



EMN Ad-Hoc Query on pull factors for unaccompanied minor asylum applicants

Requested by Hans LEMMENS on 29th June 2017

Unaccompanied minors

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom (10 in total)

Disclaimer:

The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

Background information:

In 2015 European countries faced a record number of asylum seekers (more than 1.2 million), and the number of unaccompanied minors (UMs) who sought protection in this part of the world almost quadrupled in comparison to the year before (96.500 vs. about 23.000). Your country and the Netherlands were among the top destination countries for UMs in 2015. In 2016 the numbers were reduced to a third compared to 2015 (63.300). Over half of these unaccompanied minors came from Afghanistan and Syria.

Little is known about the motivations of these UMs who arrived in Europe, why they settled in a specific European country. Especially now that EU-countries are increasingly harmonizing their asylum policies, it is important to gain insight into these topics to be able to understand and anticipate future flows of UMs. Therefore the Department of Migration Policy of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice requested the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of this Ministry, to conduct a research on the issues specified above. Accordingly the findings of this research may contribute to policy making at the national and European level.

The researchers from WODC are currently conducting this research, which includes interviewing Syrian, Eritrean and Afghan UMs, who belong to the top-three nationalities in the 2015 cohort of UMs who came to the Netherlands).


They would appreciate it if you - based on research or register data - could answer our questions about UMs who belong to the top-three nationalities of the 2015 cohort of UMs who arrived to your country.


Questions


1. Please state the top three nationalities in the 2015 cohort of asylum applicants considered to be UM's in your country. Please also state per nationality 1) the number of the applicants, and 2) the percentage of this number in the 2015 cohort of asylum applicants who are considered to be UM's.
2. Is there any information available about the reasons why these UMs came to 1) Europe, and 2) specifically for your country? If yes, please state briefly the reasons to come to Europe (per nationality) and the reasons to come to your country (per nationality).
3. Is there any information available about whether the decision to come to Europe and specifically to your country was made by these UMs themselves and/or by other parties such as the parents, other family members or smugglers? If yes, please elaborate on who was involved in the decision to come to Europe (per nationality) and the decision to come to your country (per nationality).
4. Do you have information on the percentage of applications by the UMs concerned who were granted a residence permit in your country, to reunite with their parents? If yes, please state the percentage of UMs who applied for family reunification and source of data (register or survey data) for the total of the 2015 cohort, AND if available per nationality (top three nationalities in 2015).
5. Do you have information on the current educational level of the UMs concerned who were granted a residence permit in your country (register or survey data)? If yes, please state the current educational level (per nationality - top three nationalities in 2015):



6. If available, please attach digital copies of the paper(s)/report(s)/other sources from which you cited your answers. Information in your native language is also welcome (in case you have relevant information but do not have access to digital copies please let us know so that we can contact you for further information).



Responses



	Country	Wider Dissemination	Response
	Austria	Yes	<p>1. Afghanistan: 5,609 (67.8 %); Syria: 1,134 (13.7 %); Iraq: 366 (4.4 %); rest: 1,168 (14.1 %); total: 8,277 (100.0 %). Source: official annual statistics for the year 2015 - Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>2. As widely known, Austria is one of the main reception countries for unaccompanied minor foreigners (UMF). The top 1 country of origin of UMF since 2007 is Afghanistan. From experience, reasons for choosing Austria are family members or friends already staying in Austria and the special rules for UMF in asylum proceedings including certain procedural and protective safeguards. During the admission procedure, UMF are provided with a legal counsellor as legal representative. During the main asylum procedure, they are represented by the youth welfare authority. Furthermore, UMF may file a complaint against decisions of the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum within four weeks. In addition, UMF are accommodated in special facilities, in which they receive special care. These special procedural and protective guarantees also have the effect that asylum seekers often only claim to be minor and through age assessment it is determined that the person is already an adult. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>3. The decision to leave the home country is often taken by the UMF themselves, but often in agreement with their families. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>4. In 2015, in Austria a total of 7,803 applications for family reunification were initiated. This number comprises all applications for family reunification. A specification as to how many</p>


			<p>persons filed an application for family reunification with unaccompanied minor foreigners or vice versa is not possible. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>5. From experience, the educational level is very different between UMF from Aghanistan, Syria and Iraq. UMF from Afghanistan on average are significantly less qualified than UMF from Syria or Iraq. Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>6. No information was provided by the Federal Ministry of the Interior.</p>
	Belgium	Yes	<p>1. 1. Afghanistan: #1520 / 59,7% 2. Syria: # 461 / 18,1% 3. Iraq: # 178 / 7,0% Total UAM asylum applicants all nationalities in 2015: # 2544</p> <p>2. In general, Belgium remains the country where UAM strand while heading to the United Kingdom. Independently of nationality, every youngster seems to think that the UK is a better place to live. What struck in 2016 and 2017 was the arrival of UAM who had applied for asylum in Germany in 2015, but, either because the procedure took too long or because they got a negative decision in Germany, these UAM decided to try their luck in Belgium. • Syrians: came to Europe because the war took too long, they stayed for a long time in their neighbouring countries but saw no future anymore. Usually they go to a European country where they already have acquaintances / relatives and where they could quickly start the family reunification procedure. • Afghans often leave their country without a specific destination country. En route (on the way) they hear from other refugees which countries are considered "good". But if they have family in Europe, like we have an important Afghan community in Belgium, they will go to that country. Some UAM indicated that they came to Belgium for education. • Eritreans were often on their way to the Netherlands. Arriving in Belgium, some of them wrongfully thought they were in the Netherlands. Belgium was not a conscious choice. They thought they were more likely to obtain residence permits in the Netherlands.</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. The following numbers refer to UAM in respect of whom applications for family reunification have been introduced in Belgian diplomatic missions or consular posts and have been examined</p>

			<p>by the Immigration Office in 2015, without specifying the date of obtaining international protection by the UAM (Belgium does not have cohort statistics for this topic). Number of UAM, beneficiaries of international protection, with a family reunification application for their parents in 2015: 65 Top 3 nationalities: - Syria: 33 - Afghanistan: 20 - Eritrea: 6</p> <p>5. The Directorate-General for Compulsory Education in Wallonia, nor the Agency for Educational Services in Flanders has an indicator in its database to identify unaccompanied minor refugees separately from other accompanied minors. Therefore, it is not possible for the Agency to provide data on this particular group. The Agency can provide information concerning education for minors who are newcomers and speak a foreign language (the so-called OKAN classes). But this type of education does not only concerns UAM. More information and the biannual report on OKAN is available in Dutch on http://www.agodi.be/publicaties-onthaalonderwijs-anderstalige-nieuwkomers-okan. Fedasil, het Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, does not keep record of the actual educational levels of the UAM in its reception network. The information recorded (register) concerns the type of education: “literacy class - welcome class (OKAN) - regular education system – learning trajectory - other”.</p> <p>6. Information and the biannual report on OKAN is available in Dutch on http://www.agodi.be/publicaties-onthaalonderwijs-anderstalige-nieuwkomers-okan.</p>
	Croatia	Yes	<p>1. During 2015, 2 male UMC seek asylum in Croatia, age 16-17, but nationality is not available. Out of 152 asylum seekers in 2015, UMC are representing 1, 3%. Source: Ministry of Interior statistical data of unaccompanied minors by age and gender, who requested international protection in Croatia.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No.</p>

			<p>5. No.</p> <p>6. N/A.</p>
	Germany	Yes	<p>1. In 2015 we had UM's from: 1. Afghanistan 7.645; 2. Syria 6.930; 3. Iraq 1.865 (source: Eurostat) We have no cohort statistics in Germany. Additional figures can be found in EUROSTAT.</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. n/a</p>
	Hungary	Yes	<p>1. In 2015 Hungary registered a large number of asylum applicants (177,135). From these applications 8805 applications were made by UAMs (third largest number after Germany and Sweden). Around 90% of the applications by UAMs have been terminated because the applicants left for unknown destinations. The top three nationalities are 1. Afghans - 4875 UAMs, 55,4% of total UAMs; 2. Syrians - 2240 UAMs, 25,4% of total UAMs; 3. Kosovars - 745 UAMs, 8,5% of total UAMs.</p> <p>2. Hungary was/is considered a transit country by asylum seekers (UAMs also).</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. N/A</p>

			<p>5. N/A</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	Lithuania	Yes	<p>1. In 2015 Lithuania received 3 asylum applications from UAMs: 2 from Afghanistan and 1 from India. In 2015 Lithuania admitted 27 UAMs who did not apply for asylum. Majority of them were from Vietnam.</p> <p>2. UAMs who apply for asylum come due to the insecure situation in the country. Non-asylum seeking unaccompanied minors usually arrive (are smuggled) to Lithuania in groups from Vietnam. They usually introduce themselves as young persons aged 15-17 years and come for economic reasons or transit to Western Europe.</p> <p>3. In the asylum applications they indicate that they were escaping insecure situation in their country.</p> <p>4. No family reunification cases of UAMs were registered in 2015.</p> <p>5. Not available.</p> <p>6. Not available.</p>
	Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. During 2015, there were 102 unaccompanied minors. The first three nationalities were: Afghanistan (45); Albania (14); Algeria (6).</p> <p>2. No.</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. No.</p>

			<p>5. No.</p> <p>6. N/A.</p>
	Netherlands	Yes	<p>1. 1st nationality: Syrian - Number 1458 - Percentage 38% 2nd nationality: Eritrean - Number 1237 - Percentage 32% 3rd nationality: Afghan - Number 533 - Percentage 14%</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. No</p> <p>5. Currently, there is a Dutch database being constructed based on register data, covering all asylum seekers who received a residence permit in the Netherlands in 2014, 2015 and first half of 2016.</p> <p>6. N/a</p>
	Sweden	Yes	<p>1. 1. Afghanistan 23480 UAM, 41564 asylum seekers – 56% 2. Syria 3777 UAM, 51338 asylum seekers – 7% 3. Somalia 2058 UAM, 5465 asylum seekers – 38%</p> <p>2. According to the 2015 Annual Report of the Swedish Migration Agency different factors which have influenced the decision for unaccompanied minors to apply for asylum in Sweden can be: - diaspora and previous asylum seekers already present in Sweden - the Swedish reception system with accommodation and education which gives a quick way into society - other EU-countries inadequate reception systems and/or legal framework – for example age assessment and that decision is taken after the applicant has reached age of authority - social media and information exchange via mobile phones which makes it easy to get information on possible destination countries, travel routes, costs, risks and so on - lacking or limited future in the country or region in which they are staying - small or non-existing possibilities for education in the country of origin or the country they are staying in - war, conflicts, violation of human rights -</p>

			<p>second and third generation of people on the run – limited future and no sign of improvement - continued marginalization in the country they are staying in - demographic profiles – many youngsters in those nationalities - decreased costs and risks of traveling to and within Europe - recruitment/demand to do military service and/or society service.</p> <p>3. Not to the best of our knowledge</p> <p>4. No – since we do not have data on yearly cohorts of UAM we are not able to provide this statistic.</p> <p>5. No not at the current time but on 1 January 2016, a new regulation entered into force, which foresees an obligatory mapping/assessment of newly arrived students’ knowledge and previous education.</p> <p>6. NA</p>
	<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>2. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>3. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>4. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>5. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p> <p>6. Please see the attached spreadsheet.</p>