



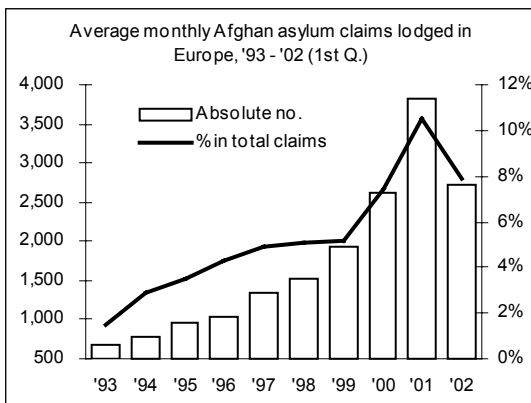
Sharp Drop in Afghan Asylum-Seekers Arriving in Europe and Other Industrialized Countries

During the decade up to the end of 2001, the number of Afghan asylum-seekers spreading outside the immediate region climbed dramatically, especially during the last five years. As conditions in Afghanistan spiralled downwards, the refugees in neighbouring countries lost hope of ever being able to return home, and simultaneously felt increasingly insecure in their first countries of asylum. In all, during 2001, Afghans applied for asylum in at least 76 countries across the world, including countries as diverse as Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba and Singapore. Europe, in particular, saw a sharp increase in numbers, with arrivals more than doubling over the past two years, as Afghans rose to become the single largest group in Europe.

Numbers of Asylum Applications by Afghans in Europe, 1992-2001

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Total in Europe*	8,000	8,100	9,400	11,700	12,500	16,300	18,500	24,100	32,700	51,100	192,400
Total in the European Union	7,700	7,900	9,200	11,200	11,300	14,500	15,100	16,800	26,500	38,600	158,800

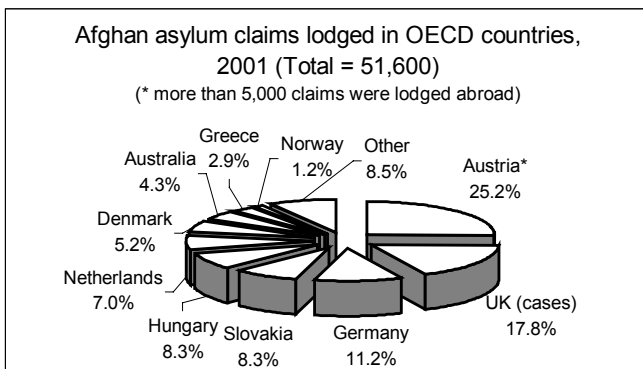
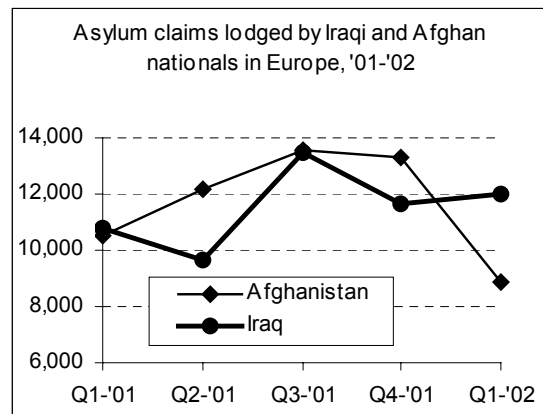
* Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Rep., Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK



During the first quarter of 2002, presumably as a result of the momentous changes in Afghanistan after September 11, the number of Afghan asylum-seekers dropped sharply – by 33 percent across Europe as a whole, and 24 percent within the EU.

During the previous decade, the average number of monthly applications of Afghan asylum-seekers submitted in Europe increased five-fold.

Across Europe as a whole in 2001, the average number of asylum applications by Afghans was 12,400 per quarter. However, during the first quarter of 2002, the number fell to 8,900. By contrast, Iraqi asylum seekers have moved back up to replace Afghans as the top nationality seeking asylum in Europe. The number of Iraqi asylum-seekers rose to 12,000 in the first quarter of 2002, compared to a quarterly average of 11,400 during 2001.



OECD member countries received some 51,600 Afghan asylum-seekers in 2001, up from 35,700 in 2000. The top recipient was Austria with 13,000 (a 25% share, although it includes applications at embassies abroad). Next came the UK with 9,200 cases (18%), Germany with 5,800 individuals (11%), and Hungary and Slovakia with 4,300 each (8%). Another Central European country, with a recently developed asylum system, that received a large number of Afghans was Bulgaria, with 1,100.