

HOW DID MEMBER STATES REACT TO THE FLUCTUATIONS OF THE INFLUX OF ASYLUM SEEKERS?

EMN FLASH #2/2018

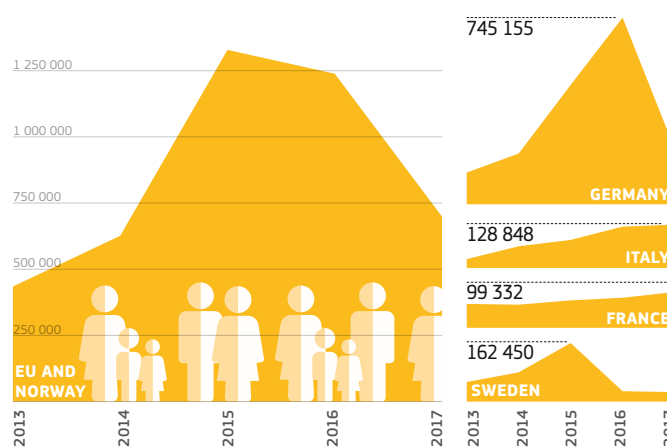
Introduction to the EMN Study on Changing Influx of Asylum Seekers 2014-2016

In 2014-2016, **EU Member States and Norway experienced an unprecedented influx of incoming applicants for international protection**: the number of applications for international protection lodged rose from 443 015 in 2013 to peak at 1 320 000 million in 2015 and 1 260 000 million in 2016, though the scale and timing of the peaks differed greatly across European countries. The mass influx led to backlogs of registrations of international protection applications, pressures on reception centres, and other operational and organisational challenges.

What initiatives did EU Member States and Norway implement to tackle the unprecedented increase in asylum applications? And of these initiatives, what were considered to be the most effective? What lesson have been learnt from this unparalleled situation to build preparedness for the future?

The EMN Study on “Changing Influx of Asylum Seekers 2014-2016” explains how 24 EU Member States and Norway responded to the migration crisis in their country by providing an overview of the changes to national strategies, approaches and measures in response to these unprecedented migratory movements.

Number of applications for international protection over the period 2013 -2017



Source: Eurostat (migr_asyunaa), extracted: 12 April 2018

Key findings



All EU Member States and Norway strengthened **cooperation among relevant stakeholders** at national level and at **bilateral, multilateral, regional and European levels**, in the areas of border management, law enforcement, the fight against smuggling, reception capacity and asylum procedures.



Newly introduced **border control and law enforcement measures** were mostly interlinked, with actions focusing on scaling up control and surveillance measures and changes in the role of certain authorities in managing the inflow of third-country nationals at the internal or external border crossings.



EU Member States put in place **wider reception services**, intended as basic and immediate short-term needs of applicants for international protection, focussed on facilitating access to health care, social services and cultural and linguistic orientation services. Traditional **integration measures** were also strengthened.



The majority of the EU Member States responded with **significant legislative and policy amendments**, mainly focused on better controls at the borders, asylum laws, institutional changes and cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders.



EU Member States and Norway took immediate actions to increase **reception capacities**, with new centres being opened or existing ones being enlarged. Procedures were also adopted to speed up and simplify **processing of asylum applications** by pooling similar applications and limiting procedural requirements for specific nationalities.



Following the peaks in the influx, EU Member States and Norway dismantled, scaled down or adjusted the measures taken during the period of high inflows. Measures were also re-prioritised, placing more emphasis on return and integration.

Key learning points

Better future preparedness for similar mass influxes through ready-made **contingency plans** to be activated in case of emergency.

Need for **continuous and constructive cooperation** in different areas and at different levels of governance (EU, national, regional etc.), accompanied by absolute clarity on mandate and competencies.

Importance of **strategic documentation and communication** of key decisions to the public and media.

Good practices were identified and were collected in this EMN study.



FIND OUT MORE

About the study: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en

About the national reports: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en