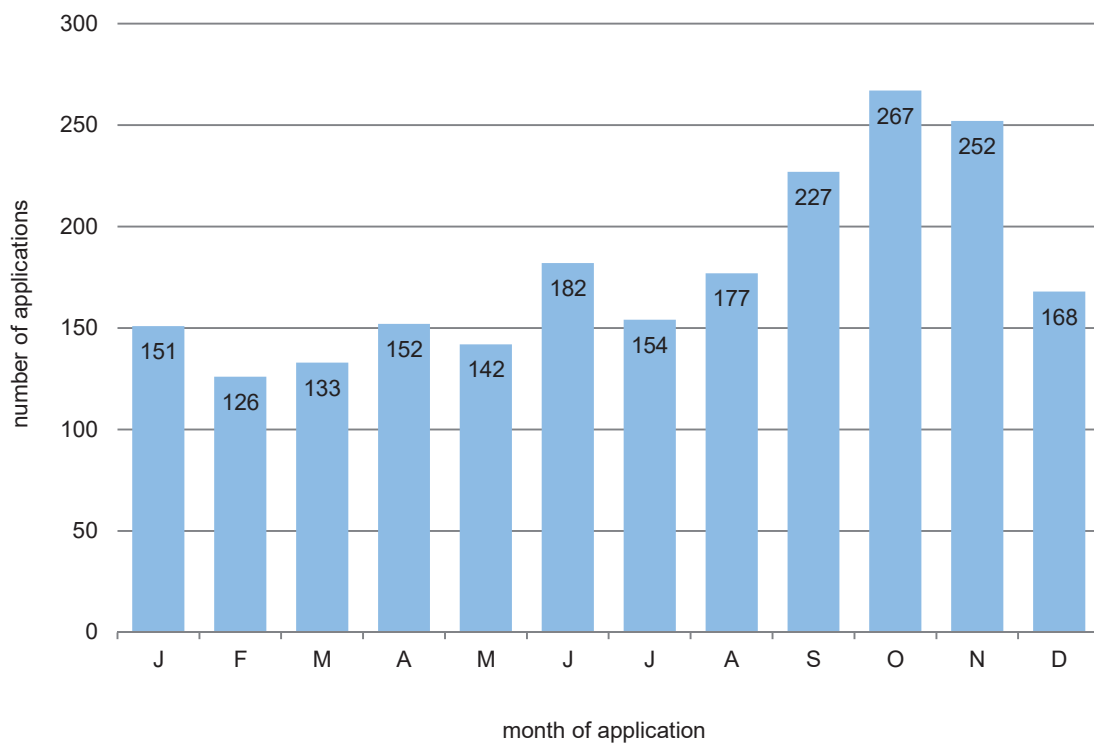


Table 5. Total applications for asylum by country of citizenship, age and sex: 2018

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
<b>Europe</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>55</b>
Russian Federation	5	4	9
Turkey	5	1	6
Ukraine	20	18	38
Other European countries	2	-	2
<b>Africa</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>1,283</b>
Algeria	5	2	7
Burkina Faso	4	1	5
Cameroon	5	1	6
Chad	10	-	10
Egypt	29	2	31
Eritrea	45	20	65
Ethiopia	32	8	40
Gambia	66	2	68
Ghana	9	2	11
Guinea	22	-	22
Guinea-Bissau	8	-	8
Ivory Coast	34	23	57
Libya	221	89	310
Mali	32	-	32
Morocco	13	7	20
Nigeria	27	12	39
Senegal	26	-	26
Sierra Leone	6	2	8
Somalia	301	19	320
Sudan	168	6	174
Tunisia	6	-	6
Other African countries	13	5	18
<b>America</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>
Colombia	4	5	9
Venezuela	15	18	33
Other American countries	2	2	4
<b>Asia</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>747</b>
Bangladesh	150	1	151
China (including Hong Kong)	4	2	6
Iran	4	1	5
Iraq	10	3	13
Mongolia	1	3	4
Pakistan	29	8	37
Palestine	15	10	25
Sri Lanka	6	-	6
Syria	310	176	486
Other Asian countries	13	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>2,131</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
0-17	257	203	460
18-34	1,189	180	1,369
35 or more	231	71	302
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>2,131</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Table 6. Top 5 countries of citizenship of asylum applicants: 2018**

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total applicants
1	Syria	486	22.8
2	Somalia	320	15.0
3	Libya	310	14.5
4	Sudan	174	8.2
5	Bangladesh	151	7.1

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

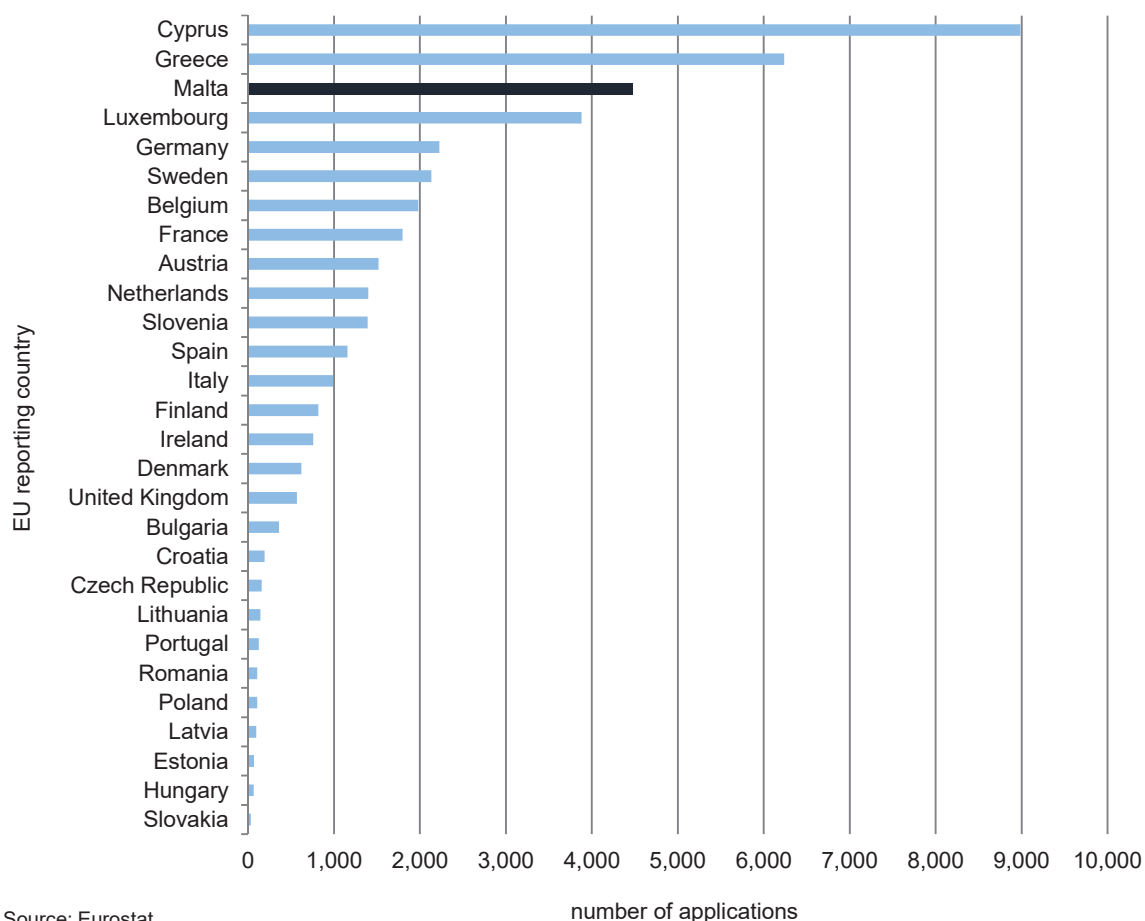
**Table 7. Total asylum applications by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2018**

Reporting country	Total asylum applications		
	Absolute <sup>1</sup>	Per million population <sup>2</sup>	Share in EU total (%)
Austria	13,400	1,518.9	2.1
Belgium	22,565	1,979.6	3.5
Bulgaria	2,535	359.6	0.4
Croatia	800	194.9	0.1
Cyprus	7,765	8,984.8	1.2
Czech Republic	1,700	160.2	0.3
Denmark	3,600	622.7	0.6
Estonia	95	72.0	0.0
Finland	4,515	819.0	0.7
France	120,425	1,799.4	18.6
Germany	184,235	2,225.3	28.5
Greece	66,975	6,235.4	10.4
Hungary	670	68.5	0.1
Ireland	3,670	759.8	0.6
Italy	59,950	991.2	9.3
Latvia	185	95.6	0.0
Lithuania	405	144.2	0.1
Luxembourg	2,335	3,878.7	0.4
Malta	2,130	4,477.6	0.3
Netherlands	24,025	1,398.3	3.7
Poland	4,115	108.4	0.6
Portugal	1,285	124.9	0.2
Romania	2,135	109.3	0.3
Slovakia	175	32.2	0.0
Slovenia	2,875	1,391.0	0.4
Spain	54,060	1,158.6	8.4
Sweden	21,600	2,134.3	3.3
United Kingdom	37,805	570.4	5.9

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat [migr\_asyappctza] - extracted on 17.05.2019

<sup>2</sup> Source: Based on population as at 1 January 2018. Eurostat [demo\_pjan] - extracted on 17.05.2019

**Chart 3. Asylum applications by EU reporting countries per million population: 2018**



Source: Eurostat

**Table 8. Asylum first instance decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2018**

Year	Positive decisions				Rejections		Total decisions (5=3+4)
	Granted refugee status	Other forms of protection status	Total	% Total decisions	Total	% Total decisions	
	(1)	(2)	(3=1+2)	(6=3/5)	(4)	(7=4/5)	
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
2017	167	595	762	68.7	347	31.3	1,109
2018	150	496	646	43.1	854	56.9	1,500

Note: Does not include decisions handed in review.

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

Chart 4. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2018

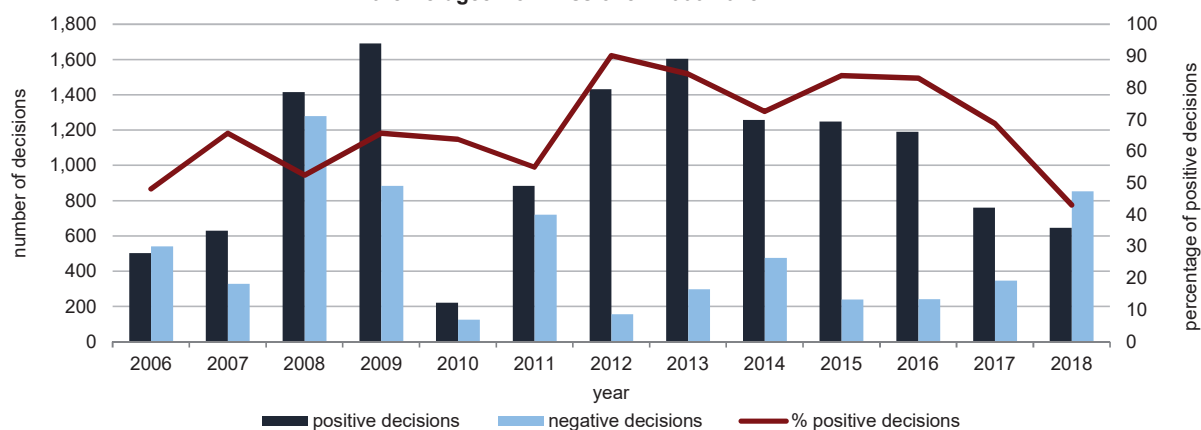


Table 9. Positive decisions (Refugee status, subsidiary status or equivalent decisions) taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner by country of citizenship, sex and age: 2018

Country of citizenship	Males	Females	Total
<b>Europe</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>
Russian Federation	4	2	6
Ukraine	7	4	11
Other European countries	1	-	1
<b>Africa</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>383</b>
Eritrea	50	28	78
Ethiopia	8	6	14
Libya	146	77	223
Nigeria	6	10	16
Somalia	25	11	36
Sudan	5	2	7
Other African countries	6	3	9
<b>America</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>
Other American countries	1	-	1
<b>Asia</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>244</b>
Iraq	4	2	6
Pakistan	2	2	4
Syria	144	84	228
Other Asian countries	5	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>646</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
0-17	156	147	303
18-34	175	53	228
35 or more	83	32	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>646</b>

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

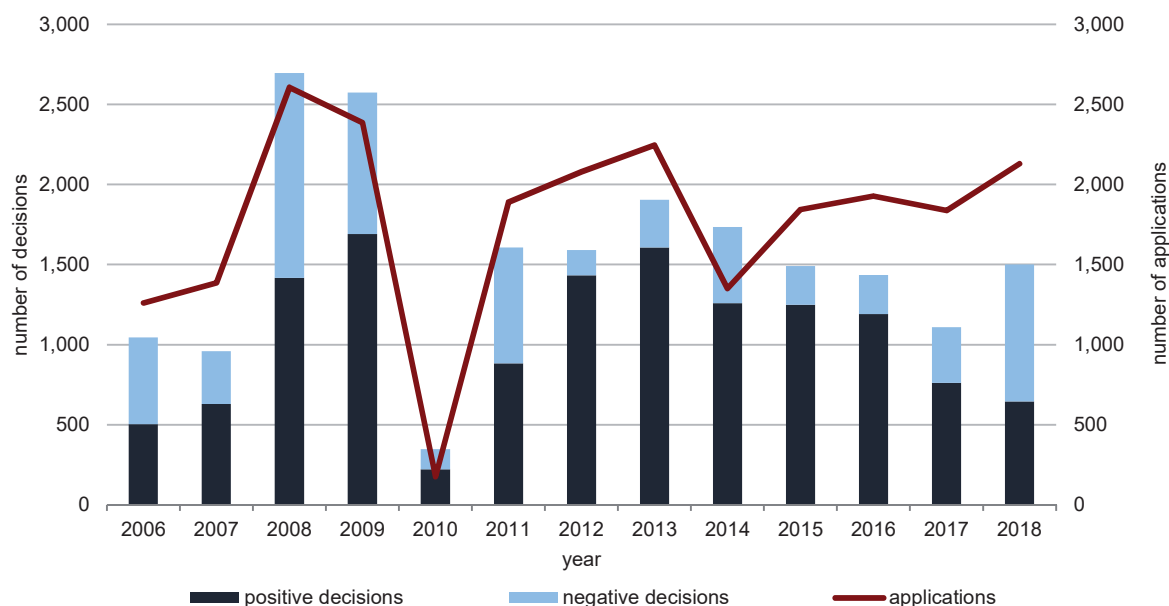
Table 10. Top 5 countries of citizenship of beneficiaries of protection status: 2018

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total beneficiaries
1	Syria	228	35.3
2	Libya	223	34.5
3	Eritrea	78	12.1
4	Somalia	36	5.6
5	Nigeria	16	2.5

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner



**Chart 5. Applications and decisions filed with the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2006-2018**



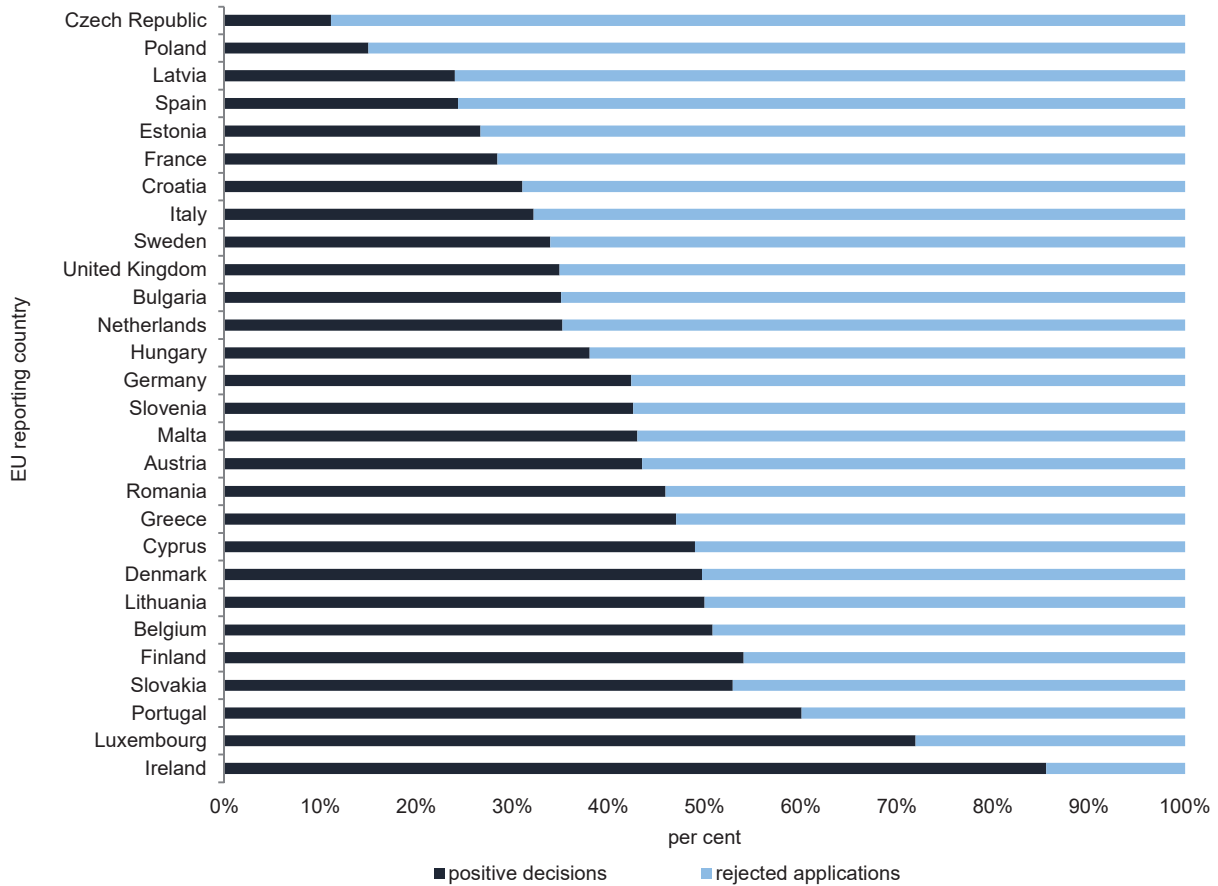
**Table 11. First instance decisions on applications by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2018**

Reporting country	First instance decisions <sup>1</sup>			Positive decisions per million population <sup>2</sup>
	Total	Positive decisions	Rejected applications	
Austria	34,525	15,020	19,500	1,702.5
Belgium	19,045	9,680	9,365	849.2
Bulgaria	2,110	740	1,370	105.0
Croatia	435	135	300	32.9
Cyprus	2,475	1,215	1,265	1,405.9
Czech Republic	1,395	155	1,240	14.6
Denmark	2,640	1,315	1,330	227.5
Estonia	75	20	55	15.2
Finland	4,445	2,405	2,045	436.2
France	115,045	32,725	82,325	489.0
Germany	179,210	75,940	103,270	917.2
Greece	32,345	15,210	17,130	1,416.0
Hungary	960	365	595	37.3
Ireland	1,175	1,005	170	208.1
Italy	95,210	30,670	64,540	507.1
Latvia	125	30	95	15.5
Lithuania	270	135	135	48.1
Luxembourg	1,390	1,000	390	1,661.1
Malta	1,500	645	855	1,355.9
Netherlands	10,285	3,620	6,665	210.7
Poland	2,500	375	2,125	9.9
Portugal	1,045	625	415	60.7
Romania	1,295	595	700	30.5
Slovakia	80	45	40	8.3
Slovenia	235	100	135	48.4
Spain	11,895	2,895	9,000	62.0
Sweden	31,370	10,650	20,725	1,052.3
United Kingdom	28,940	10,100	18,840	152.4

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat [migr\_asydcfst] - extracted on 12.06.2019

<sup>2</sup> Source: Based on population as at 1 January 2018. Eurostat [demo\_pjan] - extracted on 17.05.2019

**Chart 6. First instance decisions percentage outcomes by EU reporting countries (rounded): 2018**



Source: Eurostat

**Table 12. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households by locality as at end of year: 2016-2018**

Locality	2016	2017	2018
<b>Open centres</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>960</b>
Fgura	48	33	40
Floriana	30	69	73
Hal Far	209	517	847
Marsa	114	25	-
<b>Other institutional households</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>1,178</b>

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 13. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households by sex: 2013-2018**

Year	Males	Females	Total
2013	1,156	343	1,499
2014	649	115	764
2015	442	162	604
2016	486	187	673
2017	657	246	903
2018	907	271	1,178

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 14. Persons residing in open centres and other institutional households by country of citizenship: 2018**

Country of citizenship	Total
<b>Europe</b>	<b>20</b>
Turkey	19
Other European countries	1
<b>Africa</b>	<b>948</b>
Burkina Faso	5
Cameroon	13
Chad	12
Egypt	12
Eritrea	115
Ethiopia	87
Gambia	48
Ghana	9
Guinea	36
Ivory Coast	108
Libya	62
Mali	40
Morocco	8
Nigeria	34
Senegal	21
Sierra Leone	9
Somalia	153
Sudan	162
Other African countries	14
<b>America</b>	<b>1</b>
Other American countries	1
<b>Asia</b>	<b>209</b>
Afghanistan	4
Bangladesh	74
Iraq	20
Pakistan	4
Palestine	7
Sri Lanka	5
Syria	88
Yemen	4
Other Asian countries	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,178</b>

Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 15. Top 5 countries of citizenship of open centre residents and residents of other institutional households: 2018**

Rank	Country of citizenship	Total	% total residents
1	Sudan	162	13.8
2	Somalia	153	13.0
3	Eritrea	115	9.8
4	Ivory Coast	108	9.2
5	Syria	88	7.5

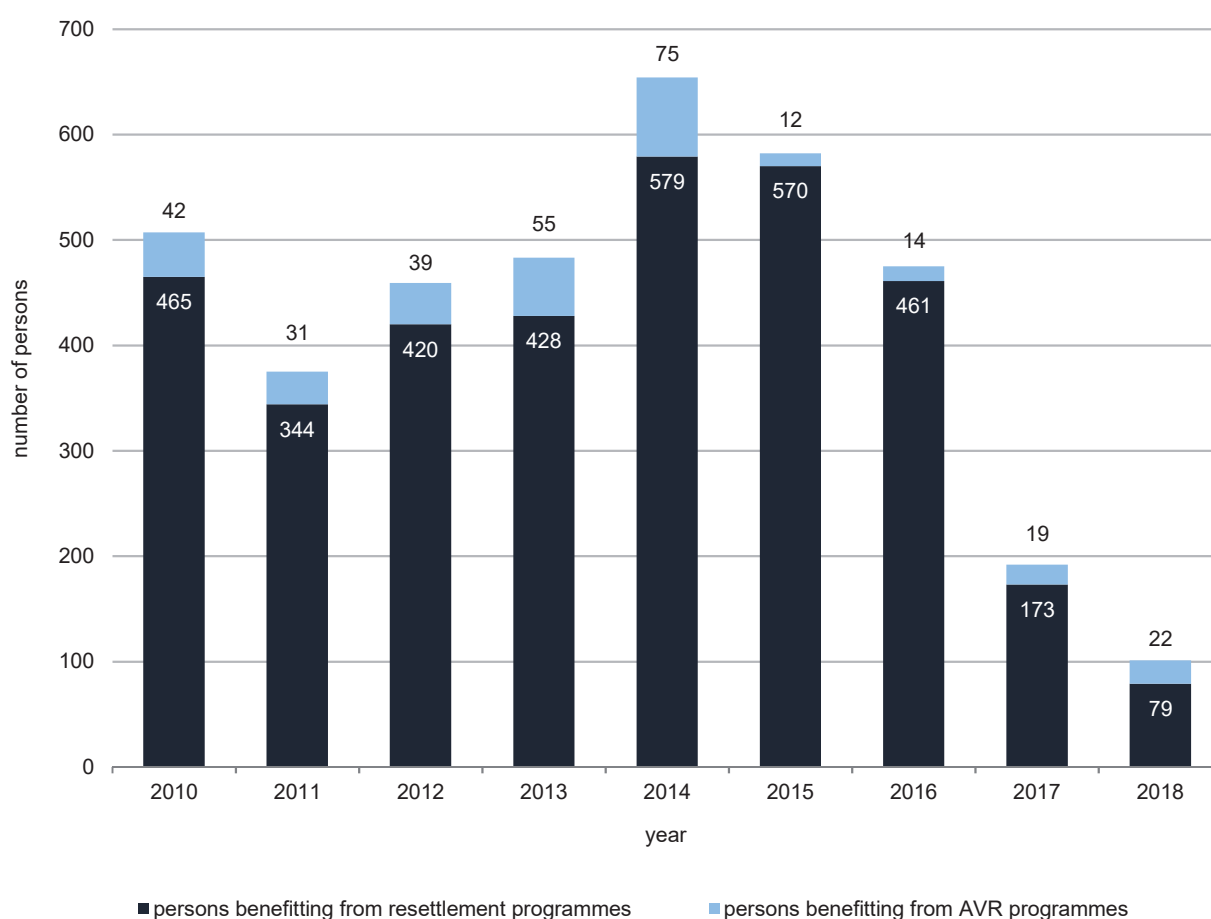
Source: The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers

**Table 16. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes: 2010-2018**

Year of departure	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
2017	173	19
2018	79	22

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

**Chart 7. Persons benefitting from resettlement and assisted voluntary return programmes: 2010-2018**



## 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 at first instance 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.
  - **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 and definitions 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](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr_asyapp_esms.htm) and information regarding decisions can be accessed at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/migr\\_asydec\\_esms.htm](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 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/her. 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.

#### 5. Other information

- Past News Releases can be accessed at [https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/View\\_by\\_Unit/Unit\\_C5/Population\\_and\\_Migration\\_Statistics/Pages/World-Refugee-Day.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration_Statistics/Pages/World-Refugee-Day.aspx)
- Metadata can be accessed at <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/reports.aspx?id=38>.

#### 6. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:

Statistical concept: <https://nso.gov.mt/metadata/concepts.aspx>

Sources and methods:

[https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources\\_and\\_Methods/Unit\\_C5/Population\\_and\\_Migration/Pages/Migration-Statistics.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration/Pages/Migration-Statistics.aspx)

#### 7. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

#### 8. A detailed news release calendar is available on:

[https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/Release\\_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx)