

On Marginal Inclusion: refugees and the fringes of citizenship in Portugal

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2.1. Applicants for international protection in the EU+ (4)

In 2016, EU+ countries (5) recorded 1 291 785 asylum applications (6) (or 2 483 applicants per million inhabitants). The number of applications decreased by 7 % compared to 2015 when an unprecedented number of close to 1.4 million applications were lodged in the EU+. Still, 2016 was the year with the second highest number of applications lodged since harmonised EU-level data collection (7) began in 2008.

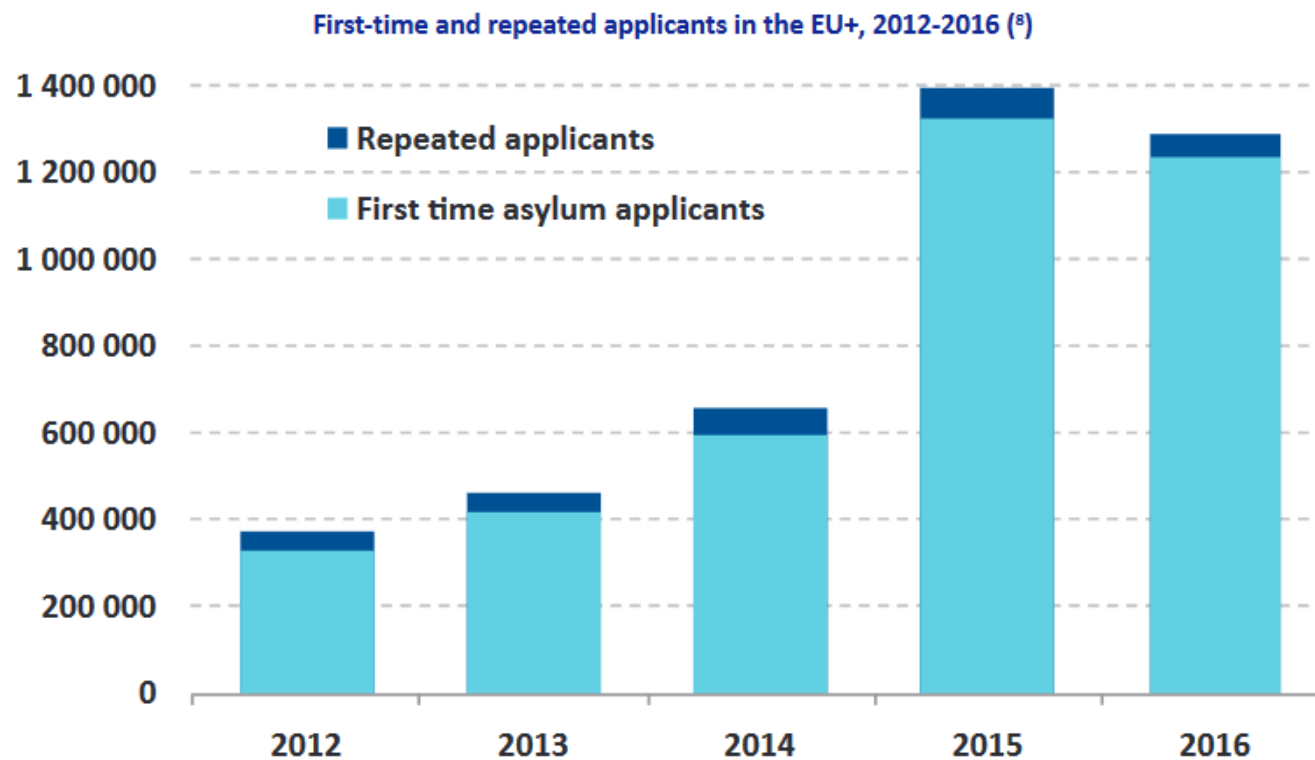


Figure 1: Small decrease in the number of applicants in the EU+ compared to 2015

Main countries of origin of applicants in the EU+, 2012-2016

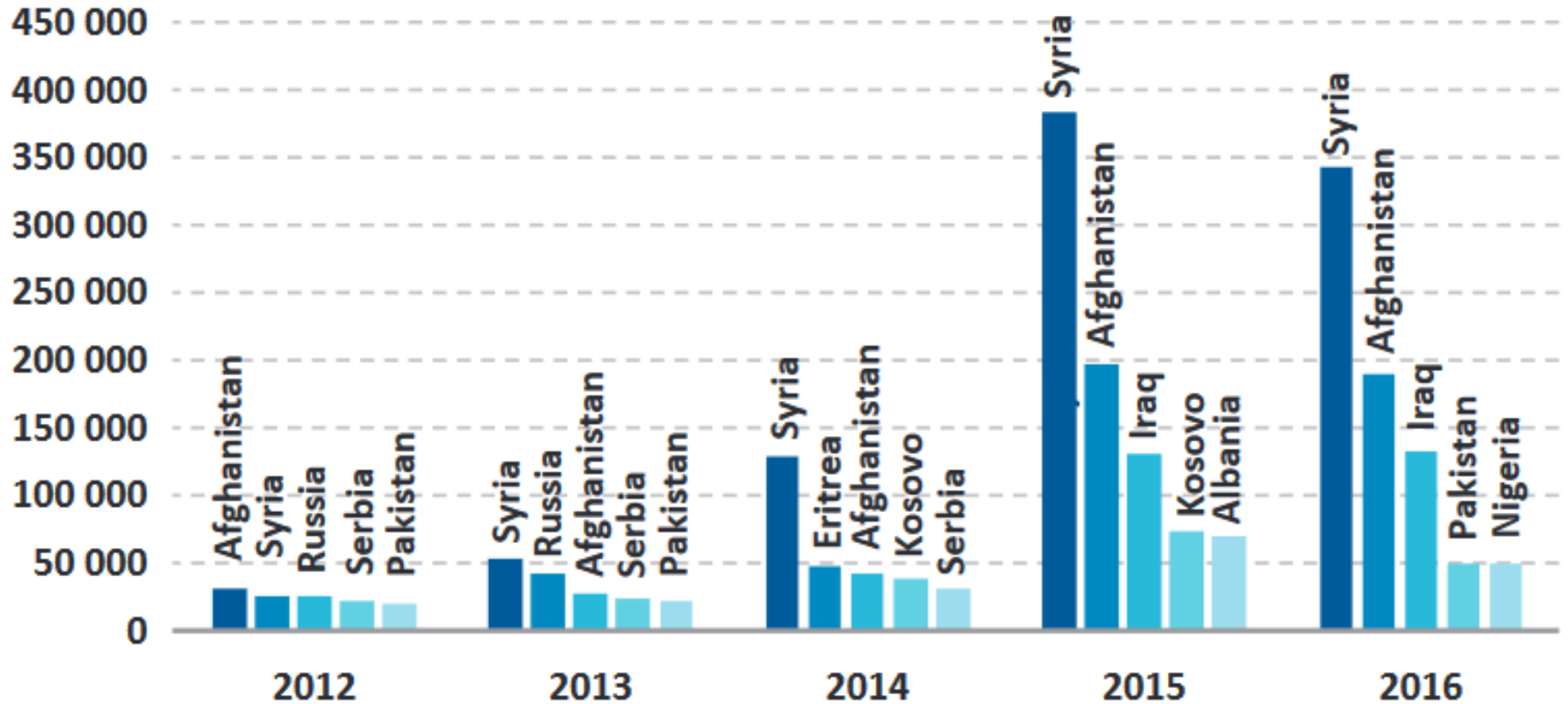
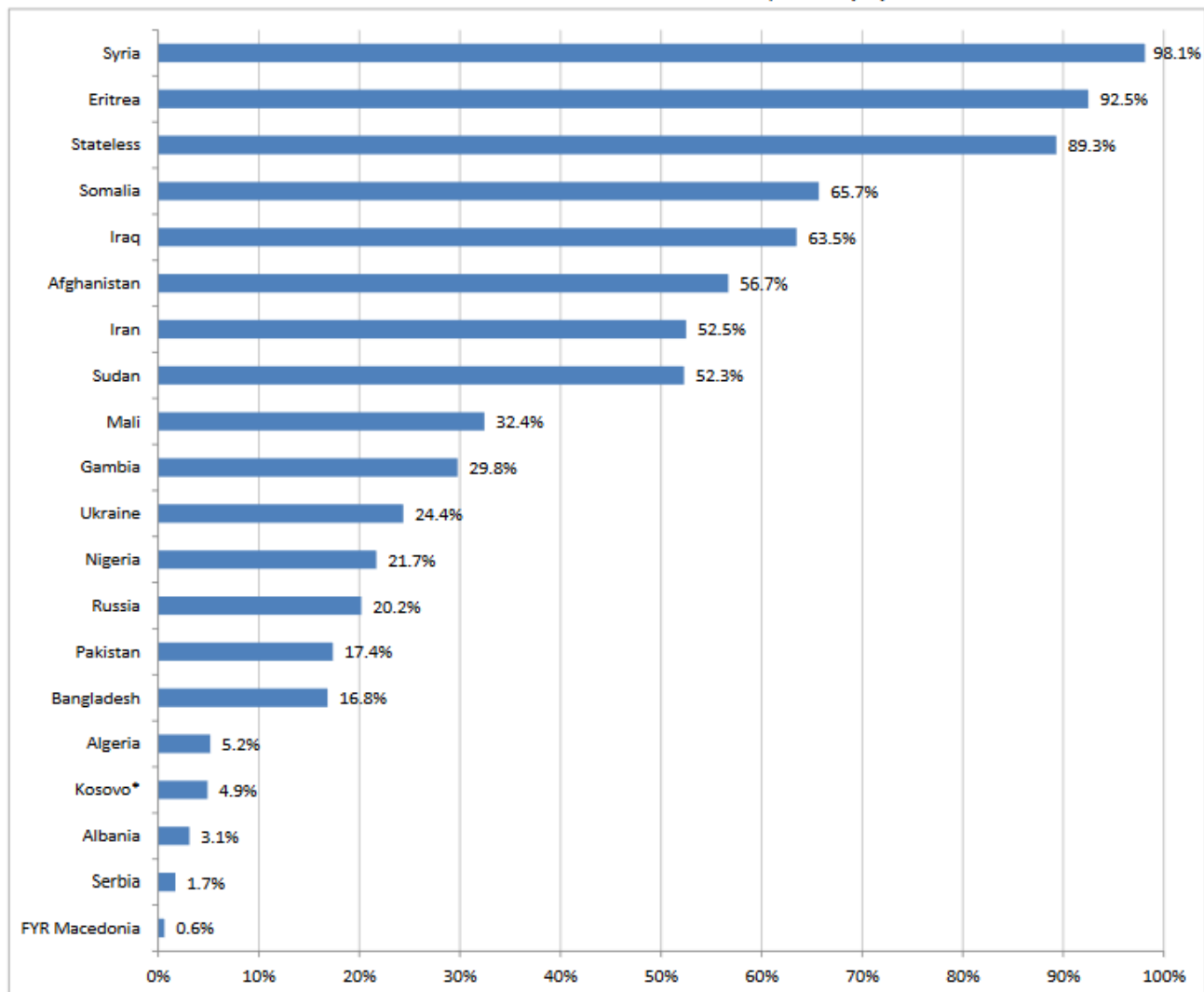


Figure 4: Syria remained the main country of origin of applicants

Recognition rates at first instance for the twenty citizenships with the highest number of first instance decisions in the EU, 2016 (%)



* Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99.



Lampedusa, 3 Oct 2013

Malta, 11 Oct 2013

Malta 10-13 Sep 2014

Libya 14 Sep 2014

Libya 19 April 2015

Libya 2 Nov 2016

European Agenda on Migration

May 2015

Immediate actions...

Triton and Poseidon in 2015-16

Immediate support to missions against smugglers

A proposal for a permanent common EU system of relocation for emergency situations

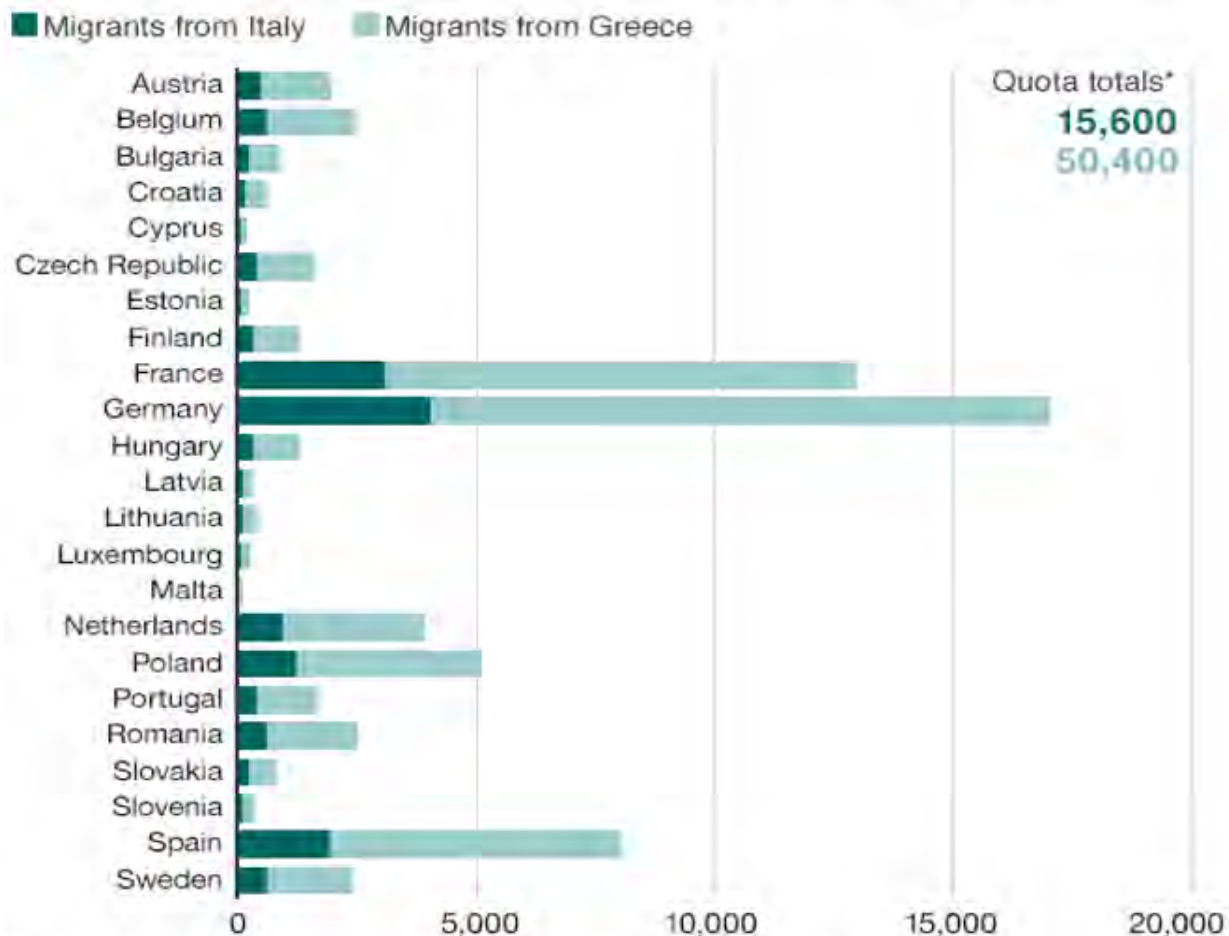
A Recommendation for an EU resettlement scheme followed by a proposal for more permanent approach

30 million EUR for Regional Development and Protection Programmes

A pilot 'multi-purpose' centre established in Niger by the end of 2015.

A new 'Hotspot' approach, where the EASO, Frontex and Europol will work on the ground with frontline Member States to swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants

Number of migrants EU member states are being asked to take



Note: UK has opted out, Ireland has offered to take 4,000, Denmark will take 1,000.
 Switzerland and Norway have also agreed to take refugees, numbers yet to be agreed.
 *Relocation of a further 54,000 migrants still to be decided.

Source: European Commission

BBC

... and four pillars.

- 1. Reducing the incentives for irregular migration:** cooperation and humanitarian assistance; action plan on smuggling; stronger action on readmission; reinforcement and amendment of the Frontex legal basis to strengthen its role on return)

... and four pillars.

2. Border management – saving lives and securing external borders: strengthening Frontex's role and capacity; Union Standard for border management; strengthening EU coordination of coast guard functions; strengthening the capacity of third countries to manage their borders.

... and four pillars.

3. Europe's duty to protect: a strong common asylum policy: a new monitoring and evaluation system for the Common European Asylum System; guidelines to fight against abuses of the asylum system; Safe Country of Origin provisions, measures to promote systematic identification and fingerprinting; more biometric identifiers passed through Eurodac; evaluation and possible revision of the Dublin Regulation in 2016.

... and four pillars.

4. A new policy on legal migration: Blue Card scheme; a platform for dialogue with social partners on economic migration; a stronger action to link migration and development policy; re-prioritising funding for integration policies (AMIF, ERDF, ESF); cheaper, faster and safer remittance transfers.



Photo: FRONTEX – 8 apr 2016

Redwan arrived in Portugal with his father Samir, who is 80. They hail from Dera'a, a place heavily affected by the civil war in Syria. They are hosted in a house provided by a NGO located in the provincial town of Serpa, in the rural region of Lower Alentejo, which they share with two other Syrians and a Portuguese ex-detainee, a beneficiary of another programme run by the same organization.

He and his father had set out from Istanbul in February 2016 and landed in the Greek island of Lesbos, where were identified and detained in Moria's hotspot. There, a paper was handed to them as they were requested to indicate eight preferences for relocation. Nobody chose Portugal. Still, the Agents of the UNHCR and the EASO insisted that Portugal is a welcoming country, people are friendly and work is available. They ended up accepting, but now feel have been cheated. He has been waiting in the small town for eight months and nothing has happened: no job, no perspectives, and no future. "I say thanks for the house, *shukran Purtughal*, but life is not only a roof on our head".



Redwan has 4 children left behind with his wife and mother-in-law in Istanbul. He is the only breadwinner for a family of 8 people. Portuguese government provide him and his father with 150 euros per month each: they only buy the basic food for them, not provided by the programme, and send the rest to Turkey. Extra expenses are a reason of concern since beneficiaries have to pay from their subsidy any additional cost for documents, translations, transportation, bank accounts and other services. “Do you believe? I pay taxes in Portugal”, he says with irony.

Redwan is a specialized upholsterer, but there are no factories and no opportunities to do his job in the town. He has only found petty jobs in agriculture, in poorly paid and highly heavy tasks.

“I come from a city of four million people: what am I doing here? If you go out here you just find elderlies and children. Young people have all emigrated, to Lisbon or abroad”.

As he explains – had not been for his father, he would have already left, like many other people have done in the last months. One of their Syrian home-mates tried twice and was sent back to Portugal, the first time from France and the second from Spain.

At the end of our meeting, Redwan shows me the pictures he took when the Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the President of the Republic of Portugal, made a trip around the reception projects of the region in April, welcoming the newcomers and asserting repeatedly Portugal is a generous country.

Redwan feels he has not arrived in Europe yet. He admits to be trapped in a conundrum in which he cannot leave his father alone, but also cannot bear the distance from his wife and children for much longer.



One year later, in November 2017, he is still waiting. He received a positive answer to his asylum claim (he was granted subsidiary protection), but only a few days before the end of the 18 months prescribed to 'become autonomous'.

I accompany him to the office of the High Commissioner for Immigration dedicated to family reunification. The employee is unkind, superficial, treating Redwan with bureaucratic formality. She considers she has nothing to explain about the delay of the procedure, being, as she says, everything is in the hand of the police. After I insist to talk with her chief, it comes up that the process has not even been lodged with the Border Police and that his appointment has been made in five months from now. He looks at me and murmurs: "I am fed up. I go away. As soon as I get out of here I go straight to the airport".

“in creating a special route for admission deliberately set apart from migration, the humanitarian discourse that protects refugees from harm actually prevents refugees from finding durable solutions, which depend upon securing an economic livelihood and not just receiving humanitarian assistance” (Long, 2013).