

Asylum statistics and the need for protection in Europe: Updated Factsheet

1. Introduction

Statistics play a key role in discussions on asylum and international protection at both the EU and the national level; they are used to support a variety of arguments. The number of yearly asylum applications is frequently mentioned to showcase the “migratory pressure” faced by the EU or specific Member States, even though asylum applications do not necessarily correspond to new arrivals to Europe. Just as frequently, statistics on recognition or protection rates¹ are used to steer policy decisions. For instance, rates deemed to be low are used to support the argument that many people reaching European countries are not in need of protection, and, therefore, that policy decisions and legal changes should focus on increasing returns and preventing arrivals.

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in May 2024, introduced several key changes to EU asylum law which will overall likely result in a reduction of protection standards in Europe. The Pact entered into application on 12 June 2026. A central component of the reform is the use of EU average international protection recognition rates as an automatic threshold to channel applicants into either the regular or the accelerated procedure. Under the Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR), EU Member States are required to channel applicants into a mandatory accelerated procedure – which for some applicants, moreover, takes place at the external border, under a ‘fiction of non-entry’ – if they are nationals of a country with an EU-wide international protection recognition rate at first instance of 20% or lower.² This mechanism aims to rapidly assess and screen out applications deemed, on the basis of statistical trends, to have a low likelihood of success. When this accelerated procedure takes place in the context of a border procedure, applicants can be subject to severe restrictions of their freedom of movement or be detained, while their cases undergo a truncated, hastened legal assessment. The first list of countries coming under this rule for the second half 2026 was published by Eurostat in May 2026. It includes 118 countries, which, combined, accounted for 55% of asylum applicants in 2025.³

Statistics are indeed crucial to understanding the state of asylum in Europe, providing valuable evidence on implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). However, for statistics to be used in support of arguments and decisions, they must be comprehensive and reliable, in both their content and their presentation. Such is not always the case: many factors require that caution be exercised when handling asylum numbers. Otherwise, statistics themselves can both directly misrepresent and be used to misrepresent the actual need for protection in Europe.

In this paper, ECRE updates its factsheet on asylum statistics produced in 2020⁴ and first updated in 2022,⁵ outlining the major misrepresentations and misuses of asylum statistics on protection rates, with reference to

* This factsheet was drafted by Joana M. Barros Simões and edited by ECRE.

¹ ‘Recognition rate’ and ‘protection rate’ are often used interchangeably to refer to (variations of) the same concept, namely the proportion of positive decisions out of the total number of decisions. They are most commonly used to illustrate the percentage of applicants who are granted a form of protection. However, as demonstrated in this note, multiple methodological and substantive factors influence the calculation of protection rates. For clarity purposes, this note distinguishes between two concepts. International protection recognition rates refer to the percentage of decisions granting international protection per EU law (namely refugee status or subsidiary protection), out of the total number of decisions on international protection applications. Protection rates are defined more broadly so as to also encompass humanitarian protection, insofar as possible. Humanitarian protection is a national form of protection, not regulated at the EU level, and does not exist in all EU Member States. Accordingly, protection rates represent the proportion of decisions granting any form of protection (international protection or humanitarian protection) out of the total number of decisions on such applications. Insofar as humanitarian status constitutes a form of protection, this note primarily focuses on protection rates, unless stated otherwise.

² Article 42(1)(j) Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (hereinafter APR); see *ECRE Comments on the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU*, October 2024, available [here](#).

³ Eurostat, *Countries of citizenship with an asylum recognition rate for international protection of 20% or lower*, May 2026, available [here](#).

⁴ ECRE, *Asylum statistics in Europe: Factsheet*, June 2020, available [here](#).

⁵ ECRE, *Asylum statistics and the need for protection in Europe: Updated Factsheet*, December 2022, available [here](#).

the latest annual figures on asylum, to illustrate the points on which caution should be used, particularly as the Pact starts being implemented across the EU.

Sources of statistics

The leading actor on statistics at the EU+ level is Eurostat, a portal managed by the European Commission that collects data within the framework of Regulation (EC) 862/2007, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2020/851. The statistics are provided by 32 States' Ministries of Interior, Justice, or immigration agencies.⁶ However, mandatory reporting is currently limited and little breakdown of the data is provided. In addition, definitions are sometimes unclear (see [Reporting issues](#)).

The European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) also collects statistical information on access to the procedure, reception, first instance determination, Dublin, determination in appeal or review and resettlement under its Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS).⁷ Similarly, the European Migration Network (EMN) complements Eurostat data with figures provided by its National Contact Points, mostly agencies under or teams within the Ministries of Interior, Migration, or Justice.

Lastly, Member States often publish data at the national level, albeit to various degrees of detail and regularity. When this is not carried out comprehensively, other actors such as Ombudspersons, Parliaments and civil society organisations seek to fill in the gaps. For example, ECRE contributes to gathering and disseminating asylum statistics through the Asylum Information Database (AIDA).⁸

Main protection trends at the EU level

Protection rates represent the proportion of positive decisions out of all decisions in a given year, rather than showing the success rate of all applications that have been lodged within the same year (as decisions are often not issued in the same year in which the application was lodged).

First instance decisions 2022-2025							
Year	Refugee Status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian status	Rejections	Total decisions	International protection recognition rate	Protection rate
2022	143,950	102,165	65,940	327,095	639,150	38.51%	48.82%
2023	152,020	130,020	76,235	319,350	677,625	41.62%	52.87%
2024	164,795	155,570	67,250	366,360	753,970	42.49%	51.41%
2025	166,820	72,535	86,410	506,595	832,360	28.76%	39.14%

Source: Eurostat, with information on the EU27 from 2022-2025.

Throughout this note:

- ❖ "International protection recognition rate" refers to the percentage of decisions granting international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection), out of the total number of decisions on international protection applications.
- ❖ "Protection rates" refers to the percentage of decisions granting international protection *and humanitarian protection* out of the total number of decisions on applications.

Data indicate that the EU-wide protection rate remained relatively stable at around 40% between 2022 and 2024. However, 2025 shows an approx. 14 percentage point decrease in the international protection recognition

⁶ This note will only use information from the 27 EU Member States.

⁷ Regarding dual collection of data on applications and decisions by both Eurostat and the EUAA, following discussions on the matter, to end this double point of entry, from June 2026 onwards (progressive implementation) 'the EUAA will act as the single point of entry for some international protection statistics (i.e. those which currently overlap under legal mandate of both organisations), and Eurostat will subsequently compile the official European statistics from these data' according to Eurostat, *Compilers' manual for asylum statistics*, 2026 edition, April 2026, available [here](#), 6.

⁸ See the AIDA website [here](#).

rate and a decrease of 12 percentage point in the protection rate compared to 2024. Furthermore, there are significant discrepancies between countries. Looking at cumulative data between 2022 and 2025, among Member States having taken at least 1,000 decisions, Sweden recorded the lowest protection rate at 25.36%, while Ireland recorded the highest at 63.44%.

A closer look at specific nationalities reveals that between 2022 and 2024, Syrian nationals accounted one third of all positive decisions over the period, with 355,850 positive decisions out of 1,057,950 total. By contrast, in 2025, there were only 10,780 positive decisions regarding Syrians, and Afghan nationals became the primary beneficiaries of protection, accounting for 94,580 out of the 325,765 total positive decisions, compared to 67,320 in 2024. Positive decisions for Syrian nationals decreased following the collapse of the Assad regime in late 2024, suspension of decision-making in many EU countries (see below, [Suspension of examinations](#)) and changed protection policies after the suspensions were lifted.⁹ At the same time, decisions for Afghan nationals increased *inter alia* following a landmark Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruling, which established that the Taliban's systemic oppression of women constitutes a general risk of persecution.¹⁰ While positive decisions regarding male applicants remained stable between 2024 and 2025, positive decisions for female applicants more than doubled (from 20,365 in 2024, similar to 2023, up to 47,815 in 2025).

Second instance decisions 2022-2025							
Year	Refugee Status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian status	Rejections	Total decisions	International protection recognition rate	Protection rate
2022	26,310	17,360	27,955	148,815	220,435	19.81%	32.49%
2023	23,095	12,825	14,895	140,045	190,860	18.82%	26.62%
2024	20,500	14,375	15,250	135,955	186,080	18.74%	26.93%
2025	18,235	13,565	17,225	137,485	186,510	17.05%	26.28%

Source: Eurostat.

Decisions at second instance yielded a slightly decreasing international protection recognition rate over the observed period, from 19.81% in 2022 to 17.05% in 2025.

However, when looking at the protection rate, the figures show a more stable trend following an initial sharp decline. After falling from 32.49% in 2022 down to 26.62% in 2023, the overall protection rate at second instance stabilised around the 26% to 27% mark between 2023 and 2025. This means that, over the last four years, at least one in four decisions at the appeal stage resulted in the granting of refugee, subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection status.¹¹

The total volume of decisions also decreased over the four years. Total second instance decisions decreased by over 15%, dropping from 220,435 in 2022 to a relatively stable baseline of around 186,000 in both 2024 and 2025. This decline reflects a lower output of total decisions.

The type of protection granted varied more significantly from year to year at first instance compared to second instance.

⁹ See *inter alia* ECRE, 'Syria: European reactions to the overthrow of the Assad regime', 13 December 2024, available [here](#).

¹⁰ CJEU, Joined Cases C-608/22 and C-609/22, *AH and FN v Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl*, EU:C:2024:828, 4 October 2024, available [here](#).

¹¹ Depending on the country and the court, decisions in appeal can: overturn the first instance decision and grant protection directly, overturn the first instance decision and refer the case back to the first instance authority for reassessment (in some cases, this is because the court is not granted the power to directly confer international protection status), or confirm the first instance decision and reject the appeal.

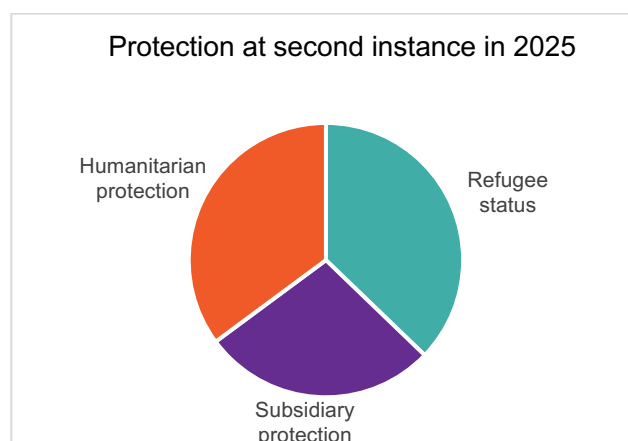
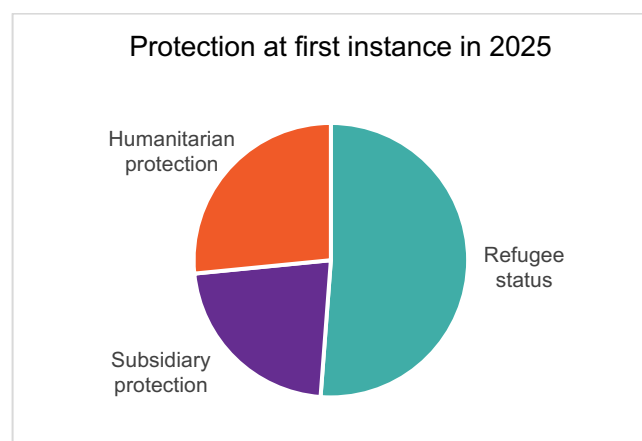
Share of the different types of protection at first instance 2022-2025			
Year	Refugee Status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian status
2022	46.13%	32.74%	21.13%
2023	42.43%	36.29%	21.28%
2024	42.52%	40.14%	17.35%
2025	51.20%	22.24%	26.56%

Source: Eurostat.

Share of the different types of protection at second instance 2022-2025			
Year	Refugee Status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian protection
2022	36.74%	24.24%	39.03%
2023	45.45%	25.24%	29.32%
2024	40.90%	28.68%	30.42%
2025	37.20%	27.67%	35.14%

Source: Eurostat.

Furthermore, the patterns are different between first and second instance, with the types of protection granted more evenly distributed at second instance. The share of refugee status granted at first instance remained stable between 2022 and 2024, before experiencing an 8 percentage point increase in 2025, given the drop in subsidiary protections. The drop in subsidiary protection rate in 2025 is quasi solely attributable to the drop in subsidiary protections afforded to Syrian nationals (from 91,980 in 2024 to 6,430 in 2025) following the fall of the Assad regime. In contrast, second instance rates remained more steady throughout the entire 2022–2025 period: the rate of subsidiary protection remained relatively stable (+/- 4 percentage points), while rates of refugee status and humanitarian protection fluctuated more significantly (+/- 9 percentage points).



2. Temporary protection

The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) was activated in 2022 for the first time since its adoption in 2001 in response to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The number of beneficiaries granted temporary protection in a single year peaked in 2022 with over 4.3 million registrations. In the subsequent years, the volume of new registrations decreased, dropping to 1,056,010 in 2023 and 683,475 in 2025.

Significant differences exist among Member States in both number of people arriving and temporary protection decisions. In 2022, Poland alone registered approx. 1,567,905 beneficiaries of temporary protection (36.20% of total beneficiaries in the EU), whereas neighbouring countries like Hungary received only 29,695 (0.69%). Throughout the 2022–2025 period, Germany and Poland consistently registered the highest absolute numbers of temporary protection beneficiaries in the EU, while Malta and Luxembourg registered the lowest absolute numbers.

Four years after the activation of the TPD in 2022, the EU still lacks long-term legal solutions for temporary protection beneficiaries. Protection has been extended on a yearly basis, with the latest extension running until March 2027, but there is no permanent transition framework in place at the EU level and individual solutions at the national level remain limited and restrictive.¹² In June 2026, the European Commission put forward a proposal to once more extend temporary protection by one year, until March 2028. However, this proposal also foresees that temporary protection would not be granted to newly arriving persons who are not authorised by the Ukrainian authorities to leave Ukraine in view of their military obligations, i.e. men between the ages of 18 and 60.¹³

Beneficiaries of temporary protection 2022-2025 ¹⁴		
Year	New beneficiaries of temporary protection	Total beneficiaries of temporary protection as of December of the reference year
2022	4,330,980	3,823,540
2023	1,056,010	4,275,580
2024	794,845	4,255,745
2025	683,475	4,353,015

Source: Eurostat.

Beneficiaries of temporary protection by sex 2022-2025, including children				
Year	New beneficiaries of temporary protection		Total beneficiaries of temporary protection as of December of the reference year	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
2022	1,480,790	2,847,560	1,316,315	2,478,965
2023	455,260	600,210	1,602,705	2,670,160
2024	369,735	424,855	1,693,865	2,559,760
2025	348,570	334,620	1,826,130	2,524,885

Source: Eurostat.

Immediately following the 2022 full-scale invasion, the number of female beneficiaries as registered under Eurostat (2,847,560) was nearly double that of male beneficiaries (1,480,790), reflecting men's engagement in military service, military conscription rules and related wartime border restrictions preventing men from leaving Ukraine.¹⁵

¹² See TPD annexes to AIDA country reports, published spring 2026, available [here](#).

¹³ European Commission, 'Commission proposes to extend temporary protection of people fleeing Ukraine for an additional year', 26 June 2026, available [here](#).

¹⁴ Because temporary protection is meant as an immediate, group-based emergency mechanism based on set criteria to establish the temporal and personal scope, rather than through an individualised assessment of protection needs, it is not possible to measure or evaluate its implementation by protection rates.

¹⁵ Stater Border Guard Service of Ukraine, 'Exceptions to the restriction which prohibits men to leave the territory of Ukraine', available [here](#).

While female beneficiaries have continued to represent the majority of beneficiaries, the gap between the sexes has progressively diminished, with 1,826,130 male beneficiaries and 2,524,885 female beneficiaries at the end of 2025. In 2025, for the first time since the activation of the directive, the number of newly registered male beneficiaries (348,570) slightly surpassed that of female beneficiaries (334,620).

Children benefiting from temporary protection 2022-2025		
Year	Children benefiting from temporary protection	Unaccompanied children benefiting from temporary protection
2022	1,544,580	8,735
2023	277,965	3,325
2024	210,955	2,790
2025	163,600	3,185

Source: Eurostat. There is no information available on children for Hungary in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Parallel to the decline in overall registrations, the number of children newly granted temporary protection dropped drastically over the four years. In 2022, children accounted for 1,529,010 temporary protection decisions. This volume fell sharply by over 80% down to 275,785 in 2023 and continued to decrease through 2024 and 2025.

3. Issues related to the presentation of statistics on protection

3.1 Reporting: discrepancies between Eurostat and national statistics

In some occasions, there are discrepancies between data reported to Eurostat and data published or reported at the national level, either publicly or as provided on request.¹⁶ On first instance, total decisions, for seven¹⁷ of seventeen countries where national data is available through AIDA, numbers reported to Eurostat are at least 10% lower than those published nationally, with Ireland in particular showing a staggering gap.¹⁸ These examples show that, despite Eurostat's assessment of the data accuracy as "high",¹⁹ there are risks of discrepancies, both for specific countries and across the board.

These discrepancies can be partially explained by the fact that the authority providing data to the various compilers (Eurostat, EMN, AIDA) is not always the same.

Another factor is the existence of diverging practices in the methodology and definition of the data sets concerned. A potential confusion – and thus a reporting divergence – that would affect international protection recognition rates and protection rates is reporting the number of decisions rather than the number of persons affected by a decision (one decision might cover a family of any number). The Eurostat Regulation and guidelines clearly indicate that all statistics, with the exception of withdrawn applications, refer to persons, meaning family members must be counted individually, irrespective of national administrative procedures.²⁰ Based on the data examined, Member States appear to respect this in their reporting to Eurostat, although it is sometimes presented differently at the national level.

¹⁶ As can be the case for data reported in ECRE's AIDA database.

¹⁷ CY, PT, CZ, DE, IE, GR, AT.

¹⁸ Data on Eurostat show 5,730 total decisions, including 2,095 negative decisions, while the data reported to AIDA include 19,558 total decisions, including 15,807 negative decisions. Other national-level reporting on decisions (see for example [here](#)), as well as the experience of civil society in Ireland, support the AIDA figure as the correct one. AIDA, *Country report: Ireland – Update on the year 2025*, June 2026, available [here](#).

¹⁹ Eurostat, 'Reference metadata – Decisions on applications (migr_asydec)', available [here](#).

²⁰ Article 4(1)(a) Regulation 862/2007; Eurostat, *Compilers' manual for asylum statistics*, 2026 edition, April 2026, available [here](#), 8.

Data on second instance decisions can vary depending on whether the authorities report as positive decisions only decisions where the court itself decides on the need for protection or whether they also include decisions that overturn the first instance decisions but send the case back to the first instance authority for reassessment. Eurostat guidelines indicate that decisions issued by an appeal instance body ordering the review of the initial decision should not be reported under final decisions.²¹ Moreover, under Eurostat, “final decisions” means decisions on protection claims that are no longer subject to remedy as foreseen under the 2024 Asylum Procedures Regulation (APR) (previously, under the 2013 Asylum Procedures Directive). As pointed out by the Eurostat guidelines, such decisions may still be eligible to remedy under national law, particularly remedies concerning procedural matters rather than substantive questions, and thus the “final remedy” under Eurostat may not be the final remedy under national law, which may generate different reports.

Lastly, there are differences in the definition of rejection decisions that states use. Per Eurostat, states should report all rejection decisions, including inadmissibility decisions, with the exception of those involving Dublin procedures. However, at the national level, some report all rejection decisions together, sometimes including Dublin inadmissibility decisions, some report in-merit and inadmissibility decisions separately, while some report only in-merit rejection decisions. The definition used is not always explicit in the reporting (see below, [Methodology and choice of data to be presented](#)).

3.2 Methodology and choice of data to be presented

Methodological choices as to how international protection recognition rates and protection rates are calculated and presented have an important impact on the figures. There are a number of distortions that often affect the presentation of data.

Lack of reference to second instance decisions

The first and major limitation is that protection rates regularly only include first instance decisions, with second instance decision making ignored. This means the protection rate at first instance is used as the key metric even though it represents only a partial picture. On average, according to Eurostat data over the last four years, consistently at least 17% of first instance decisions (slightly under one in five) were overturned with some form of international protection status granted at second instance; 26% when including national protection statuses. However, this average mask severe disparities among Member States. For instance, in Italy, the second instance protection rate reached as high as 82% in 2025. In contrast, Germany granted protection in 25% of its 63,925 second instance decisions, while the Netherlands saw a 46% positive rate out of 3,120 second instance decisions in 2025. France recorded a protection rate of 23% out of 52,255 decisions in 2025.

Presenting asylum protection rates without including second instance outcomes is incomplete and inaccurate. As with any other area of law, the legal process is not complete until all available remedies have been exhausted. If a protection rate is intended to accurately measure the proportion of asylum applications that conclude with a recognition of a protection need, second instance decisions must be fully integrated into the statistical overview.

There are methodological challenges: it is not possible to calculate overall protection rates for a given year by combining first and second instance decisions, given that different caseloads are being assessed. Due to the length of appeals, it is rare that appealed decisions will be decided in the same year as the first instance decision. Nonetheless, when protection rates only refer to first instance decisions, this should be clearly stated, together with the fact that it reflects only a partial picture of the overall outcomes.

Inclusion of inadmissibility decisions

The inclusion of inadmissibility decisions in “rejections” is also a distorting factor. Protection rates are often calculated by using the total number of rejection decisions, regardless of the ground for rejection. This figure cannot accurately represent the need for protection in Europe, as many people entitled to protection may be

²¹ Eurostat, *Compilers’ manual for asylum statistics*, 2026 edition, April 2026, available [here](#), 35.

faced with an inadmissibility decision: beneficiaries of international protection in another Member State, persons considered to have a sufficient link with a safe third country, people facing a Dublin transfer (whose protection need has not necessarily been examined yet); such decisions should not be included in negative decisions under Eurostat but are occasionally presented as such at the national level. Thus, a rejection decision does not mean that the person concerned does not have protection needs. It may indicate that the country concerned is considered to not be responsible for their protection, but this is a different issue.

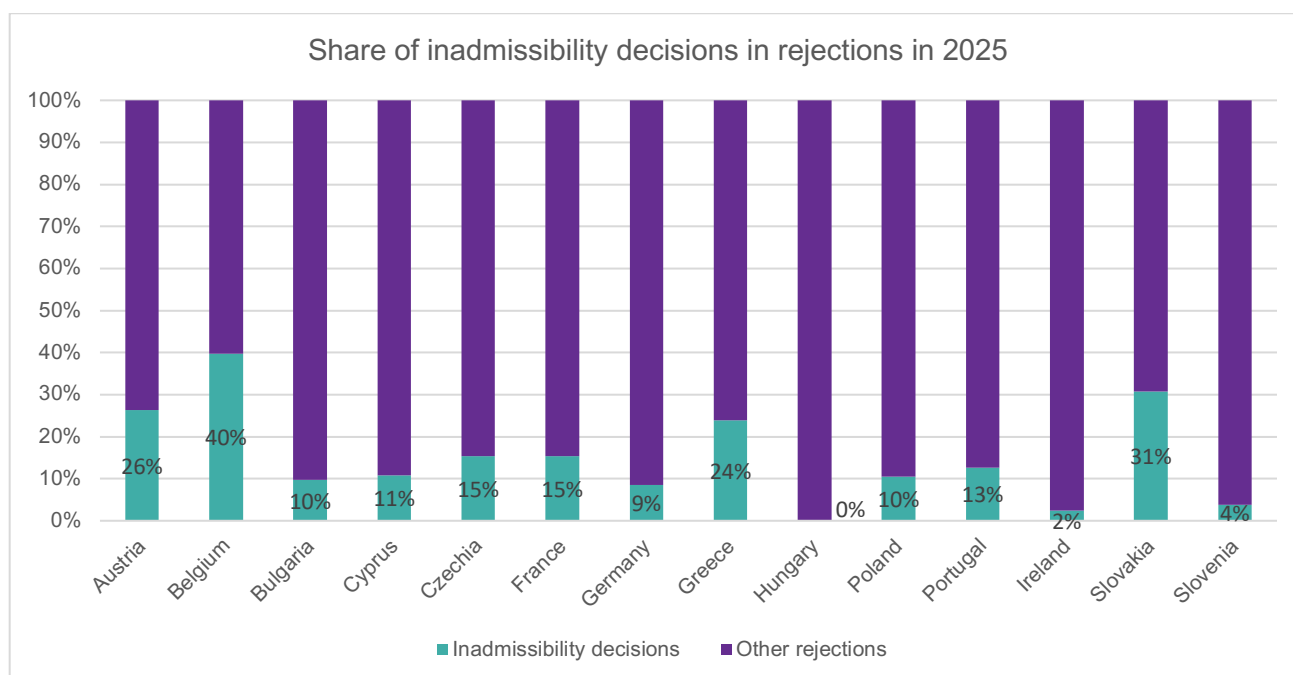
- ❖ Belgium frequently issues inadmissibility decisions, particularly regarding subsequent applications or individuals who have already been granted protection in other EU Member States. For instance, out of the 19,006 individuals denied international protection in 2025, only 11,284 had their applications rejected on the merits.²² This has an impact on the protection rate. When factoring in all rejections, the protection rate stands at 28%. However, taking into account only in-merit decisions, the protection rate rises to 44%, offering a more accurate reflection of actual protection needs.
- ❖ Greece has frequently issued inadmissibility decisions based on its official designation of Türkiye as a "safe third country" for asylum applicants originating from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, despite the lack of realistic transfer prospects since 2020. The impact this policy has on rejection statistics has varied: in 2023, 3,454 out of 16,494 total rejections were ruled inadmissible under the "safe third country" provision. This trend continued in 2024, with 2,143 out of 17,880 total rejections considered inadmissible on these same grounds, before dropping significantly in 2025, where only 464 out of 17,072 total rejections were based on the safe third country criteria.

The Eurostat Regulation does not require EU Member States to differentiate among rejections decisions (Articles 4(2)(a) and 4(3)(b)). The nuances detailed above are also not clearly mentioned when protection rates are presented, which would also be advisable. In 2022, the European Commission launched a pilot project to disaggregate rejection decisions by type, including inadmissibility grounds.²³ However, as it remains a pilot, this data is not released on Eurostat. A working document on the progress made on the pilots was provided on 13 July 2024.²⁴ The document highlighted insufficient participation by Member States, which hindered a precise evaluation of the viability of detailed data. To address this, Eurostat established a new data prioritisation strategy focusing on critical areas such as asylum and residence permits. A new update from Commission is expected to be published on 13 July 2026.

²² AIDA, *Country report: Belgium: Update on the year 2025*, July 2026, available [here](#).

²³ European Commission, *Commission staff working document on the progress made regarding the pilot studies referred to in article 9a of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection*, 15 July 2022, available [here](#).

²⁴ European Commission, *Commission staff work document on the progress made regarding the pilot studies referred to in Article 9a of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection*, 25 July 2024, available [here](#).



Source: AIDA; Greece National Statistics, available [here](#). Data on France relates to 2024 due to lack of updated data available. For Germany, this constitutes a minimum number of inadmissibility decisions, as a breakdown of rejection decisions was only available for one out of five inadmissibility ground, international protection in another Member State. For Portugal, this number alone can be misleading, as civil society reports that rejection decisions are often issued on mixed grounds, including inadmissibility, and in such cases are not counted as inadmissibility decisions. It should be noted that access to asylum in Hungary is severely limited due to the embassy procedure.

In some countries, the inclusion of inadmissibility decisions significantly affects the composition of negative first-instance asylum decisions. According to national data, inadmissibility decisions account for at least one out of four total rejections in Belgium (40%), Slovakia (31%, 24 out of 54 decisions), Austria (25% and Greece (24%). In these cases, a substantial share of applicants is not refused protection on the merits of their claim, but on procedural grounds linked to the admissibility of the application. By contrast, inadmissibility decisions represent a smaller, although still significant, proportion of rejections for example in Portugal (13%),²⁵ Poland (10%) and Germany (at least 9%), while they account for a very low share in Ireland (2%) and Slovenia (4%, 9 out of 225 decisions). These differences illustrate the varying role that admissibility procedures play across national asylum systems and highlight the importance of distinguishing between substantive and procedural negative decisions when comparing rejection rates between countries.

Inclusion of discontinuation proceedings

Another similar issue is that of discontinuation decisions, which can have differing definitions at the national level as they encompass a variety of realities, and which are also sometimes presented as negative decisions at the national level. It should be noted that in some countries, discontinuation decisions and inadmissibility decisions are presented separately, while in other cases inadmissibility decisions are included as one type of decisions on discontinuation of the procedure, creating further potential for confusion.

- ❖ In Poland, 42% of total rejections in 2025 were decisions on discontinuation of the procedure (these do not include inadmissibility decisions, and mainly consist of applications deemed “implicitly withdrawn”);
- ❖ In Czechia, discontinuations (which include inadmissibility decisions) accounted for over 40% of negative decisions in 2025;
- ❖ In Greece, inadmissibility decisions, implicit and explicit withdrawals, and archived cases represented 84% of rejections presented at the national level in 2025;

²⁵ As mentioned under the graphic, for Portugal, this number alone can be misleading, as civil society reports that rejection decisions are often issued on mixed grounds, including inadmissibility, and in such cases are not counted as inadmissibility decisions.

- ❖ In Germany, 25.1% of the 310,930 total decisions closed the case without examining the claim on the substance (inadmissibility, Dublin decisions, withdrawals, etc).

In Eurostat, there is a separate reporting structure for (implicitly or explicitly) withdrawn applications. Based on available data, it seems that they are excluded from data on negative decisions reported by those states to Eurostat, meaning they do not feature in Eurostat data. However, they might still influence data and percentages presented at the national level.

Exclusion of resettled people

It should also be noted that Eurostat does not include in the protection statistics of those benefiting from safe pathways to protection such as resettlement.²⁶ While beneficiaries of protection relocated between EU countries are not included to avoid double counting, the same reasoning cannot be applied to individuals accessing the EU from outside directly through safe routes, who largely benefit from some form of either international or national protection. Excluding them drives down the data on positive decisions and thus protection rates, although the impact of this is lessened by states' lack of commitment to resettlement over the last few years. Under the newly operational Union Resettlement Framework, the European Commission published its first Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Plan. For 2026-2027, Member States pledged to welcome 10,430 people combined across both years via resettlement and humanitarian admission. In the preceding 2024–2025 pledging cycle, EU countries had committed to 61,000 places, although actual admissions were far lower (24,000). The new framework thus marks an approximate 83% drop in resettlement ambitions.²⁷

3.3 Other factors that affect overall EU+ protection rates

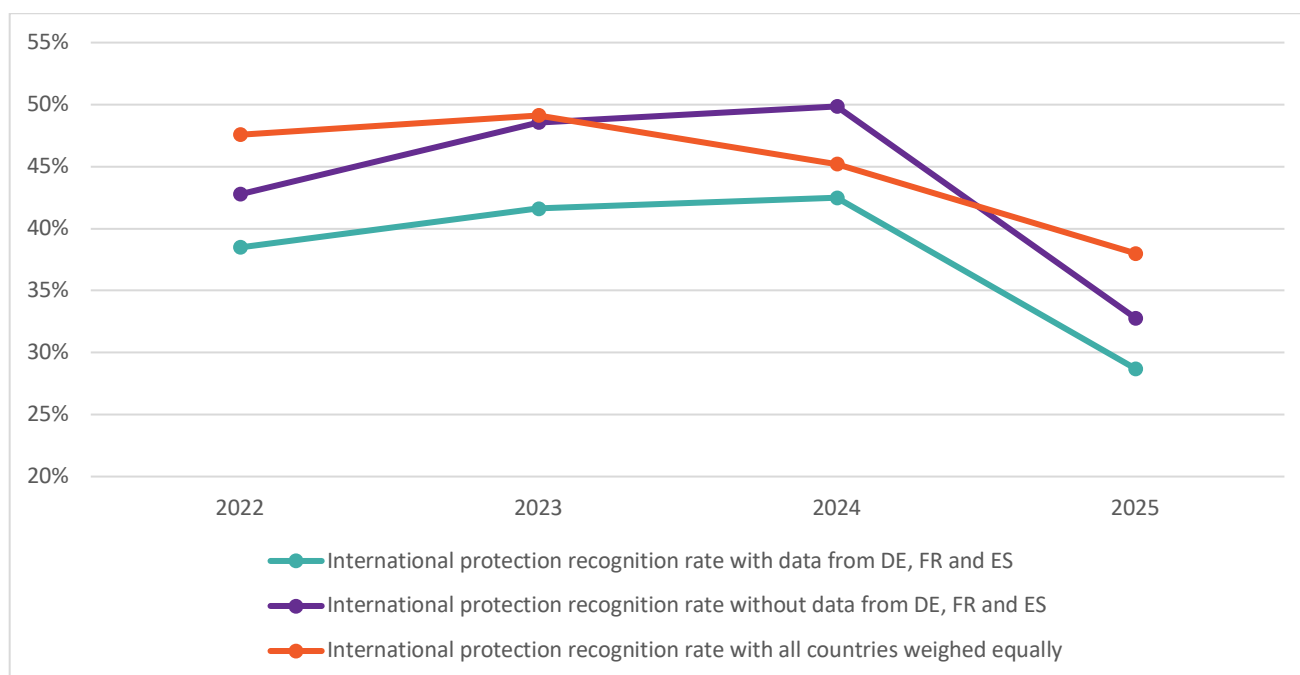
Countries with few asylum applications

Percentages for countries with few decisions must be read with caution, as even minor changes in absolute numbers can lead to significant fluctuations in percentages. This is all the more so because Eurostat rounds data to the closest 5, which introduces an additional level of approximation. The rounding is close to insignificant for large caseloads such as that of Germany or France but may distort the data of countries with smaller asylum systems.

In addition, certain countries may disproportionately influence EU-wide statistics. In 2025, three countries (FR, DE, ES) accounted for two-thirds of all first instance decisions (66%). At second instance, decisions from Germany and France represented 34% and 28% of all decisions respectively. An EU-wide protection rate is thus not always representative of the average position of all states on protection but may preponderantly illustrate the approach of just a few, those which process the most applications. This applies to overall protection rates as well as to protection rates by nationality of applicants. As illustrated below, the three countries bring down the protection rate.

²⁶ Eurostat, *Compilers' manual for asylum statistics*, 2026 edition, April 2026, available [here](#), 18.

²⁷ ECRE, 'Joint Statement: EU states must not backtrack on refugee resettlement commitments', 12 January 2026, available [here](#); EUAA, 'Annual report – Resettlement and humanitarian admission at the national level', June 2026, available [here](#).



Source: Eurostat.

Access to the asylum procedure might also have an indirect effect on protection rates. The scale and normalisation of policies aimed at preventing arrivals have increased over the years, including the reintroduction of internal border controls, formal and informal readmission deals, pushbacks at the maritime and land borders, and limiting Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean.²⁸ For example:

- ❖ In Poland, the right to apply for international protection at the Belarusian border has been suspended since 27 March 2025, combined with numerous reports of violence and push backs.²⁹
- ❖ In 2025, access to the German asylum procedure was restricted through administrative instructions authorising the rejection of asylum seekers directly at internal borders, reintroduced stricter border controls with neighbouring EU states, and accelerated processing of applications from countries with low international protection recognition rates (such as Georgia, Moldova, and parts of North Africa).³⁰

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum further solidifies this approach. The Pact further limits access to a fair asylum procedure, widening grounds for inadmissibility decisions, introducing mandatory border procedures and reducing procedural safeguards.³¹ This is compounded by the changes to the safe country concepts adopted in 2025, which encourage offloading responsibility for asylum applicants onto external countries, and are likely to further undermine protection standards.³²

Suspension of examinations

Protection rates are influenced by state decisions to suspend the examination of certain caseloads. When national authorities decide to pause examination of a specific national caseload, for instance due to major geopolitical changes, they may take a variety of approaches: suspending decision making for all cases without exception, suspending decision making except to take positive decisions in cases where protection needs remain despite the changing circumstances (e.g. because the claim is based on grounds unrelated to the changes taking place), or suspending decision making except to take negative decisions in cases where the

²⁸ See, among many others, ECRE/AIDA, *Asylum in Europe: the situation of applicants for international protection in 2024*, September 2025, available [here](#).

²⁹ AIDA, *Country report: Poland – Update on the year 2025*, June 2026, available [here](#).

³⁰ AIDA, *Country report: Germany – Update on the year 2025*, June 2026, available [here](#).

³¹ ECRE, 'Editorial: All Pact-ed up and ready to go: EU asylum law reforms', 16 February 2024, available [here](#).

³² ECRE, *Analysis of the Proposed Amendments to the Asylum Procedures Regulation Covering Safe Countries of Origin, Frontloading the Pact and Safe Third Countries, and the Politics Behind the Measures*, July 2025, available [here](#).

authorities feel it is clear there is no (more) protection need (based on gender, based on the ground of the alleged protection need, etc), or a combination of these approaches. This means that the EU-wide protection rate does not necessarily include the decision-making practice of all countries, on all applications put before them, and thus does not necessarily accurately reflect protection needs.

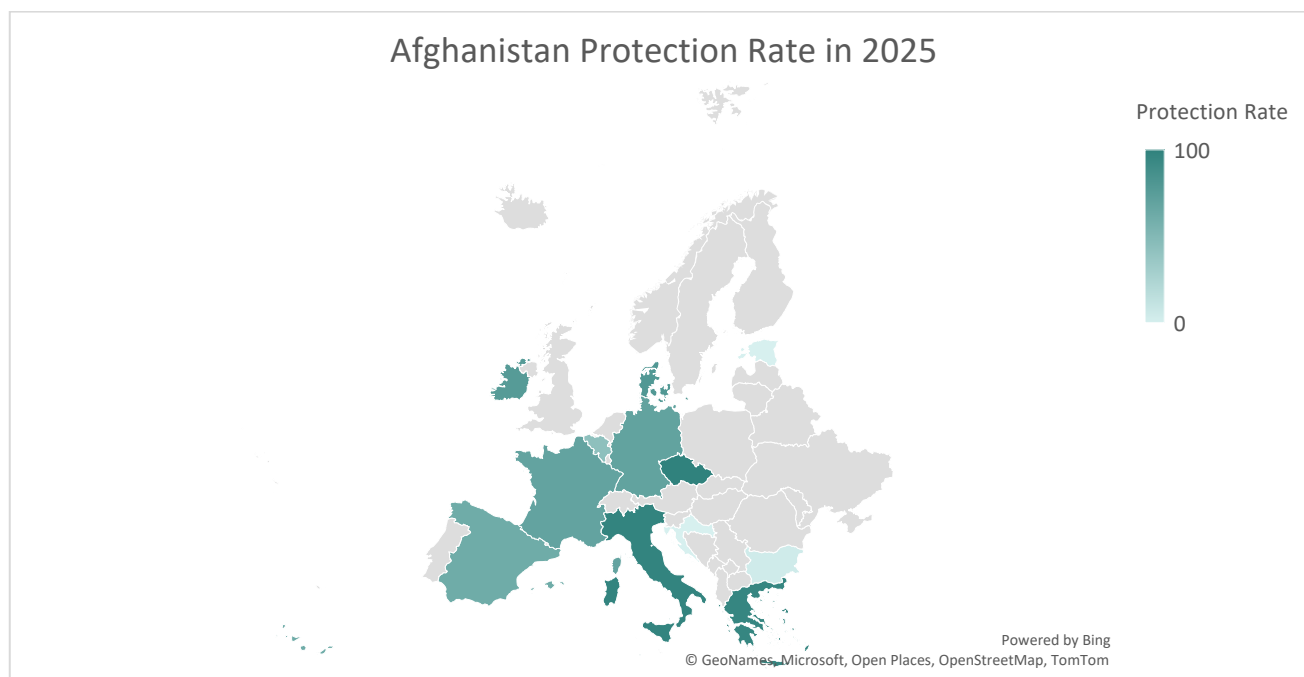
For example, following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, eighteen EU Member States officially or informally suspended examination of international protection applications from Syrian nationals.³³ Cyprus had officially suspended the examination of all Syrian asylum claims in April 2024. Similarly, EU+ country Switzerland temporarily paused asylum procedures for Syrian (and Sudanese) nationals during 2024 to reassess changing country-of-origin conditions before resuming casework into 2025.³⁴ The length of this suspension, when applied,³⁵ varied greatly. Some countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, also suspended decision making for Palestinian applicants at the end of 2023, but there were no such suspensions still in place early 2026 regarding Palestinians and Gaza.

4. Issues emerging from analysis of statistics on protection

4.1 Lack of harmonisation and poor decision-making

The need for protection in Europe is not well represented by protection rates, not only due to the aforementioned issues, but also due to poor decision-making in some cases. National protection rates vary widely from one EU country to another, from very low to very high values. Such variations have persisted for many years. Depending on where they apply, the same asylum seeker may be granted any of the three protection types, rejected for merit reasons, or have their case rejected for inadmissibility reasons.

For instance, whilst the overall protection rate for Afghan nationals in 2025 was 73%, it ranged in individual countries from 0% to 100% (43% to 98% when only considering countries with at least 1,000 decisions).



Source: Eurostat.

³³ AT, BE, BG, HR, CY (but this was in place since April 2024 and justified by the authorities by 'increased arrivals'), CZ, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IT, LV, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, SE. See ECRE/AIDA, *Asylum in Europe: the situation of applicants for international protection in 2024*, September 2025, available [here](#) and EUAA, *Annual report 2025*, June 2025, available [here](#), 43-44.

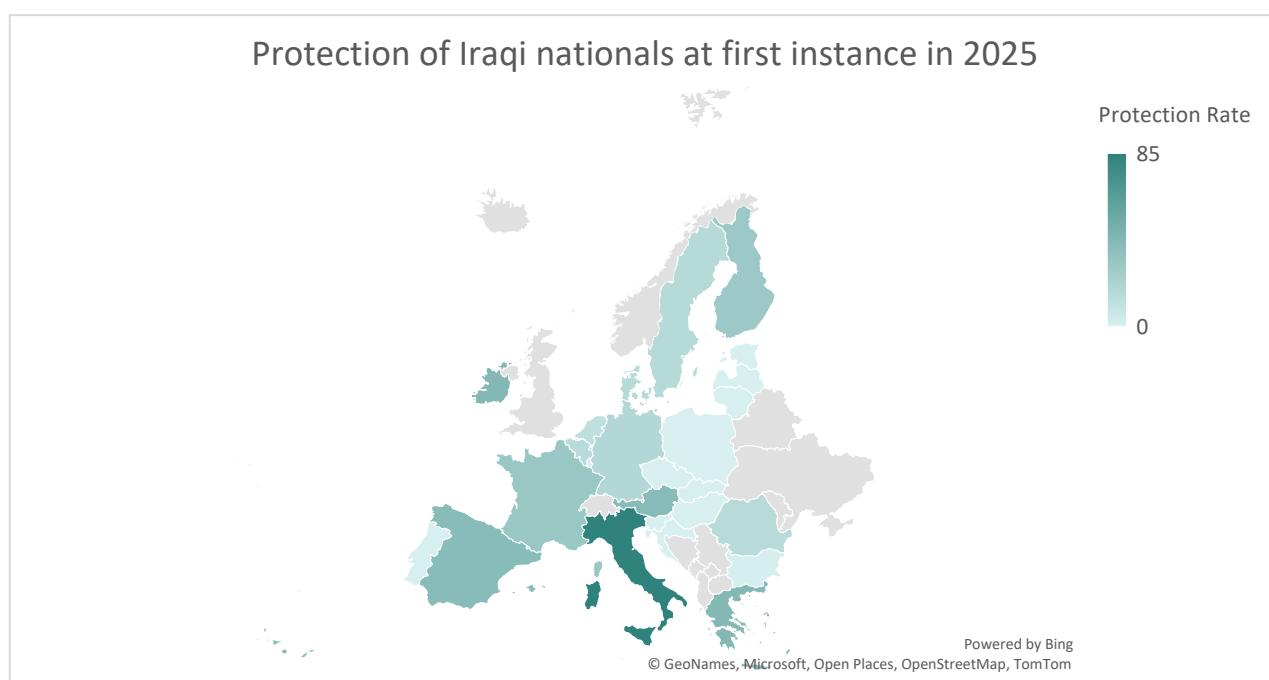
³⁴ ECRE/AIDA, *Asylum in Europe: the situation of applicants for international protection in 2024*, September 2025, available [here](#).

³⁵ ES, LT, PT did not pause decision making.

Protection of Afghan nationals at first instance – 2022 to 2025			
Year	Protection rate < 50%	50% ≤ Protection rate < 75%	Protection rate ≥ 75%
2022	BE, SE	FR	DE, GR, ES, IT, NT, AT, PT
2023	BE	SE, FR	DK, DE, IE, GR, ES, IT, NE, AT
2024	BE	FR, SE	DE, IE, GR, ES, IT, AT
2025	BE, SE	DE, ES, FR, NE	GR, IT, AT

Source: Eurostat. Countries are listed only when they took at least 500 decisions for the given year.

The issue was the same for Iraqi nationals, for whom the overall protection rate stood at 37%, but ranged from 0 to 100% in 2025 (0% to 86% when only considering countries with at least 500 decisions).



Source: Eurostat.

Protection of Iraqi nationals at first instance – 2022 - 2025			
Year	Protection rate < 25%	25% ≤ Protection rate < 50%	Protection rate ≥ 50%
2022	BE, SE	DE, FR, FI	IT, GR, NL
2023	BE, SE	DE	GR, IT, AT
2024	BE	DE	GR, IT
2025	BE, DE, NL, SE	FR, GR	IT

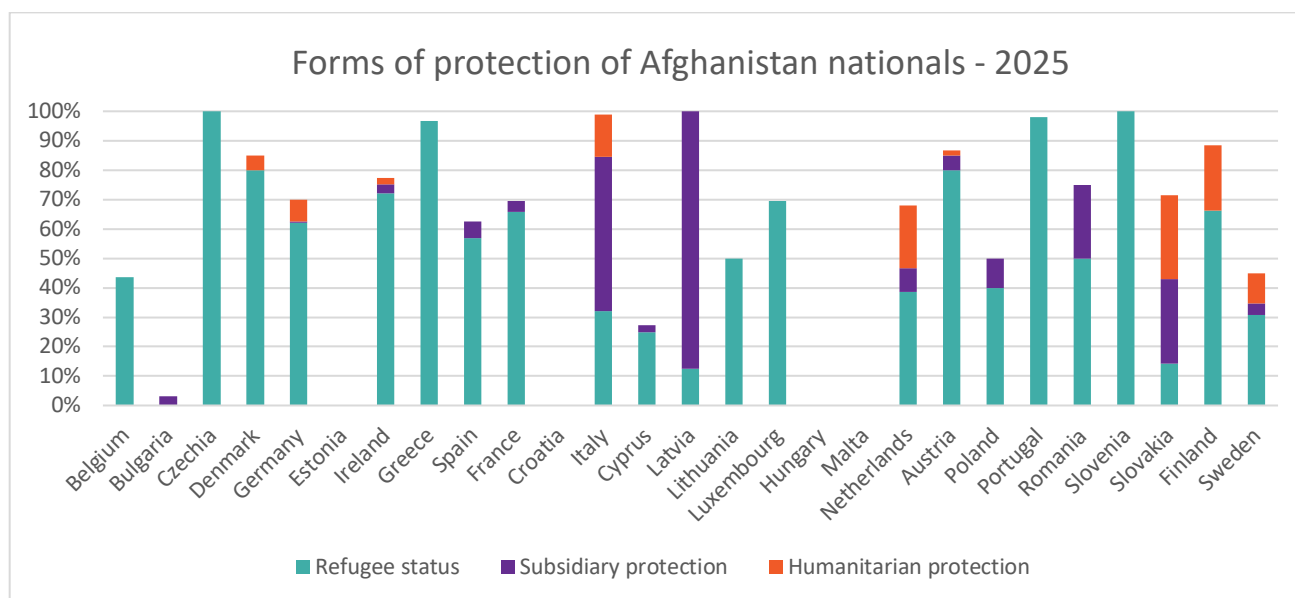
Source: Eurostat. Countries are listed only when they issued at least 500 decisions for the given year.

States may have differing interpretations of country of origin information (COI): in the immediate aftermath of the regime change in Syria in December 2024, most EU Member States temporarily suspended decision making on the protection needs of Syrian applicants until the situation became clearer (see above, [Suspension of examinations](#)). Asylum authorities subsequently determined they had sufficient COI to restart processing these applications at different points in time throughout 2025. For example, Bulgaria restarted in Bulgaria, Poland

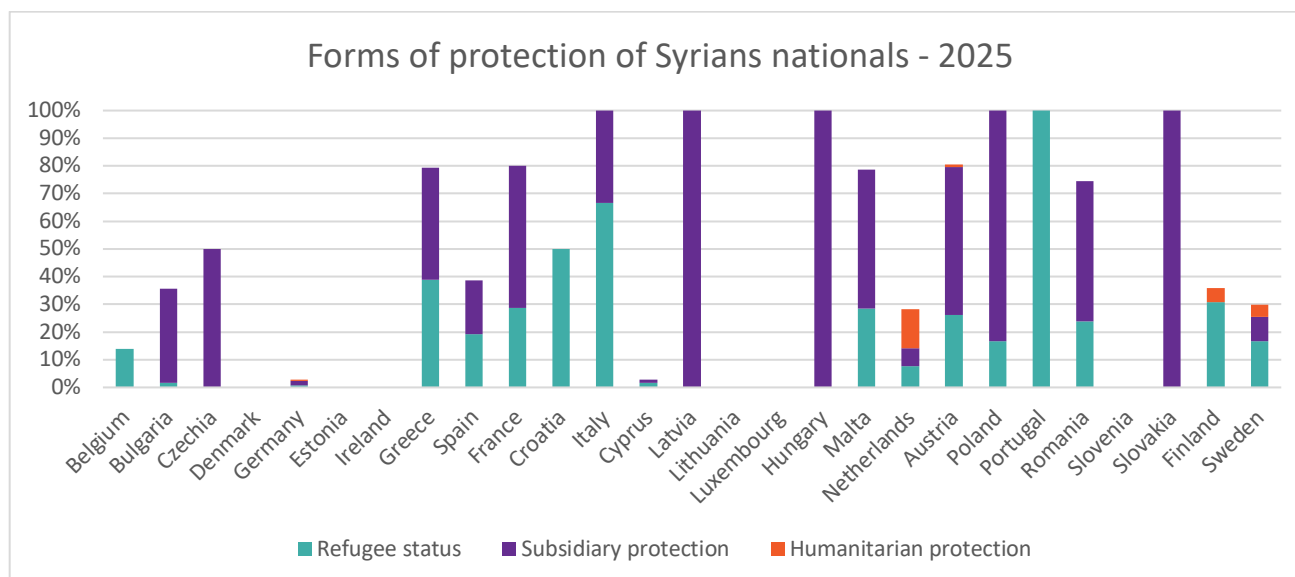
resumed assessments in April, while Luxembourg resumed in October, Belgium in November, and Norway in December. Conversely, the suspension remained in place at the end of 2025 in Croatia, Ireland, and Italy.

4.2 Differences in the form of protection recognised

Even for those granted protection, the type of protection granted diverges from country to country. Although an argument can be made that the differences in caseloads account for the differences in protection status awarded, the evidence has not been provided to demonstrate that objective factors related to the nature of the cases entirely explain the difference. The divergences are significant, while in many respects the profiles of people are similar.



Source: Eurostat.

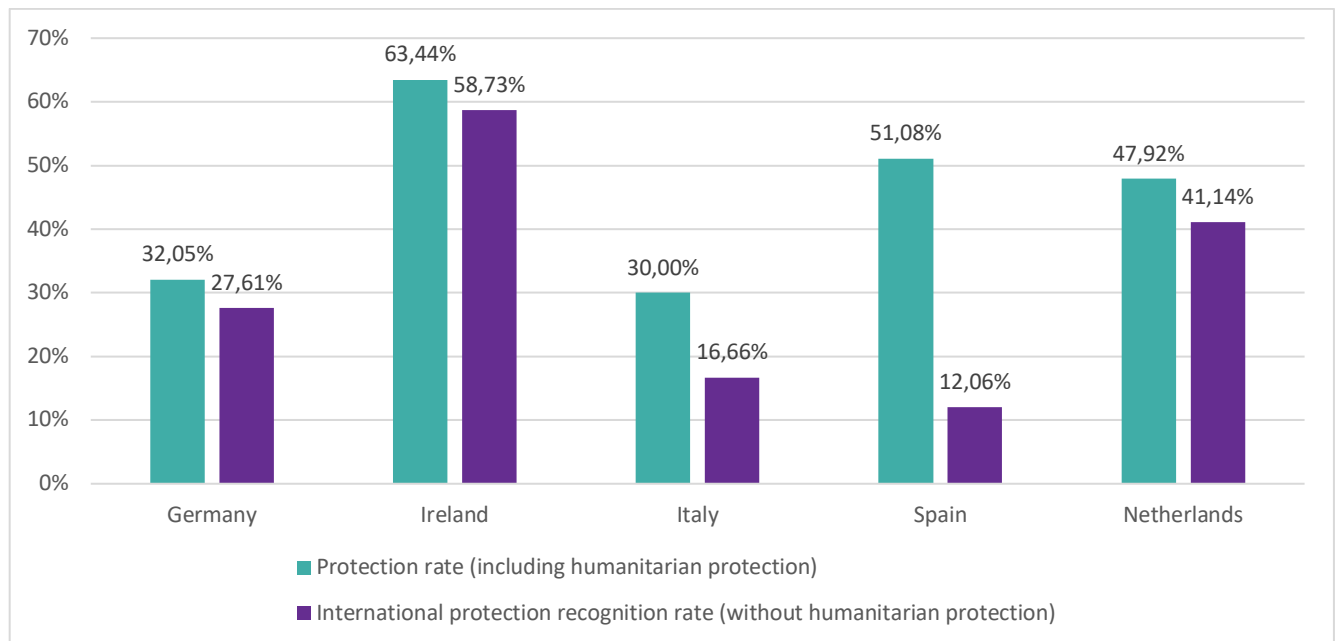


Source: Eurostat.

The type of protection issued has serious implications for the person's rights, status, and long-term prospects in the country of asylum due to the fact that the content of protection for each status may vary significantly. For example, the right to family reunification is not always foreseen for beneficiaries of subsidiary and humanitarian protection, or it may only be granted only under less favourable conditions, and there has been a trend of

increasing restrictions on the matter in the last few years.³⁶ Moreover, the duration of residence permits is usually shorter for beneficiaries of subsidiary and humanitarian protection as compared to refugee status, meaning that these statuses are susceptible to re-evaluation more often and more precarious. Related insecurities may be generated for such beneficiaries in addition to hindering integration.

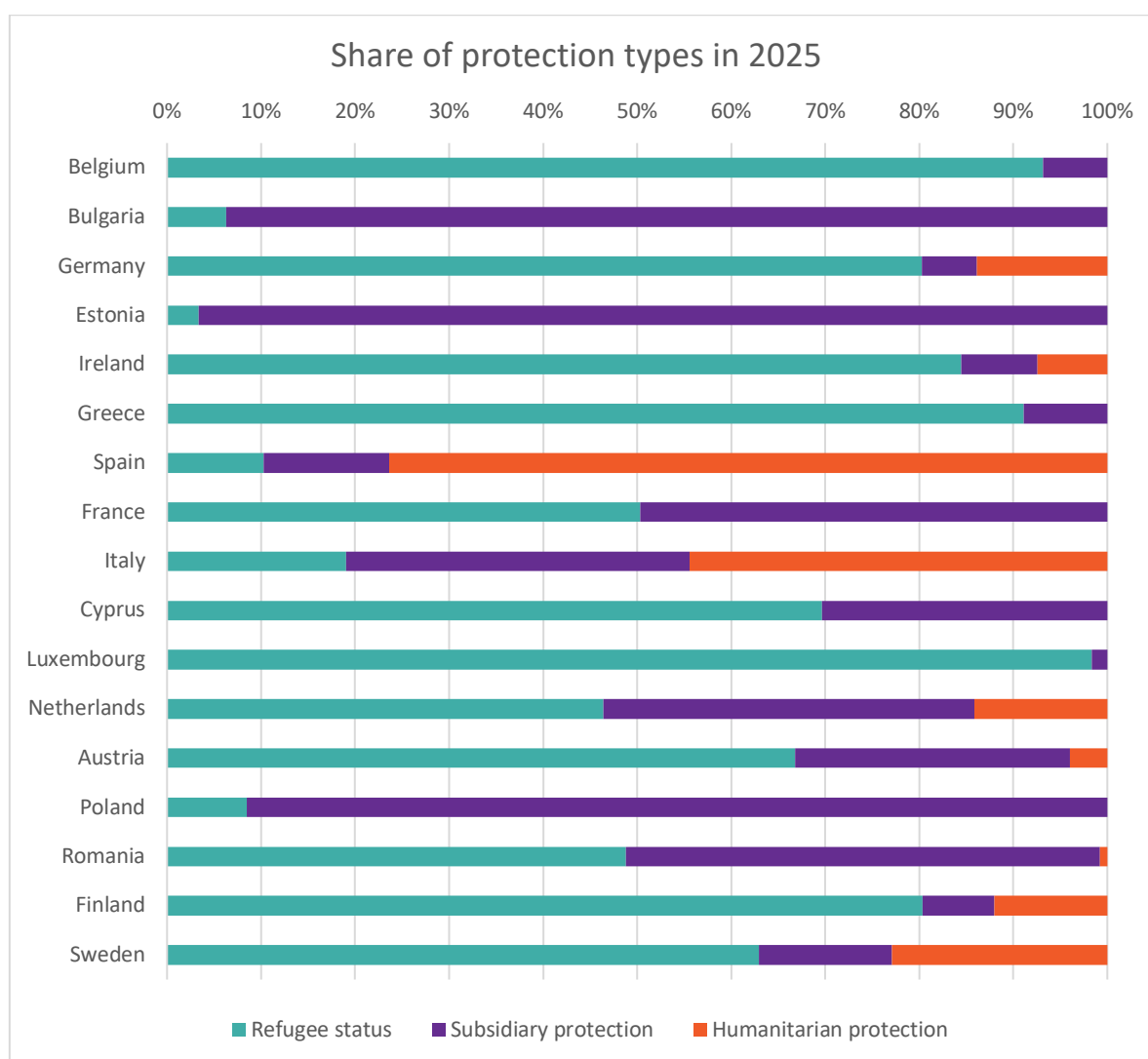
It should be noted that humanitarian protection is not harmonised at the EU level and is not provided for in all Member States. Where it does exist, depending on national definitions, it may not be reported under Eurostat, notably if it is granted under a procedure separate from the asylum procedure. Currently, 18 out of the 27 Member States reporting to Eurostat report numbers on humanitarian protection.³⁷ Including humanitarian protection in protection statistics can have a big impact on the protection rate. For instance:



Source: Eurostat.

³⁶ GR, CY and MT fully exclude beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from family reunification; others, such as AT, BE, DE, HU, NL impose restrictive conditions such as a waiting period, quotas or non-exemption from financial, accommodation and health insurance criteria. BE, DE, FI, NL introduced new and/or further restrictions in 2025. In July 2025, AT suspended family reunification for all beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees.

³⁷ AT, CZ, DK, DE, EE, GR, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, HR, LT, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SK. It should be noted that some report 0 protections over several years, making it unclear whether they actually have humanitarian protection in law but did not grant it or if they mistakenly report 0 instead of “,” because they do not have humanitarian protection.



Source: Eurostat. To limit variations due to small numbers, only countries with at least 500 positive decisions are listed.

Spain consistently issues the highest number of humanitarian protection decisions in the EU. While Spain's international protection recognition rate sits at just 12.5% in 2025, well below the EU average (28.76%), when including humanitarian protection, the protection rate stands at 52.4%. This significant increase is driven by Spain's policy of humanitarian status for Venezuelan nationals; in 2025, 94% of applications from Venezuela were approved on these grounds. Since 2022, decisions regarding Venezuelan applicants have accounted for an average of 38% of all asylum decisions. In 2025, Spain issued 57,333 decisions granting humanitarian protection, of which 56,269 concerned Venezuelans, out of 75,835 positive decisions and 148,485 total decisions. However, the Spanish government ended this programme on 12 June 2026, citing the strain it placed on the asylum system.³⁸

4.3 Factors related to variations in protection rates

Discrepancies in protection rates have generated concern in the past. In some cases, the EUAA³⁹ and national authorities⁴⁰ have argued that the differences are due to the different profiles of applicants, i.e. applicants from the same country of origin that apply in one EU+ country have very different profiles compared to the applicants from the same country of origin lodging their applications in a different EU+ country. Factors might include people being from specific ethnic minorities, a higher number of unaccompanied children, people from different

³⁸ El Pais, 'Spain to end fast-track path to legal status that Venezuelans have enjoyed since 2018', 1 April 2026, available [here](#).

³⁹ For example, EASO, *Asylum Report 2021*, available [here](#), 206.

⁴⁰ German Federal Government, *Response to parliamentary question, 20/2309*, 17 June 2022, available [here](#), 12.

regions within the same country or similar. Although it would be the case that these factors would play a role in decision making, there is no conclusive evidence that there are very different profiles for applicants from one EU+ country to another, at least not sufficient to explain all the differences in the protection rate or in the granting of particular statuses.

Lack of harmonisation

The Qualification Directive left states considerable discretion in decision making. The European Commission and the Council⁴¹ recognised that there is a lack of convergence in decision making, partly due to a lack of harmonisation of decision-making policies and practices. This was a main driver in transforming the 2013 Qualification directive into the 2024 Qualification regulation, which is directly applicable in national contexts and does not need to be transposed through national legislation. The Pact, which entered into application on 12 June 2026, also brings several changes affecting decision making processes. For example, the safe country of origin concept, which used to be an optional tool, now has to be applied for countries listed in the common EU list of safe countries. Countries can still establish or maintain national lists of safe countries in addition, but are not required to do so. However, EU Member States are required to apply accelerated procedures to all applicants from the nationalities designated on the common EU list and on their national lists where applicable.

Data shows that Member States continue to disagree on the safety of countries of origin: of the EU Member States examined, the 19 that have national lists⁴² have designated dozens of different countries as “safe”.

Another change brought on by the Pact through the Qualification Regulation is the now mandatory examination of the internal protection alternative. This is unlikely to be a major source of contention, given that 24 of 27 Member States use this option under the current legislation.⁴³ However, obligatory use of the internal protection alternative constitutes a harmonisation that lowers protection standards, by consolidating concepts that are foreign to international refugee law in EU law.⁴⁴

Quality of asylum determination procedures

The poor quality of status determination procedures may also undermine the accurate assessment of protection needs in Europe. Challenges arising in first instance processes include limited use of procedural safeguards, poor evidential assessment, lack of training of officials in charge of the determination, and a general lack of access to interpreters and legal assistance/aid. Poor decision making at first instance is partly illustrated by the number of decisions overturned upon appeal, as referred to above: 26% on average over the last 3 years across the EU, i.e. one in four decisions appealed. In at least two countries (IE, SE), over half of first instance decisions were overturned in 2025. Having to go to second instance for a proper assessment increases the cost of the procedure and delays access to protection, thus increasing uncertainty for the applicant, and generating administrative burdens for the state.

Second instance decision making is not without problems in many states and thus does not always serve to remedy poor decision making at first instance. Although the APD foresees the right to an effective remedy (Article 46), it does not prescribe harmonised standards for second instance decision making. As a result, only some second instance proceedings re-examine cases both in fact and in law, whereas others only assess whether the law has been correctly interpreted and applied but do not re-evaluate the facts of the claim, a poor guarantee. In addition, not all second instance bodies adjudicate cases on the merits, some are constrained to, at best, sending the case back to the first instance authority for review. The remedy is not always automatically suspensive, which puts some applicants at risk of removal. Finally, some courts use accelerated procedures with fewer guarantees for certain applicants and applicants cannot always access legal assistance and aid. Such procedural divergences even happen within the same country: a study published in 2021 highlighted major

⁴¹ Council of the EU, *Council conclusions on convergence in asylum decision practices*, April 2016, available [here](#); European Commission, *Proposal for the Qualification Directive*, July 2016, available [here](#)

⁴² AT, BE, HR, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FR, DE, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, SE, SI, SK, plus non-EU participants IS, LI, NO, CH.

⁴³ MPI Europe, *Cracked Foundation, Uncertain Future*, March 2018, available [here](#), 19.

⁴⁴ ECRE *Comments on the qualification regulation (EU) 2024/1347*, December 2025, available [here](#).

differences between Italian courts charged with first instance decision making when it comes to procedural guarantees (the hearing, interview, etc) and rules on interpretation.⁴⁵

Furthermore, with the APR, structural changes are introduced that significantly restrict access to quality second-instance procedures through the erosion of the right to an effective remedy, strictly compressed deadlines, and the widespread removal of automatic suspensive effects, forcing applicants must actively petition a court for the right to remain within a very short deadline (minimum 5 days) and increasing the risk that applicants be wrongly deported before their case is fully reviewed, potentially violating the principle of non-refoulement and Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.⁴⁶

5. Recommendations

In general, authorities and actors presenting statistics, including the **European Commission** and **Member States**, should:

- ❖ Stop using protection statistics out of context or in a misleading way.
- ❖ Avoid conflating asylum applications with arrivals to Europe, or presenting the data in a way that may cause confusion between the two.
- ❖ When presenting protection rates, specify whether it is first or second instance or both.
- ❖ When presenting rejection rates, specify which types of decisions are counted towards negative decisions.
- ❖ In general, when presenting statistics, include detailed information about their methodology to avoid providing misleading information.
- ❖ Use protection rates, including humanitarian protection, instead of international protection recognition rates when speaking about overall protection needs of people applying for asylum in Europe.

The **European Commission** should:

- ❖ Ensure greater accuracy of the data collected and published by Eurostat, including through random sampling and comparison with nationally reported statistics.
- ❖ Ensure correct understanding and application of Eurostat's reporting definitions and methodologies, including through sampling and comparing with nationally reported statistics.
- ❖ Provide detailed information by country as to the forms of humanitarian protection reported under Eurostat.
- ❖ Continue to collect and then publish the data on grounds for rejection and grounds for inadmissibility.
- ❖ Focus on the quality of decision making in the EU rather than pushing expanded or mandatory concepts which do not address these fundamental and well-documented flaws in the system.

Member States should:

- ❖ Adhere strictly to Eurostat definitions and indicate to the Commission whenever a specificity in their asylum system makes reporting comparable data more difficult.
- ❖ Systematically apply the exemptions to the 20% recognition rate threshold for accelerated and border procedures provided for in the APR, and ensure an exhaustive, in-depth, case-by-case examination of all asylum applications regardless of the applicant's nationality or the applicable international protection recognition rate. Moreover, although they are included in the European Commission's list, Member States should not apply the 20% threshold to nationals of countries without a recognition rate due to an absence of decisions, as this should not be treated as equivalent to a 0% international protection recognition rate.
- ❖ Apply safe country concepts sparingly, in light of the complex nature of international protection claims, and ensure that every asylum application receives an exhaustive, in-depth, case-by-case examination.

⁴⁵ Cristina Dallara and Alice Lacchei, 'Street-level Bureaucrats and Coping Mechanisms. The Unexpected Role of Italian Judges in Asylum Policy Implementation, 2 August 2021, available [here](#).

⁴⁶ ECRE Comments on the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU, October 2024, available [here](#).

- ❖ Ensure the accuracy of their statistics, notably through reliance on and cooperation with their asylum authorities.
- ❖ Report detailed data at the national level, including on elements such as inadmissibility and discontinuation proceedings, with clear definitions and methodology.
- ❖ Ensure rapid access to fair asylum procedures for all to put an end to the asylum lottery.
- ❖ Separate in merit negative decisions from other decisions that do not result in granting of protection, to accurately reflect actual rejection decisions.