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Refugees in Europe - National overviews from key countries: A Perspective from Norway

A total of 199 400 persons with a refugee background were living in 2016 in Norway. This corresponds to 3.8 per cent of the total population, and 29 per cent of immigrants in Norway. Somalia is the largest group followed by Iraq and Eritrea. According to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration , more than 31.000 people applied for asylum in Norway in 2015. In total, more than half of the asylum seekers to Norway in 2015 were from Syria, but the number of new asylum seekers has seen a sharp drop, from a record 2 500 one week in mid-November. Figures for 2016 are even more different with the number of asylum seekers arriving in Norway dropped by 95 per cent since the start of 2016 and the main reason was proposal from the parliament to tighten the asylum policy which was also accompanied with more strict border checks. Among the actions were reduced benefits for people living in reception centres, temporary residence permits and facilitating return if the situation in the country of origin changes and limit family reunification and family establishment rights for refugees. In Norway, there is insufficient and fragmented research on refugees health issues and overall knowledge of refugees' mental health at arrival in the host country is still limited. However, existing research on asylum seekers and mental health confirms results from international studies that asylum seekers face health related problems that are different from those of the rest of the population.