



## Appendix D: World-wide refugee numbers

There seems to be a general measure of agreement about world-wide numbers of refugees since the end of the Second World War. From about 'one million people of concern' to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the late 1940s, numbers had grown to about eight million in the early 1980s to just over 15 million by the end of that decade. By the middle 1990s, one estimate of the figure was 27 million people. This number did not include other categories such as Internationally Displaced People (IDPs), estimated in 1991 by UNHCR to number 30 million people.<sup>1</sup>

When examining the situation faced by Australia, numbers of asylum seekers in other nations are relevant. For example, based on UNHCR figures, it is estimated that in 2000 just under 400,000 applications were lodged by asylum seekers in the 15 EU countries. By the end of the 1990s, there were 200,000 applications pending in those EU countries, more than half of them in the United Kingdom. Although this varied from nation to nation, it was estimated that only about one quarter of those seeking asylum in 1999 were granted it.<sup>2</sup>

Some 452,000 applications were received by the 25 European nations in 2000, some four per cent less than in 1999 when 471,000 applications were received. In the EU nations, the number of applications rose from 387,000 to almost 390,000 in 2000.

From UNHCR figures, the following table sets out the numbers of applications for asylum were received by the 25 European countries in 1999 and 2000. The number of applications per 1000 inhabitants in both years is also shown, as is the ranking of these countries. These rankings are based on the number of applications against estimated national populations.<sup>3</sup>

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1 *ibid*, p. 14. An article in **The Economist**, 3 March 2001, pp. 21-23: 'Displaced People: When is a refugee not a refugee?', estimated the number of IDPs at 40 million people.

2 BBC News, Tuesday, 6 February 2001, pp. 1-2.

3 Unless specified otherwise, the following figures have been extracted from material compiled by UNHCR's Registration and Statistics Unit, Geneva, 25 January 2001.

This table also sets out UNHCR's figures for Europe as a whole, as well as for the EU countries only.

Country	1999	per 1000	Rank	2000	Per 1000	Rank
Austria	20,100	2.45	6	18,280	2.23	7
Belgium	35,780	3.52	4	42,690	4.20	2
Bulgaria	1330	0.16	21	1760	0.21	21
Czech Republic	7290	0.71	14	8770	0.86	13
Denmark	6470	0.22	11	10,080	1.90	8
Finland	3110	0.60	15	3320	0.64	16
France	30,910	0.52	17	38,590	0.65	15
Germany	95,110	1.16	12	78,760	0.96	12
Greece	1530	0.14	22	3000	0.28	20
Hungary	11,500	1.15	13	7800	0.78	14
Ireland	7720	2.07	8	10,920	2.93	3
Italy	33,360	0.58	16	18,000	0.31	17
Liechtenstein	520	16.25	1	10	0.31	18
Luxembourg	2910	6.76	2	590	1.37	11
Netherlands	39,300	2.49	5	43,890	2.78	4
Norway	10,160	2.28	7	10,320	2.31	6
Poland	2960	0.08	23	4290	0.11	23
Portugal	310	0.03	25	200	0.02	25
Romania	1670	0.07	24	1360	0.06	24
Slovakia	1310	0.24	19	1550	0.29	19
Slovenia	870	0.44	18	9240	4.65	1
Spain	8410	0.21	20	7040	0.18	22
Sweden	11,230	1.26	10	16,370	1.84	9
Switzerland	46,070	6.24	3	17,660	2.39	5
UK	91,080	1.55	9	97,860	1.66	10
Europe	471,010	0.97		452,350	0.93	
EU	387,330	1.03		389,590	1.04	

In Europe in 2000, the main nationalities of asylum seekers were:

- the former Yugoslavia: 42,250 ( a decrease from 115,850 in 1999);
- Iraq: 34,680 (an increase from 30,810 in 1999), and
- Afghanistan: 28,790 (an increase from 23, 590 in 1999).

From UNHCR figures, the number of applications for protection to European countries from Iran rose from 12,100 in 1999 to 27,100 in 2000.

The latest figures for protection applications to Canada and to the USA are for 1999. Canada received 30,124 primary applications for protection, representing a

rate of 0.9 applications per 1000 of population. The USA received 41,377 primary applications, representing a rate of 0.15 applications per 1000 of population.

In 1996, there were estimated to be 5 million illegal immigrants in the USA. The 2000 Census indicated that there were 11 million 'undocumented' immigrants, or nearly twice that earlier estimate.

The latest figures for Australia, for 1999/2000, show that there were 12,173 primary applications for protection, representing a rate of 0.64 applications per 1000 of population.

