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Migratory Challenges in the Republic of Cyprus



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR



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Overview

In the past three years, Cyprus has been faced with substantial migratory influx. For the third year in a row, Cyprus remains the top destination member state per capita.

With a population of approximately 850,000 people, Cyprus has granted protection and received applications for asylum that exceed 3.5% of its population.

So far, around 15,000 persons have been granted protection, while 15,000 more applications are still under examination, with an increasing trend.

The geographical proximity to politically and socially unstable countries, the inability to control the occupied areas of the island, accounting for 38% of its territory, as well as the total lack of cooperation on behalf of Turkey, are among the main reasons that result in this extremely challenging situation.

Despite the ongoing efforts put forward by the Republic of Cyprus, the situation continues to deteriorate, leading to a complete overload of the social and economic structures of the island.

Cyprus plays a crucial role in protecting the Union's external borders. In order to be able to continue doing so, it is indispensable that immediate and effective measure are taken, with a view to alleviate the disproportionate burden from front-line member states, such as Cyprus.

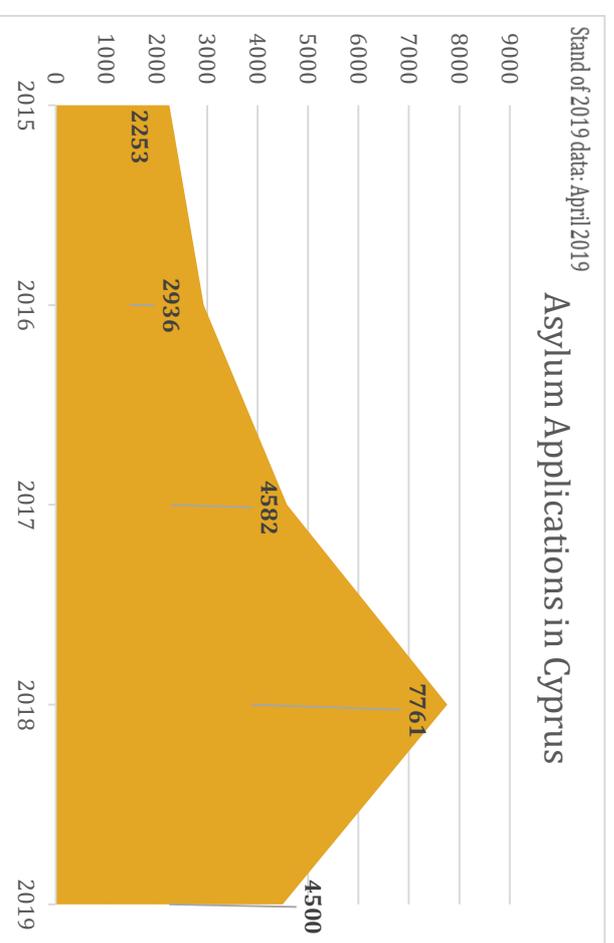
Asylum Situation in Cyprus

Migratory Pressures

Despite the overall decrease of arrivals to the EU, Cyprus continues to experience substantial increase of migratory influx.

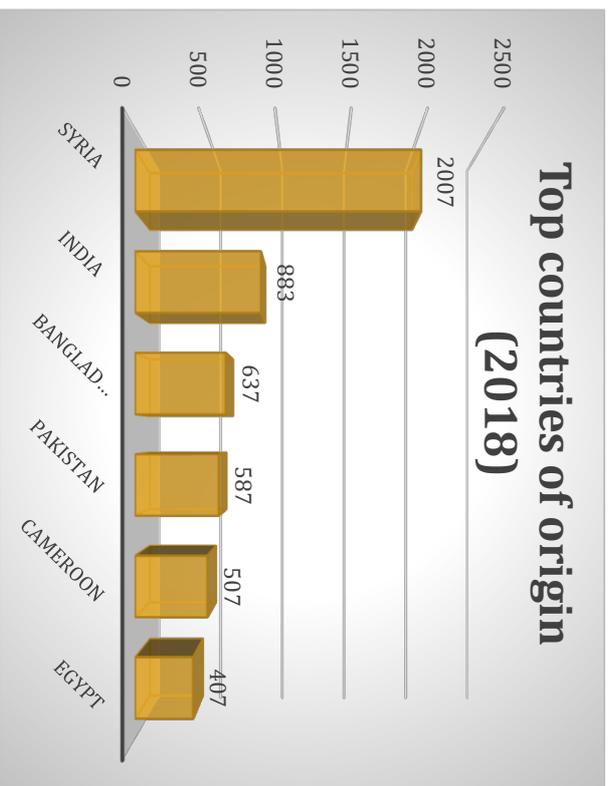
In **2017**, the increase in asylum applications, in comparison to **2016** was over **50%**. In the same trend, **2018** demonstrated an increase in migratory influx of **69%**.

The alarming trend continues in **2019**, where for the first three months of the year, there was an average **1000** applications **per month**.



Main nationalities

The top nationalities of asylum seekers in Cyprus, based on available data of 2018 were citizens of **Syria, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cameroon and Egypt.**



Syrian nationals account for over 26% of the overall migratory influx of Cyprus.

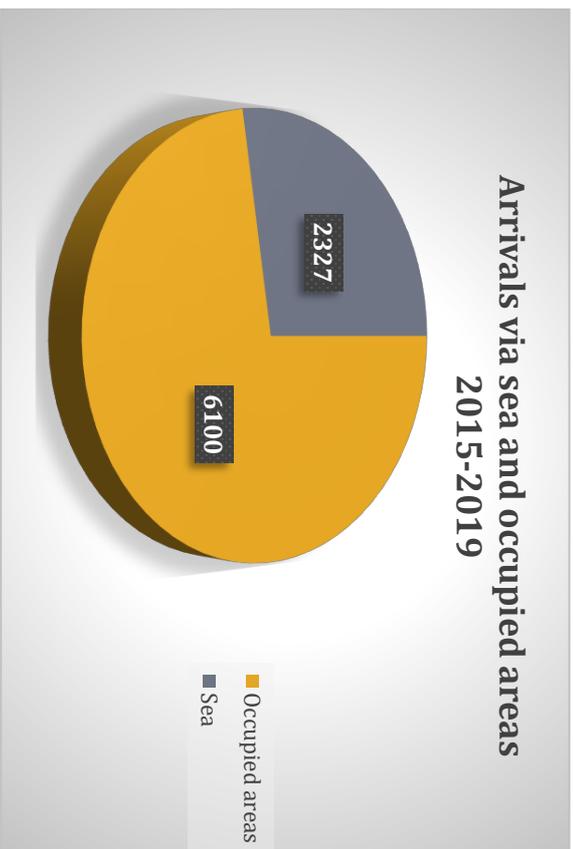
Migratory Routes

Due to the ongoing occupation of the Northern part of the island by the Turkish troops, the Republic of Cyprus has no control of 38% of its territory, while 40% of the country's population has been internally displaced from the northern occupied areas to the south of the country

In the past two years, the vast majority of the asylum seekers arrive to the area controlled by the Republic of Cyprus, through the occupied areas, via Turkey. The latest data confirm the alarming trend of persons travelling from other countries to Turkey, where they enjoy visa-free regime.

They, then, travel by plane to the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus, and then cross to the areas controlled by the Authorities of the Republic and ask for asylum.

A significant number of asylum seekers arriving to Cyprus, enter either via the occupied area, or by boat from Turkey.



For the period 2015-2019 -and only according to the available data- almost 8.500 persons have arrived to the Republic of Cyprus via sea or the occupied areas.

Despite the overall decrease in arrivals towards EU member states, Cyprus continues to experience substantial increase of up to 69% in comparison to the 2017.

Measures taken

The Government of Cyprus has taken a series of measures in order to effectively manage the situation.

In cooperation with the European Commission, as well as through the operational plan with EASO, a number of significant measures have been introduced, including the reinforcement of the Asylum Service and the expansion of reception facilities.

Effective Solidarity

Despite the measures taken, the disproportionate migratory influx continues.

Given Cyprus' political problem and the total lack of cooperation from Turkey, Cyprus cannot tackle the situation on its own.

Due to the large percentage of persons receiving protection, the options for social inclusion and absorption progressively diminish.

The only way to effectively alleviate the disproportionate migratory pressure faced by Cyprus, is to immediately proceed with a relocation program, in line with the principle of solidarity.

Solidarity lies at the heart of Europe. Only through effective relocation measures, will the disproportionate burden be alleviated.
