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## Nationals of countries with visa-free access lodge over a quarter of asylum applications in EU+



*Applications for international protection from Latin American countries continue to increase.*

In March 2019, applications for international protection in the EU+ were significantly higher than a year ago, at **58 778** (+20 % compared to March 2018). This increase is partly due to the highest recorded number of applications by nationals **exempt from visa requirements to enter the Schengen area**, which constituted more than 28 % of all applications lodged in March.

Within this group, nationals of Venezuela (2<sup>nd</sup>), Colombia (5<sup>th</sup>), Albania (9<sup>th</sup>) and Georgia (10<sup>th</sup>) were among the top ten countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ in the reporting period.

Latin-American countries of origin continue to be a focus due to their steady rise in terms of applications lodged. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) [recently reported](#) that applications from this region had reached a record.

With 4 304 applications lodged in March, **Venezuela** was the second main country of origin for a second consecutive month, following Syria (5 336 applications). The number of Venezuelan applications in March translates into a record number for the country after the one already set in February (3 995). Over the past six

months, some 43 % of Venezuelan applicants received international protection in the first-instance, even though for many others the decisions remain pending.

**Colombian** nationals also lodged an unprecedented high number of applications for international protection in the EU+. In March, Colombian applications totalled more than 2 551, a 32 % increase compared to February, and the third consecutive month with increasing applications. The recognition rate for Colombian nationals remained much lower compared to Venezuelans, at 11 % over the past six months, even though the number of first-instance decisions issued was very low.

In addition to Venezuelans and Colombians, there were also increases in applications by other Latin-American nationalities, such as Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Hondurans and Peruvians, although at a lower scale.

You can find out more about EU+ asylum data for March [here](#).

*Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: [press@easo.europa.eu](mailto:press@easo.europa.eu).*

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