

# [Alicante News February 2018](#)

March 01, 2018 [About the EUIPO](#)

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The latest edition is out now.

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  - Change of EUIPO bank account for payment of fees
  - EUIPO performance update: Q4 2017
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# Number of asylum decisions surpasses number of applications in EU+ countries

## **Monthly applications by Georgian citizens increased by 113% since September 2017**

Despite the issuing of a high number of asylum decisions by national asylum systems in the EU+ and a resulting decrease in backlog, nearly half a million cases remain pending.

In January 2018, some 54,000 applications for international protection were lodged in the 28 European Union Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+). Despite issuing close to 60,000 decisions in the first instance, approximately 450,000 cases were still awaiting a decision. Even though these numbers are lower than for most of 2017, the figures indicate that the asylum situation in Europe is still not completely clear from the effects of the spike in applications in 2015-2016.

Together, EU+ countries are issuing more first-instance decisions on asylum cases than the number of new applications that are being submitted, which reflects the success of the investment that Member States are making into backlog management and the continued focus on decision-making capacity in some countries. Consequently, there was a decrease in the number of pending cases, down from approximately a million in late 2016 to less than half a million at the end of January 2018.

A third of all applications for international protection in the EU+ were submitted by citizens of just five countries: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan. The number of Syrian applicants reached the lowest monthly number since February 2014, while some other nationalities increased.

Of significance in the figures for January 2018, data shows that Georgians became the sixth most common citizenship among all applications in the first instance. The figures indicate that Georgians have been applying for asylum in increasing numbers since a Visa-Liberalisation agreement for travel in the Schengen Area took effect in March 2017. Reflecting this increase, in January 2018 applications more than doubled (an increase of 113%) the number registered four months earlier (from 874 in September 2017 to 1,859 in January 2018). Despite the increased numbers of applications and resulting pressure exerted on national systems, just 3% of Georgians who applied for asylum in the EU+ were granted either refugee status or subsidiary protection in 2017.

A recently-launched EASO interactive portal, which will shortly be updated with data from January 2018, allows users to visualise data on asylum applications, as well as on decisions and the number of pending cases in the EU+: [www.easo.europa.eu/latest-asylum-trends](http://www.easo.europa.eu/latest-asylum-trends).

*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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## **Press release: Minister Field remarks to media at the February 2018 EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting**

Upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels, Minister of State Mark Field said:

We are obviously very interested in playing our part today in the Venezuelan situation which is a dreadful humanitarian, political and diplomatic situation. We are obviously very keen to be supporting the Spanish who are leading on this and we need to move towards a united front to ensure there is a fully participatory, free and fair election in Venezuela.

We are going to talk about the Middle East Peace Plan... I hope that we are going to have an agreement that we need to move ahead and ensure that there is a two-state solution but also above all that America has to be part and parcel of this process.

We are also going to talk a little bit about Moldova. Many of you know obviously in Moldova there is a programme of economic and political reform being supported by all elements of the European Union.

[Minister Mark Field at the FAC](#)

### **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## Media enquiries

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## [News story: Secretary of State Appoints Charity Commission Chair](#)

Baroness Tina Stowell has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as the new Chair of the Charity Commission, for three years from 26 February 2018.

Baroness Stowell will take over from William Shawcross in the role.

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Tina Stowell will be a brilliant chair of the Charity Commission and I am delighted she is taking up this role. It is an important time for the Commission, and the sector, and I know that she will work tirelessly to protect and promote the great work that charities do and ensure they uphold the highest standards of integrity. I would also like to thank William Shawcross for his hard work over the past six years.

Baroness Stowell said:

I am delighted to join the Charity Commission, and look forward to leading a strong board and a committed and expert staff through the challenges ahead. I will place the public interest at the heart of everything I do as Chair to build the public's trust in charities and the Commission as their regulator. To that end it is vital that we have a constructive, business-like relationship with all our stakeholders and I look forward to listening to a wide range of voices in the days and weeks ahead.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston was Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord

Privy Seal until July 2016.

Tina Stowell was made a peer in January 2011 and joined the Government in September the same year. As a junior minister she led the landmark Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act through the House of Lords in 2013. She was promoted to Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord Privy Seal in 2014 and re-appointed to the same Cabinet post after the 2015 General Election.

Before joining the House of Lords Tina Stowell's career over the previous 25 years crisscrossed government, politics and the media. Until September 2010, she was the BBC's Head of Corporate Affairs.

She was a civil servant for ten years, working at the Ministry of Defence in London, the British Embassy in Washington and 10 Downing Street from 1991 to 1996. She left the Civil Service at the age of 28 and was awarded the MBE in the 1996 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

### **Notes to editors**

- This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments
- The Chair of Charity Commission is appointed by the Secretary of State. Remuneration for this role is £62,500 for up to two and a half days per week. The term of appointment will last for three years
- In accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Baroness Tina Stowell has declared that she was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Lords from 2014-2016; she has spoken on behalf of the Conservative Party and candidates during elections campaigns; and has canvassed on behalf of the Conservative during election campaigns. She has resigned the Conservative Whip in the House of Lords and become an independent, unaffiliated peer.