



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

ASYLUM LEVELS AND TRENDS IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, 2006

**OVERVIEW OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS LODGED IN EUROPEAN
AND NON-EUROPEAN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES IN 2006**

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[HTTP://WWW.UNHCR.ORG/STATISTICS.HTML](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics.html)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report summarizes the main levels, trends and developments in the number of asylum claims submitted in 50 industrialized countries in 2006 (44 European and six non-European). A limited number of those who apply for asylum are granted refugee status and obtain long-term residence status. Statistics on asylum-seekers accepted as refugees, those granted a complementary form of protection or refugees who have been resettled, particularly by Australia, Canada and the United States, are currently being compiled and will be published separately.

2. The number of asylum countries covered by the various tables in this document differs, depending on the nature of the analysis and the availability of data. With the borders of the European Union (EU) potentially moving further to the east or south in the future, the perspective of asylum capacity building and international responsibility sharing has become more important in central, eastern and southern Europe. As such, Table 1 provides a comprehensive picture of asylum trends in 50 countries for the period 2002-2006. Tables 2 through 19, on the other hand, are based on the monthly asylum application database maintained by UNHCR, which covers 36 asylum countries.

3. Some central and eastern European countries included in Table 1 host significant refugee or internally displaced populations resulting from mass displacement (e.g. **Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Serbia**, etc.). These displaced populations, although of major concern to the host countries and the international community, fall outside the scope of this analysis, which looks at individual applications for asylum.

4. While asylum and migration, also known as the “asylum-migration-nexus”, are becoming more and more intertwined, the lack of statistical data does not permit an evidence-based analysis of asylum-seeker flows within the broader mixed migration picture. Moreover, despite the humanitarian challenges and prominent media coverage suggesting otherwise, most migrants do not claim asylum and are thus not included in this report or in UNHCR statistics.

II. SOURCES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

5. Both the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refer to the responsibility of countries to provide statistical data to UNHCR. Governments provide UNHCR with statistics on the number and conditions of refugees, asylum-seekers and other groups of concern to the Office. This report is, therefore, mostly based on official asylum statistics, reflecting national laws and procedures. During the period 2002-2006, UNHCR conducted refugee status determination under its mandate in a number of countries including Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, and Turkey. Details on the responsibility for refugee status determination are included in the notes of Table 1.

6. In general, the statistics presented in this document reflect the number of asylum-seekers lodging an application for the first time. However, it is believed that a significant number of countries included in this report do not distinguish new asylum applications from re-opened or repeat claims in their respective statistical systems. As a consequence, some of the numbers of asylum claims reported to UNHCR are believed to be inflated. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INDIS) of the Netherlands, for example, started reporting separate statistics on new asylum claims and second/repeat applications as from July 2006. A first analysis shows that only 56 per cent out of the total number of claims submitted during August-December 2006 (4,483) were in fact lodged by new asylum-seekers. However, the figures reported in this document include

