

**Presentation: Freedom of movement in a populist age -
Why Balkan visa liberalisation is (still) a success**
Brussels, 1 July 2011

Asylum seekers from the Balkans: Statistical data

Table 1: Asylum seekers from Western Balkans countries in the EU, 2008 - 2010¹

While the number of asylum claimants in the EU slightly decreased from 2009 to 2010, the number of asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia, two countries that were granted visa-free travel in 2009, increased considerably.

	2008	2009	2010
Albania (visa requirement in place in 2010)	1,130	2,060	1,905
Bosnia (visa requirement in place in 2010)	955	1,320	2,105
Macedonia (visa-free in 2010)	815	940	7,550 (+ 803%)
Montenegro (visa-free in 2010)	280	250	405
Serbia (visa-free in 2010)	13,540*	5,290	17,715 (+ 335%)
Kosovo (visa requirement in place)	-	14,275	14,285
In comparison: Afghanistan	10,145	20,455 (top in 2009)	20,580 (top in 2010)
In comparison: Iraq	27,580 (top in 2008)	18,940	15,800
All countries (non-EU) TOTAL	225,870	265,845	257,815

* This figure includes the applicants from Kosovo.

¹ Eurostat database, Asylum and new asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex, Annual aggregated data (rounded), online data code: migr_asyappctza.

Table 2: Asylum seekers in the EU in 2010²

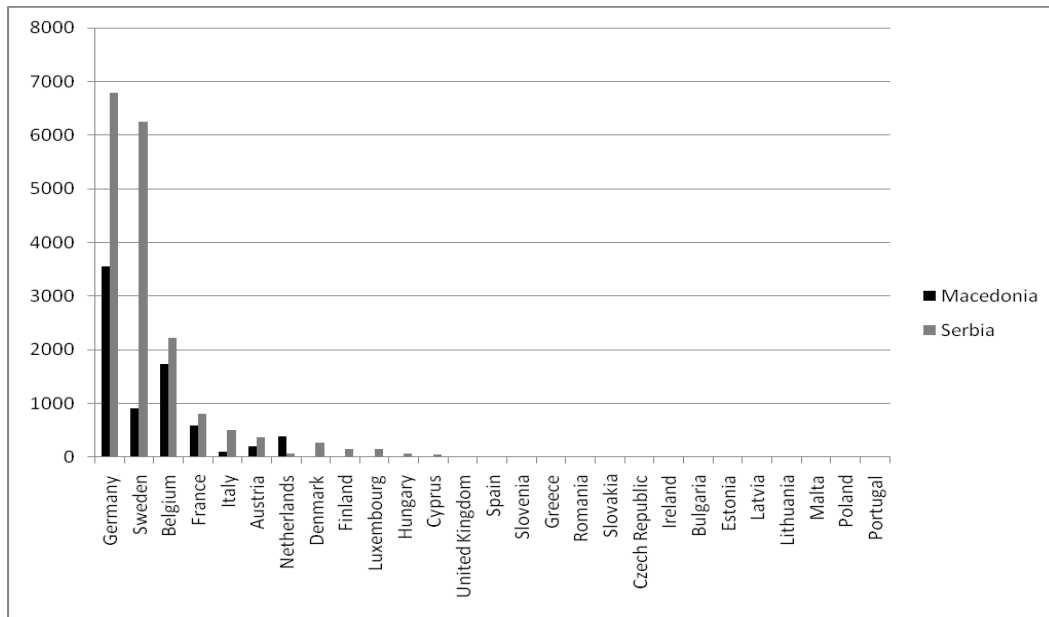
Serbia was the country where the third-largest number of asylum seekers in the EU in 2010 originated, and Macedonian ranked 9.

Non-EU	257 815
1. Afghanistan (AF)	20 580
2. Russia (RU)	18 500
3. Serbia (RS)	17 715
4. Iraq (IQ)	15 800
5. Somalia (SO)	14 350
6. Kosovo (XK)	14 285
7. Iran (IR)	10 310
8. Pakistan (PK)	9 180
9. Macedonia (MK)	7 550
10. Georgia (GE)	6 860
11. Nigeria (NG)	6 745
12. Turkey (TR)	6 335
13. Sri Lanka (LK)	6 300
14. Bangladesh (BD)	6 175
15. China (CN)	5 655
16. Armenia (AM)	5 515
17. Dem. Rep. of Congo (CD)	5 360
18. Syria (SY)	5 010
19. Guinea (GN)	4 830
20. Eritrea (ER)	4 520
21. Algeria (DZ)	3 575
22. India (IN)	3 175
23. Zimbabwe (ZW)	2 615
24. Vietnam (VN)	2 320
25. Sudan (SD)	2 290
26. Stateless	2 215
27. Haiti (HT)	2 130
28. Bosnia (BA)	2 095
29. Azerbaijan (AZ)	2 075
30. Albania (AL)	1 900
Montenegro	405
Other non-EU	41 450
EU citizens	1 260

² Eurostat, Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in 2010, Data in focus 5/2011, 29 March 2011, p. 7, at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-005/EN/KS-QA-11-005-EN.PDF.

Table 3a: Distribution of Serbian and Macedonian asylum claimants among EU countries in 2010³

In 2010, Germany, Sweden and Belgium were the three main EU countries of destination for asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia. Seven other member states experienced a low influx of asylum seekers; the remaining 17 EU countries registered 0 to less than 100 claimants from Macedonia and Serbia. This means that the Macedonian and Serbian asylum seekers did not cause a crisis *in the EU*, but in three member states.



	2009	2010
Germany	1,050	10,340
Sweden	675	7,155
Belgium	1,325	3,960
France	1,055	1,395
Austria	890	560
Italy	230	595
Netherlands	70	455
Denmark	160	285
Finland	50	175
Luxembourg	20	165
Hungary	585	70
Cyprus	170	45
Slovenia	25	15
Spain	10	15

	2009	2010
UK	20	15
Greece	5	10
Romania	20	10
Slovakia	25	10
Czech Rep.	5	5
Bulgaria	0	0
Estonia	0	0
Ireland	0	0
Latvia	0	0
Lithuania	0	0
Malta	0	0
Portugal	0	0
Poland	5	0
TOTAL	6,395	25,280

³ Eurostat database, Asylum and new asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex, Annual aggregated data (rounded), online data code: migr_asyappctza

Table 3b: Distribution of asylum applicants from SERBIA among EU countries in 2010⁴

In 2010, applications from Serbian nationals in Germany, Sweden and Belgium accounted for 86 percent of all Macedonian applications in the EU's 27 member states.

Germany	6,795	38%	= 86%
Sweden	6,255	35%	
Belgium	2,220	13%	
France	765	4%	
Italy	495	3%	
Other	1,185	7%	
TOTAL	17,715	100%	

Table 3c: Distribution of asylum applicants from MACEDONIA among EU countries in 2010⁵

In 2010, applications from Macedonian nationals in Germany, Sweden and Belgium accounted for 82 percent of all Macedonian applications in the EU's 27 member states.

Germany	3,545	47%	= 82%
Belgium	1,740	23%	
Sweden	900	12%	
France	595	8%	
Netherlands	390	5%	
Other	380	5%	
TOTAL	7,550	100%	

⁴ Eurostat, Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in 2010, Data in focus 5/2011, 29 March 2011, p. 7, at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-005/EN/KS-QA-11-005-EN.PDF

⁵ Eurostat, Asylum applicants and first instance decisions on asylum applications in 2010, Data in focus 5/2011, 29 March 2011, p. 7, at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-11-005/EN/KS-QA-11-005-EN.PDF

Table 4a: Asylum seekers from SERBIA in Belgium, Germany and Sweden in the EU⁶

In the course of 2010, Germany, Sweden and Belgium experienced two peaks in the influx of asylum seekers from Serbia. The first occurred in the February to March period, and the second between September and November 2010. In Belgium, the fluctuations were less pronounced than in the other two countries, and Germany mainly experienced the second peak.

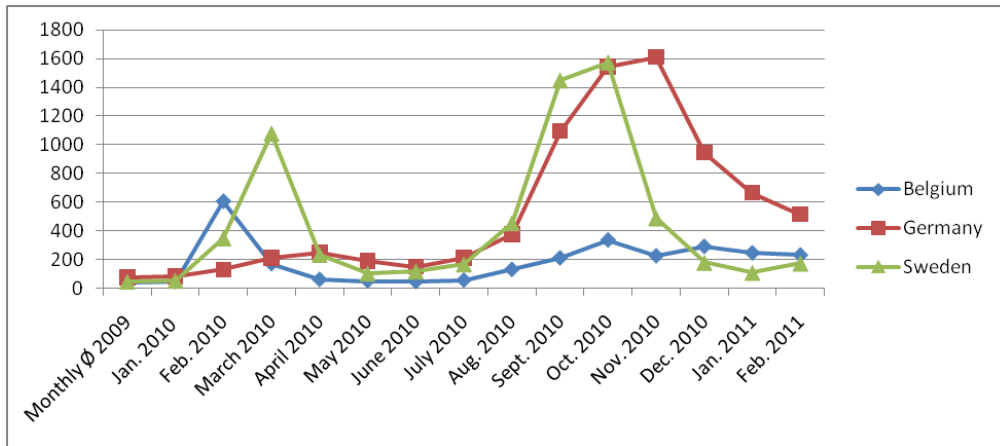
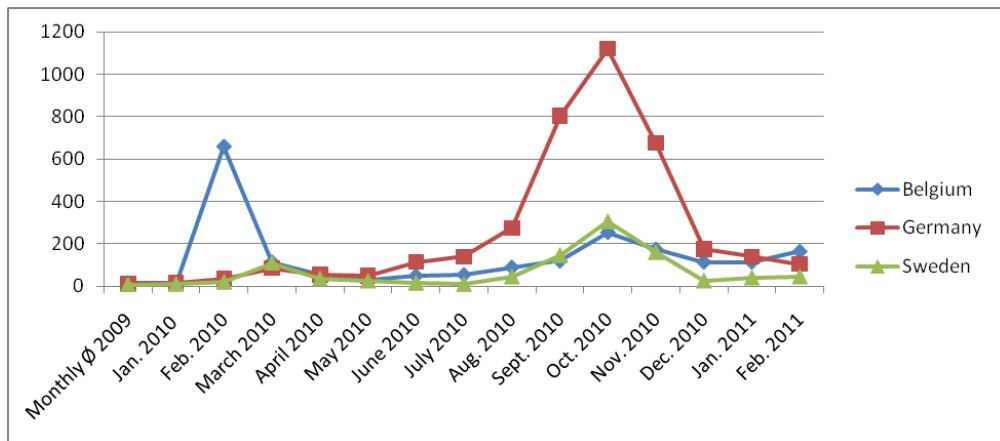


Table 4b: Asylum seekers from MACEDONIA in Belgium, Germany and Sweden in the EU⁷

Similarly, there were two peaks in the influx of Macedonian asylum seekers into Belgium, Sweden and Germany: in February/March and in September-November 2010. In the spring, the influx into Belgium, and in the autumn, the influx into Germany, were strongest.



⁶ Eurostat database, Asylum and new asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex, Monthly data (rounded), online data code: migr_asyappctzm

⁷ Eurostat database, Asylum and new asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex, Monthly data (rounded), online data code: migr_asyappctzm

**Table 5a: International protection granted
at the administrative (first-instance) level in 2010
(Refugee status, subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection⁸)**

Almost all of the asylum requests from Serbian and Macedonian nationals were rejected at the first, administrative level in 2010. The EU does not grant asylum either for poverty or for general discrimination; the claimant must be able to prove that he personally and individually was threatened.

	Serbian asylum seekers	Macedonian asylum seekers
Sweden⁹	0.7% (41 out of 5,515 persons whose claims were decided)	1.1% (8 out of 709 persons whose claims were decided)
Germany¹⁰	0.6% (31 out of 5,245 persons whose claims were decided)	0.2% (7 out of 2,925 persons whose claims were decided)
Belgium^{11*}	8.7% (74 out of 848 decided cases)	2.1% (13 out of 606 decided cases)
EU27^{12**}	2.7% (310 out of 11,635 persons whose claims were decided)	1.3% (60 out of 4,535 persons whose claims were decided)

**Please note that Sweden and Germany count all persons, including children, while Belgium does NOT count children.*

*** Please note that the EU figure does not include Luxembourg.*

Refugee status is the highest form of international protection. Under EU asylum legislation, which is based on the 1951 UN Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, EU member states are committed to offering asylum, also called refugee status, to third-country nationals that have “a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group” in their home country.¹³

⁸ Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted, at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0083:EN:HTML>.

⁹ ESI email correspondence with the Swedish Migration Board, 27 May 2011.

¹⁰ ESI email correspondence with the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 8 March 2011.

¹¹ ESI email correspondence with the Belgian Commissariat-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 26 May 2011.

¹² Eurostat database, First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex, Annual aggregated data (rounded), data online code: migr_asydcfsta.

¹³ Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted, at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0083:EN:HTML>.

Subsidiary protection is accorded to people who face “risks of serious harm” at home, but who do not meet the UN definition of refugee. The relevant EU Directive defines “serious harm” as “(a) death penalty or execution; or (b) torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of an applicant in the country of origin; or (c) serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.”¹⁴

There is also **protection on humanitarian grounds**, also defined as “compassionate grounds”, which can cover a wide range of situations. It is at the discretion of EU member states to grant it. The authorities can decide, for example, not to send back a person suffering from a serious disease that cannot be treated in his or her home country.¹⁵

Table 6: Asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia in the EU in 2011

During the first few months of 2011, the numbers of asylum seekers from Serbia and Macedonia remained high, though they were somewhat lower than in 2010.

		Jan. 2011	Feb. 2011	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly average 2009	Monthly average 2010
EU-27*	Serbians	1,225	1,190	n.a.	n.a.	441	1,476
	Macedonians	410	390	n.a.	n.a.	78	629
Belgium^{16**}	Serbians	129	126	183	106	43	127
	Macedonians	71	104	86	100	17	90
Germany¹⁷	Serbians	666	516	478	317	74	566
	Macedonians	142	104	205	168	13	296
Sweden¹⁸	Serbians	116	176	266	172	49	529
	Macedonians	43	47	97	262	8	76

* The data from the Czech Republic is missing, but given that the number of asylum seekers from the Balkans in the Czech Republic has been virtually zero over the years, this will not significantly change the total, if at all.

** The Belgian refugee authority, which has provided these figures, does not count children, but only adults. All other figures in this table include children.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted, at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0083:EN:HTML>.

¹⁶ ESI email correspondence with the Belgian Commissariat-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 26 May 2011.

¹⁷ ESI email correspondence with the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 19 May 2011.

¹⁸ ESI email correspondence with the Swedish Migration Board, 27 May 2011.

Table 7: Asylum seekers from Albania and Bosnia in the EU in 2011

The visa requirement for Albanians and Bosnians was lifted on 15 December 2010, and there was fear of a new wave of asylum seekers from the Balkans. However, during the first few months of 2011, there was only a very slight increase.

		Jan. 2011	Feb. 2011	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly average 2009	Monthly average 2010
EU-27*	Albanians	120	135	n.a.	n.a.	172	159
	Bosnians	85	95	n.a.	n.a.	110	175
Belgium**	Albanians	16	19	24	35	21	17
	Bosnians	12	2	10	14	8	9
Germany	Albanians	6	-	2	13	5	4
	Bosnians	22	19	18	13	21	30
Sweden	Albanians	8	11	16	25	10	5
	Bosnians	19	22	13	14	11	10

* The data from the Czech Republic is missing, but given that the number of asylum seekers from the Balkans in the Czech Republic has been virtually zero over the years, this will not significantly change the total, if at all.

** The Belgian refugee authority, which has provided these figures, does not count children, but only adults. All other figures in this table include children.