



Safeguards for asylum applicants with disabilities

The information presented in this fact sheet is extracted from the [Asylum Report 2022](#) and covers developments in 2021 and early 2022.

EU legislation contains provisions to address the special needs of applicants who may be considered especially vulnerable in asylum and reception systems. These provisions ensure that vulnerable applicants receive adequate support to benefit from their rights and comply with the obligations which are defined under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and that they can be on an equal footing with other applicants. (See more in the [recast Asylum Procedures Directive](#), Article 2(d) and Recital 29 and the [recast Reception Conditions Directive](#).)



Key developments extracted from the Asylum Report 2022



The new EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted for 2021-2030, and the European Commission called on Member States to work closely with the EUAA and facilitate the training of protection officers and interpreters who are in contact with applicants with special needs, including persons with disabilities.¹



- The Asylum Research Centre (ARC) and Asylos collaborated on a project which addresses information gaps about persons with disabilities who are seeking international protection. They found that persons with disabilities commonly had their claims rejected, appearing to be a consequence of the lack of country of origin information (COI) on the topic. They published a document on “Principles for Conducting Country of Origin Information Research on Disability”, which will be followed by a handbook, training module and a country report on the situation of children and young people with disabilities in Nigeria.²
- Working on integration efforts, the Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities developed a guide promoting the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons with disabilities.³
- A Belgian project financed by Fedasil established a manual for counsellors working with applicants with hearing impairments.⁴
- The Icelandic Directorate of Immigration has been developing new standard operating procedures for applicants with disabilities and mental health issues.
- The Irish Centre for Human Rights and the Centre for Disability Law and Policy of the National University of Ireland in Galway drafted a joint submission to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and to the minister responsible for disability. It highlighted that a strategic approach to managing applicants with disabilities was applied in the development and implementation of the vulnerability assessment tool that was piloted throughout 2021.⁵
- Among initiatives related to reception, the Greek Ministry for Migration and Asylum highlighted that the new Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs) on the islands were all wheelchair accessible.
- In Italy, the number of reception places for applicants with a chronic illness or mental health issues was further increased by 170 places in 2021.⁶
- The French government aimed to ensure that 2% of reception places can be accessible to persons with reduced mobility.⁷
- The Swedish Migration Agency [updated](#) its legal position on the medical examination of applicants invoking physical or psychological harm to support their asylum claim.⁸ The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [found](#) in a particular case that the Swedish authorities failed to dispel any doubts about the risks an applicant would face if returned to Afghanistan, when he was diagnosed with and treated for PTSD which was assessed to be life-threatening due to the risk of suicide.



To search for more developments by topic, country or year, consult the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).

To read more case law related to asylum, consult the [EUAA Case Law Database](#).

Sources

Please see [Sources on Asylum 2022](#) for the full list of over 1,200 references which were consulted for the Asylum Report 2022.

¹ European Commission. (2021, March 3). *Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030*. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

² Asylum Research Centre Foundation, & Asylos. (2021). *Principles for Conducting Country of Origin Information Research on Disability*. <https://asylumresearchcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/principlesfinal.pdf>

³ European Website on Integration. (2021, May 6). *Spain: New guide for an inclusive approach to refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons with disabilities*. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/spain-new-guide-inclusive-approach-refugees-asylum-seekers-and-stateless-persons-disabilities_en

⁴ Doof Vlaanderen. (2022, February 9). *Project voor dove en slechthorende asielzoekers afgerond [Project for deaf and hard of hearing asylum seekers completed]*. <https://www.doof.vlaanderen/nieuws/project-voor-dove-en-slechthorende-asielzoekers-afgerond>

⁵ Centre for Disability Law and Policy, Irish Centre for Human Rights, & Institute for Lifecourse and Society. (2021, February 19). *The vulnerability assessment tool and disability in direct provision: Submission to Minister O’Gorman and Minister Rabbitte*. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MnRMILG6PQVC7-T9cr3QsR-bs9QV-fKa/view>

⁶ Ministry of the Interior | Ministero dell’Interno. (2021, August 10). *Decreto n. 23428 | Decree n. 23428*. https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2021-08/dm_di_finanziamento_ampliamento_msna_2021.pdf

⁷ Ministry of the Interior | Ministère de l’Intérieur. (May 2021). *10 actions renforcer la prise en charge des vulnérabilités des demandeurs d’asile et des réfugiés [10 actions strengthening the response to vulnerabilities of asylum seekers and refugees]*. <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/content/download/127815/1021010/file/Plan-vulnerabilite-28052021.pdf>

⁸ Swedish Migration Agency | Migrationsverket. (March 2021). *Rättsligt ställningstagande. Medicinska utredningar av åberopade skador - RS/022/2021 [Legal position. Medical investigations of alleged injuries - RS/022/2021]*. <https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=45313>