Asylum: pandemic's impact, applications down by 33% in the EU. Schinas, "solidarity now needed" at EU level.

Available EU data on asylum and irregular border crossings in the first 10 months of 2020 "shows the impact of the pandemic on migration to the EU. The EU as a whole registered a 33% year-on-year decrease in asylum applications and a 6-year low in irregular border crossings". The decrease, however, was not uniform. Indeed, "several local communities received unexpected large numbers of arrivals, and the overall number of arrivals has continued recovering after a large drop around April". This is according to a report on arrivals from third-countries released by the European Commission today. EU Vice President Margaritis Schinas commented: "Solidarity has taken on a whole new meaning in the unprecedented actions taken by the European Union to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. That same solidarity now needs to be translated into the field of migration management as well. We can only manage migration well if we do it together. It is high time for an agreement on our proposals for a European migration and asylum policy". In the first ten months of last year, 390,000 asylum applications (including 349,000 first time applications) were filed in the EU, that is, 33% less compared to the same period of 2019. Member States reduced their backlogs of pending asylum cases. At the end of October 2020, the number of pending cases was 786,000, 15% less compared to the end of 2019. "The recognition rate, or the percentage of asylum applications that resulted in a positive decision at first instance (before any appeals), including decisions granting humanitarian status, stood at 43%".

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