

Practical Guide on Information Provision in the Asylum Procedure



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December 2024

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Manuscript completed in November 2024

Revised edition.

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

Print ISBN 978-92- 9410- 490-8 doi: 10.2847/0437998 BZ-01-24- 066-EN-C

PDF ISBN 978-92- 9410- 489-2 doi: 10.2847/3237845 BZ-01-24- 066-EN-N

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About the guide

Why was this guide created? The mission of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is to facilitate and support the activities of EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries (EU+ countries ⁽¹⁾) in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In accordance with its overall aim of promoting the correct and effective implementation of the CEAS and of enabling convergence, the EUAA develops common operational standards and indicators, guidelines and practical tools.

How was this guide developed? This guide is the result of a joint effort between experts from the EU+ countries, the EUAA and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. Valuable input has come from the European Commission, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles ⁽²⁾. Before its finalisation, a consultation on the guide was carried out with all EU+ countries through the EUAA Asylum Processes Network. We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the working group who prepared the drafting of this guide: Pavol Cích, Christina Kallergi, Konstantinos Koulaxidis, Lubomíra Mieresová, Nadine Santos de Brito, Daniela Stross, Gerfried Tschögl, Marta Torralba Baraja, Sophie Amougou-Akaa-Hirth, Oscar Lehmann, and Rebecka Siöland.

Who should use this guide? This guide is primarily intended for first contact officials, registration officers, case officers and policymakers in the national authorities. Additionally, this guide is useful for any other person or organisation working or involved in the field of information provision in the context of the asylum procedure in the EU context.

How to use this guide. This guide is structured in three parts, corresponding to three chapters. Chapter 1 provides guidance on basic principles of information provision, communication techniques and channels. Chapter 2 provides guidance on the organisational set-up of information provision during the asylum procedure and Chapter 3 provides guidance on the information that has to be provided to the applicant for international protection during the asylum procedure.

This practical guide on information provision in the context of the asylum procedure is based on the standards of the CEAS. It should be seen as a complement to other available EUAA tools, particularly the practical tools for access to the asylum procedure ⁽³⁾ and the *Practical Guide on Registration: Lodging of applications for international protection* ⁽⁴⁾. The consistency

⁽¹⁾ The 27 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

⁽²⁾ Note that the finalised guide does not necessarily reflect the positions of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or the European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

⁽³⁾ EUAA–Frontex, [Access to the Asylum Procedure – Practical tools for first contact officials](#), 2024.

⁽⁴⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide on Registration – Lodging of applications for international protection](#), December 2021.





of this guide with other tools has been a primary consideration, especially in relation to the EUAA training curriculum module 'Communication and information provision to asylum seekers' ⁽⁵⁾.

How does this guide relate to national legislation and practice? This is a soft convergence tool. It is not legally binding and reflects commonly agreed standards as adopted by the EUAA Management Board on 17 December 2024.

Disclaimer

This guide was prepared without prejudice to the principle that only the Court of Justice of the European Union can give an authoritative interpretation of EU Law.

⁽⁵⁾ See EASO, [Training Catalogue](#), 2021, p. 14.





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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
APD (recast)	asylum procedures directive – Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast)
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
Dublin III regulation	Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast)
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
Eurodac regulation	Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of Eurodac for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (recast)
EU+ countries	EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries
family reunification directive	Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification
LGBTIQ	lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer persons
Member States	EU Member States



Abbreviation	Definition
QD (recast)	qualification directive – Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast)
RCD (recast)	reception conditions directive – Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)
Refugee Convention	The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (referred to in EU asylum legislation and by the CJEU as ‘the Geneva Convention’)
THB	trafficking in human beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Introduction

This practical guide has been developed in the context of the **EUAA Let's Speak Asylum** project, the aim of which is to provide a standardised set of practical tools for the implementation of information provision activities during the asylum procedures, the Dublin procedure, reception and resettlement. This practical guide targets any person involved in providing information to applicants for international protection as well as policymakers who coordinate information provision activities during the asylum procedure.

In accordance with Directive 2013/32/EU (APD) (recast) ⁽⁶⁾, an applicant for international protection has the right to be informed about the asylum procedure in a timely manner. The information provision enables applicants to enjoy their rights and comply with their obligations. The right to information is one of the core guarantees provided in the APD (recast), aiming to ensure a fair and effective asylum procedure. Delivering information to the applicant is in the interest of both the applicant and the authorities.

Information provision is effective when the applicant comprehends what this information means in practice. This practical guide aims to support information providers in reaching this goal.

Chapter [1. Basic principles and skills for information provision](#) outlines the basic principles for information provision. It presents communication techniques to deliver information and to adapt the method of communication according to the applicant, in order to ensure understanding. It also presents how information can be conveyed through oral, printed, digital and audiovisual communication channels.

Chapter [2. Organisational set-up of information provision](#) discusses when the applicant needs to receive certain information to fully attend the procedure and how this can be adapted to the national context. It also presents how the circumstances can affect information provision activities. Furthermore, the chapter introduces how information provision can be coordinated among multiple organisations.

Chapter [3. Information provisions topics](#) describes in detail the different information topics that need to be covered in the context of the asylum procedure. The chapter provides background information on each of these topics, focusing on what the information provider needs to know about the topic and on the message that needs to be delivered to the applicant. Practical tip boxes on how to provide this information complement the description of the information topics. The practical guide does not aim to provide specific formulations that should be directly conveyed to the applicant. Rather, it outlines the messages that need to be conveyed.

⁽⁶⁾ [Directive 2013/32/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), (OJ L 180/60, 29.6.2013).



This practical guide is part of a toolbox on the asylum procedure that supports efficient information provision across the EU+ countries. Besides the practical guide, the toolbox also includes information material and templates for the direct provision of information to applicants for international protection at the early stage of the asylum procedure, during the making, registering and lodging of an application for international protection. Further support and information is provided on the [Let's Speak Asylum portal](#), which hosts all the products developed under the Let's Speak Asylum project.



1. Basic principles and skills for information provision

Information provision primarily aims to enable applicants to fully access, participate and understand the asylum procedure. Applicants for international protection often have limited knowledge about asylum when they first access the procedure. At the same time, they are expected to absorb large amounts of new information that includes legal information on administrative procedures. Your task as an information provider is not only to give the information but also to ensure that the applicant understands what this information means in practice.

It is also in the interest of the asylum administration that the applicant fully understands the information delivered to them from the beginning of the procedure. This information enables them to understand what is expected from them at different stages of the procedure, which consequently enhances the overall quality and efficiency of the asylum procedure. It is necessary to ensure that the applicant receives correct and consistent information about the asylum procedures, as they may have received misinformation from other people, such as smugglers.

This chapter introduces the legal requirements related to information provision and the basic communication techniques that allow you to adapt your message according to the applicant's personal circumstances and to verify their understanding. It also presents how information can be conveyed to applicants orally, in printouts, on digital platforms and via broadcast media.

1.1. Legal requirements

The right to information is one of the core guarantees provided in the APD (recast) to ensure a fair and effective asylum procedure. It is also a prerequisite for effective access to the procedure: the applicant must understand what international protection and the asylum procedure are to be able to fully participate in the procedure ⁽⁷⁾. Particular attention needs to be given to the situation of persons in detention to ensure that they receive the necessary information ⁽⁸⁾.

(7) For more information, see ECtHR, judgment of 20 July 2021, [D. v Bulgarie](#), No 29447/17, ECLI:CE:ECHR:2021:0720JUD002944717, paragraph 116 (available only in French). A summary is available in the [EUAA Case Law Database](#); ECtHR, judgment of 23 February 2012, [Hirsi Jamaa and Others v Italy](#), No 27765/09, ECLI:CE:ECHR:2012:0223JUD002776509, paragraph 204. A summary is available in the [EUAA Case Law Database](#).

(8) See Article 8(1) APD (recast) 'Information and counselling in detention facilities and at border crossing points': *Where there are indications that third-country nationals or stateless persons held in detention facilities or present at border crossing points, including transit zones, at external borders, may wish to make an application for international protection, Member States shall provide them with information on the possibility to do so.*



The applicant has the right to be informed about the asylum procedure in a timely manner ⁽⁹⁾. As a result, the applicant needs to be continuously informed at decisive moments during the procedure. In the context of access to the asylum procedure, this entails providing information about asylum at the very time of accessing the asylum procedure and about the reception services within 15 days of lodging the application ⁽¹⁰⁾.

The APD (recast) lays down the information that needs to be given to the applicant regarding the asylum procedure, in a language they understand, at decisive moments during the procedures.



Article 12(1), point (a) APD (recast) – Guarantees for applicants

1. *With respect to the procedures provided for in Chapter III, Member States shall ensure that all applicants enjoy the following guarantees:*
 - (a) *they shall be informed in a language which they understand or are reasonably supposed to understand of the procedure to be followed and of their rights and obligations during the procedure and the possible consequences of not complying with their obligations and not cooperating with the authorities. They shall be informed of the time-frame, the means at their disposal for fulfilling the obligation to submit the elements as referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2011/95/EU, as well as of the consequences of an explicit or implicit withdrawal of the application. That information shall be given in time to enable them to exercise the rights guaranteed in this Directive and to comply with the obligations described in Article 13;*

It further specifies that this information should be provided free of charge and according to the particular circumstances of the applicant.

⁽⁹⁾ For more information, see ECtHR, judgment of 21 January 2011, [M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece](#), No 30696/09, ECLI:CE:ECHR:2011:0121JUD003069609, paragraph 304. A summary is available in the [EUAA Case Law Database](#).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Article 5 of [Directive 2013/33/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013) (RCD (recast)).





Article 19(1) APD (recast) – Provision of legal and procedural information free of charge in procedures at first instance

1. *In the procedures at first instance provided for in Chapter III, Member States shall ensure that, on request, applicants are provided with legal and procedural information free of charge, including, at least, information on the procedure in the light of the applicant's particular circumstances. In the event of a negative decision on an application at first instance, Member States shall also, on request, provide applicants with information – in addition to that given in accordance with Article 11(2) and Article 12(1)(f) – in order to clarify the reasons for such decision and explain how it can be challenged.*

The RCD (recast) lays down the information that should be provided to the applicant in relation to reception within 15 days after arrival in the country.



Article 5 RCD (recast) – Information

1. *Member States shall inform applicants, within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after they have lodged their application for international protection, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating to reception conditions.
Member States shall ensure that applicants are provided with information on organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and organisations that might be able to help or inform them concerning the available reception conditions, including healthcare.*
2. *Member States shall ensure that the information referred to in paragraph 1 is in writing and in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand. Where appropriate, this information may also be supplied orally.*

In the context of access to the asylum procedure, this means that it is of the utmost importance that the applicant understands what international protection is and what is expected from them during the making, registering and lodging of their application for international protection. This includes the procedure to follow, the applicant's rights and obligations, the consequences of not complying with such obligations and the consequences of withdrawing the application.

The applicant should also be informed about their reception benefits and conditions by persons working either in the context of the asylum procedure or of reception. Similarly, information should be given on the processing of fingerprints in Eurodac when fingerprints are



taken from the applicant ⁽¹⁾. Finally, the applicant should be informed about the next steps of the asylum procedure and the applicable time frame.

Article 12(1), point (a) APD (recast) applies to all steps of the procedure, including the personal interview.

In preparation for the personal interview, applicants should understand the purpose of the interview and what is expected of them, including what documents to bring or how to submit evidence to support their application. They should be provided with practical information to be able to attend their interview (for example information about when and where the interview is taking place). This also includes, for example, information about the availability of special support and procedural guarantees if needed, in accordance with Article 15 APD (recast). They should also be informed that the interview will take place under conditions which ensure appropriate confidentiality ⁽¹²⁾, about their rights, obligations and consequences of not appearing for the interview without providing a valid explanation to the authority.

Additional information needs to be provided when notifying a negative decision, based on Article 11(2) APD (recast), besides the mandatory aspect of the decision in writing, applicants should be informed about how to challenge a negative decision.



Article 11 APD (recast) – Requirements for a decision by the determining authority

2. Member States shall also ensure that, where an application is rejected with regard to refugee status and/or subsidiary protection status, the reasons in fact and in law are stated in the decision and information on how to challenge a negative decision is given in writing.

Member States need not provide information on how to challenge a negative decision in writing in conjunction with a decision where the applicant has been provided with such information at an earlier stage either in writing or by electronic means accessible to the applicant.

Besides this information, which is applicable to all profiles of applicants, depending on the applicant's individual situation, additional information may be needed. Member States are obliged to inform unaccompanied children on matters that relate to the procedure and to their rights, such as their right to a representative and the role of the latter during the procedure in

⁽¹⁾ For more information on the right to information in relation to fingerprinting, see Article 29 'Rights of the data subject' of [Regulation \(EU\) No 603/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of Eurodac for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (recast) (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013) (Eurodac regulation).

⁽¹²⁾ Article 15(2) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.



accordance with Article 25 APD (recast). Member States are also obliged to inform applicants with special procedural needs on the support that is available for them to be able to benefit from their rights and comply with their obligations in accordance with Article 24 APD (recast).

Information should be given in a manner that ensures it is understood and considers the applicant's particular circumstances, such as their age, gender and/or level of education to ensure effective access to rights and the ability to comply with obligations ⁽¹³⁾. For example, child-friendly information considers the age and maturity of the child to communicate information in a manner that is as understandable as possible to the child.

To enable effective access to information, this information needs to be provided free of charge and in a language that the applicant is reasonably supposed to understand ⁽¹⁴⁾.

1.2. How to communicate information

A long list of possible topics could be covered at the beginning of the asylum procedure to fully explain it. Often the applicant is not particularly receptive to this information. They might have recently arrived and have other, more urgent, needs, such as missing family members, unfulfilled basic needs or challenges processing new information due to trauma. If you deliver all the information to the applicant at once, you risk overwhelming them. However, if you reduce the amount of information too much, you may not be able to supply applicants with enough information for them to effectively participate in the procedure.

This section covers basic communication techniques that you can use to mitigate this risk.

1.2.1. Basic communication techniques

(a) Reduce complexity

Reducing complexity refers to communicating your core message clearly by using accessible language. This means that all legal and abstract concepts should be explained in non-technical language. Information can also be made relatable to the applicant by using practical examples from the sphere of their lives to illustrate what a certain piece of information means in practice. However, reducing complexity should not make the message incomplete or incorrect.

Practical considerations

- Write as you speak and talk about abstract concepts in plain language.
- Make the information concrete by using examples and visual aids.
- Start with what is most important; take out unimportant details.

⁽¹³⁾ See recital 22 APD (recast) on the reasons to provide information to applicants for international protection.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Article 19 APD (recast).



- Use relatively short and clear sentences that include primarily only one idea.
- Use direct language and active verbs.
- Avoid acronyms.
- Explain cultural differences, when necessary.
- Summarise core information.

(b) Consider the number of information topics

By limiting the number of different topics that are covered at the same time, you allow the applicant to focus on information that is directly relevant to them at that point in time. For example, at the beginning of the procedure, it is necessary for the applicant to understand what international protection means and what happens during the asylum procedure. Once this is understood, further information topics can be added within this basic framework.

Practical considerations

- Firstly, provide information that is directly relevant for applicants at that moment, including information on the step of the asylum procedure they are in and how to prepare for the next step.
- Group information topics around themes that relate to each other, for example when talking about the obligations of the applicant, you can provide information on several topics at the same time.
- Let the applicant know that they will receive more information. Guide them on how to find further information on their own. Inform the applicant of when the next oral information provision session will take place.

(c) Consider the level of detail

The level of detail provided corresponds to what is necessary for the applicant to participate in the procedure meaningfully and effectively. At the beginning of the procedure, delivering only a lower level of detail on later steps in the procedure will make it easier for the applicant to absorb the information. This core information will be complemented with further details afterwards, once the applicant is familiar with the basic information.

Practical considerations

- Provide detailed information only on topics that are directly relevant to the applicant, considering their current stage in the procedure and their personal circumstances.
- Provide additional detailed information on other topics after ensuring that the applicant has already received basic information at an earlier stage.

(d) Repeat information

Repeating information during the asylum procedure helps the applicant to remember the core content. Identify the central messages of each information topic and repeat them several times, for example through different information provision channels.



Practical considerations

- Use consistent terminology when providing central information.
- Expand on the central message by providing additional information at a later stage.

(e) Use a visual style for written communication

Visual communication techniques can help organise the information content, thus facilitating its understanding and retention. Formats that are visually clear allow the applicants to access and understand the key messages that are relevant to them.

Practical considerations

- Break up long texts into short paragraphs.
- Use headings and subheadings.
- Use highlight formats to make central messages stand out.
- Summarise the main information in bullet points at the beginning.
- Add self-explanatory visual aids, such as pictures, drawings, pictograms and flow charts.
- Where possible, use colours and patterns such as stripes or dots in your visual aids, flowcharts and graphs.



Practical tip: visual blueprint

Use visual aids, colours and patterns consistent with the central information that is repeated to the applicant. Reuse the same visual aid in different material to refer to the same information topic. This will help the applicant to remember central content.

Avoid using letters, dates or any other temporal elements in the visual aids. By doing so, your illustrations will not need to be modified for other material and language versions.

Make sure that your visual aids are as self-explanatory as possible. This will facilitate understanding of the message.



Practical tip: easy-to-read formats ⁽¹⁵⁾

Use **easy-to-read** formats to ensure that information is accessible to persons who have difficulty in reading and understanding written information, including people with poor literacy, reduced eyesight, cognitive and learning difficulties and limited knowledge of a given language.

Easy-to-read formats facilitate understanding of information by using simplified language and enable access to information by using pictures and visual layouts.

Information material can be made available in an easy-to-read format by simplifying the content and applying the appropriate visual style.

For an **easy-to-understand** text, follow these guidelines.

- Use simple words.
- Use proper nouns rather than pronouns such as 'it', 'he' or 'they'.
- Start a new sentence on a new line.
- Include only one idea per page.
- Accompany text with explanatory pictures, where possible.

For an **easier-to-access** text, apply a specific visual layout.

- Align all text to the left and keep all the images to the left of the writing.
- Use plain sans-serif font, such as Arial or Calibri.
- Use a large font size of at least 14 pt.
- Use wide spacing of at least 1.5 spacing between lines.
- Avoid underlining, italics, writing in colour and special writing design.
- Use wide margins.
- Use a large page size of at least A4, where possible.
- Use wide, white spaces by including only a limited amount of content on each page.

As easy-to-read material is often much longer than other material because of how it is formatted, it may be beneficial to shorten the text of the key messages that the applicant needs to know.

⁽¹⁵⁾ For more information on easy-to-read formats, see, for example Inclusion Europe, [Information To All: European standards for making information easy to read and understand](#), 2010 and Inclusion Europe, [Easy-to-read Checklist: Checklist to make sure your document is easy to read](#), 2010.



**Practical tip: translation of information material**

The basic communication techniques facilitate the translation of information into different languages. For example, simple presentation of the information and simple explanation of abstract terminology makes it easier to translate accurately.

When translating information material, it is recommended to provide details to the translator about how the material is meant to be used. For example, it is useful to inform the translator about the target audience, for example if it is for children or persons with special needs, to ensure that the language is translated according to the needs of this target group. Inform the translator about the required style of language, whether formal or informal, to ensure that the translation reflects the same style.

Having translated material proofread by native speakers who are familiar with the asylum context helps in making sure that the translations are accurate and correctly understood.

1.2.2. Oral communication

Oral communication is the oldest form of information exchange among humans. This makes it, in many cases, the preferred option for information provision. Oral communication should be provided as much as possible even when written information is available since, for example, not everybody might be able to read.

At the same time, keep in mind that oral information provision is not suited for certain groups, such as applicants with hearing impairments. In such cases, other methods of communication should be prioritised.

This section presents techniques and methods of oral communication that can be used to verify that the applicant correctly understands the information that is delivered to them.

Practical considerations

Building trust and ensuring a confidential space for information provision facilitates effective information provision. It allows the applicant to ask questions that are relevant to them and which can sometimes be sensitive or personal. Informing the applicant about the set-up for information provision and how confidentiality is ensured also contributes to building this trust.

(a) Oral communication techniques

The basic communication techniques presented above also apply to oral communication.

There are, however, additional techniques that help to deliver information orally in a manner that makes the message easier to understand.



▶ **Start with an informal discussion**

Starting an information provision session with an informal discussion helps build trust and makes it easier for the applicant to ask questions during the session.

▶ **Speak with a slow and steady pace**

When speaking to an individual or a group, **do not speak too fast**.

You have probably shared your information many times before but the applicant will be hearing it for the first time. Speaking at a slower pace can also help interpreters understand what you say, which in turn improves the quality of the message. Pausing while speaking also allows the applicant to ask questions.

▶ **Use an appropriate volume**

It is important that the applicant can hear you properly when you speak.

As a ground rule, use the volume required to make yourself heard but not louder than this. Speaking very loudly or shouting can be seen as aggressive, especially when addressing an individual. Asking the question 'Can you hear me well?' before you start providing information can help you to adjust your volume.

▶ **Use prosody effectively**

The tone of your voice matters. It can help you to emphasise a message or to connect with the applicant. For example, indicate a message is important by using a serious tone. A friendly tone communicates empathy and respect, which can help make the applicant feel more comfortable and safer with you.

▶ **Plan more time or take a break**

The applicant might have difficulty understanding you or might find it challenging to stay focused for a long time. Set aside time for questions and to take one or more breaks. It can help the applicant process what you have said and increase understanding.

Working with interpreters

Your communication techniques should take working with interpreters into consideration. You may need to explain to the interpreter the terminology you use to ensure correct translation to another language. You may also need to allocate more time for information provision so that the interpreter can translate what is being said.

You should clearly explain your own role and the role of the interpreter to the applicant at the beginning of the information session. Your role is to provide the information and the interpreter's role is limited to translating what you and the applicant say. It is also important to



When working with an interpreter, you are responsible for the communication context. For example, you should not allow the interpreter to interact with the applicant on their own behalf, as this would result in you losing control of what information is passed on to the applicant. If this happens, it is advisable to promptly remind the interpreter of their role.



Practical tips when working with interpreters

- Be aware of how certain terms are understood in a given language and explain clearly what you mean. For example, the term ‘health’ should be understood as including both mental and physical health, the term ‘family’ should be understood as nuclear family rather than extended family and the term ‘brothers and sisters’ refers to siblings only.
- Verbally verify that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other.
- Be aware of signs indicating that the applicant and the interpreter do not fully understand or trust each other, for example the applicant is hesitating when answering questions or they are providing longer answers than the interpreter is translating.
- Address the applicant directly when you are speaking, by looking at them and using the second person (‘you’), even when they cannot understand your language.
- Pause after every one to three sentences to allow for accurate interpretation.



Good practice

It is important to make sure that the interpreter knows the correct and appropriate terminology to use during information provision. Multilingual glossaries can facilitate correct interpretation. Such glossaries should include terminology related to the asylum procedure that is commonly used during information provision sessions or specialised terminology used when delivering information to certain applicant groups, e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer persons (LGBTIQ) applicants.

The EUAA terminology project aims to establish a multilingual glossary of terms and definitions that are relevant in the asylum context. The glossary can be accessed here <https://iate.europa.eu/search/collection/FC1BBC4EE1BB4CB4BA96C7146607554F>.



Related EUAA training

The EUAA offers a training module on **interpreting in the asylum context**, which explains the role of the interpreter in the asylum procedure and the principles of interpreting in the asylum context.

If you are interested in attending EUAA training courses, contact the person responsible for training within your authority to receive additional information.

(b) Verification methods to ensure understanding

The applicant should be encouraged to ask questions during information provision. This is particularly important to clarify any doubts and to dispel any rumours or false information that the applicant may have heard or received.

To ensure that your audience has understood the information you have shared with them, you need to actively check that they understood your message correctly.

Verbal feedback from your audience

Although the applicant might truthfully respond ‘yes’ when you ask if they understood what you have explained, there are several reasons why they might answer ‘yes’ even though they did not actually understand. You can tackle this by applying different verification methods.



Summarise in your own words

After a section of information, you can summarise what you have said by highlighting the main points again and dividing the information into small units. This allows for short discussions/questions before you continue.



Have the applicant repeat in their own words

You can ask applicants to repeat in their own words what you have just said. In this way you will be able to determine if there are any misunderstandings or if the applicant has missed important information. It will also help the applicant to better remember what you have said.



Ask a test question

Without ‘quizzing’ the applicant on their knowledge, you could ask a more detailed question to see if a particular point has come across. For example, after explaining an upcoming appointment you can ask ‘Can you tell me where you need to be?’



Give room for further questions

You can proactively ask the applicant if they have any questions. This is a good way to show early on that you are interested in their feedback and questions and can also give you an idea of the applicant's main concerns.

Break information down into segments

Repeat the suggested verification methods while the information provision session is ongoing. Do not ask all the questions at the end of the information session. The applicant might be discouraged to tell you that they have not understood everything after you have given a lengthy explanation. Therefore, explain at the beginning of the session that questions can be asked at any time throughout information provision and divide your message into segments followed by a question-and-answer session.



Practical tip: counter misconceptions

You may come across many falsehoods related to the asylum procedure. It is important that you counter these misconceptions but it is as important that you do so tactfully.

Do not say outright that the applicant is wrong, as this might reinforce any mistrust that the applicant already feels. Instead, invite them to explain what they have heard about (an aspect of) the procedure and try to address the cause of the falsehood. Then, you can say that the information they heard is wrong and **counteract falsehoods by explaining the real situation or procedure**. You can support what you say with information material, such as a leaflet, a map or other forms of support material.

Non-verbal feedback

When you communicate with the applicant, you use a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues. Be alert for non-verbal signs with which the applicant (unknowingly) lets you know that they did not understand what you said. Look out for the following signals:

- facial expressions like frowning or yawning;
- looking around the room or staring;
- change of mood or change in tone of voice;
- crossed arms;
- shaking head.

You can counter these reactions by using basic non-verbal communication techniques, including the following.



Say hello with a smile

When greeting the applicant, have a positive and empathetic attitude.

Try to keep neutral facial expressions

Use neutral, open facial expressions. This helps you to convey the message without confusion and you leave room for the applicant's response. You can adapt your facial expression to the response you receive but retain a professional attitude.

Give non-verbal feedback to the applicant

When listening to the applicant, you can signal that you hear and understand what they are saying by nodding.

Indicate with your body language that you are paying attention to the applicant

When communicating with the applicant, make sure that you have an open posture that is facing them directly and that you make appropriate eye contact with them. When possible, try not to have any objects (such as tables) between you and the applicant.

Use your hands

Neutral hand gestures can help explain what you mean. Due to potential cultural differences, it is recommendable to also explain verbally what is meant by hand gestures.



Practical tip: be aware of cultural differences

Non-verbal feedback from the applicant can indicate that they understood what you said, for example because they were nodding when you were speaking. However, this can also be done out of respect while the message itself was lost.

Your non-verbal signals matter as well. Your message might seem like good news to you, but it can be received as something negative by the applicant. Leave room for their emotional response by maintaining a professional and neutral attitude.

Keep in mind that smiling, keeping eye contact or handshakes have different connotations in different societies. If the applicant is not smiling back or avoids looking at you, this might be a sign of respect or modesty rather than uncooperative behaviour. Moreover, as widely known, in some cultures shaking the head means 'yes'.





1.2.3. Adapt your communication techniques to the applicant's personal circumstances

Communication techniques adapted to the applicant's personal circumstances will allow the applicant to understand the message better. Thus, tailor-made communication techniques enable the applicant to fully enjoy their rights and comply with their obligations.

When adapting your communication techniques, consider what kind of communication ensures understanding in light of the applicant's personal circumstances. In the context of the asylum procedure, the most common circumstances to consider include the following.

- [Culture](#)
- [Education and level of literacy](#)
- [Gender](#)
- [Age](#)
- [Cognitive and learning difficulties](#)
- [Vision and hearing impairments.](#)

(a) Culture

Culture affects the communication style of a person – the way they understand, interpret and retell information. However, one should not assume that all the persons of a certain culture behave or interact in a certain manner. Factors such as age, gender or societal status also play a part.

Culture may affect the communication style in several ways.

- Certain concepts may have different meanings: dates, seasons, distances and the notions of close family or age can vary depending on the culture. Many abstract concepts can also be new to the applicant, such as fundamental rights or legal assistance.
- Body language and gestures may express different meanings depending on the culture.
- Notions related to appropriate behaviour, customs or involvement in public life can vary depending on the culture.
- Communication in collective cultures, such as in Africa, often puts an emphasis on common routines, social relations and interaction, while in individual cultures, such as in Europe, communication typically focuses on individual experiences, roles and emotions.

Practical considerations

- Explain concretely any abstract concepts used in information provision.
- Familiarise yourself with different communication styles in the culture of the applicant, including level of directness, manners of greeting, body language, etc.





Good practice

Cultural mediators can facilitate the understanding of cultural contexts pertaining to both your country and the applicant's country of origin. They can help explain terminology and provide examples which the applicant can relate to. They can also advise on body language and gestures that may have differing meanings across cultures. Cultural mediators are primarily used in addition to formal interpreters in contexts where precise translation is not needed, such as during community-based activities. Cultural mediators should not be confused with interpreters who are required to certify sufficient language knowledge and are bound by professional conduct related to their role in the asylum procedure.

(b) Education and level of literacy

The level of education may affect access to information and the ability to comprehend information relating to certain aspects outside their personal sphere of life. Limited or lack of (formal) education may affect their communication style in several ways, as explained in the following points.

- Since most people learn to read and write at school, lack of formal education may lead to limited or no literacy and digital literacy. This limits the possibilities to access information provided in writing or through digital platforms.
- Formal education develops our capacity for abstract thinking in logical sequences and our understanding of concepts like size, distances, proportions, time and causality. Applicants with limited education may not be able to comprehend abstract terminology.
- Formal education supplies us with general knowledge about the world, such as historical, geographical and scientific knowledge. Limited or lack of (formal) education may affect the applicant's knowledge of matters outside the scope of their personal sphere of life, such as how administrative procedures work.

Practical considerations

- Provide explanations for any abstract terminology.
- Provide information in a manner that relates to the applicant's personal living environment or experiences instead of general knowledge.
- Use visual material to illustrate your message and ensure that the visual aids used are as self-explanatory and understandable as possible without accompanying text.
- Ensure that illiterate and low-literate applicants have access to oral information and to visual and audio information material.
- Ensure that visual and audio information material is easy to find in the digital platforms even for persons with limited digital skills. Show the applicant how they can find this material by using a computer.



(c) Gender

Gender refers to socially constructed roles of females and males. These social roles may exclude persons who are assumed to be women and girls from decision-making within their family and community. Thus, these roles also affect information provision to female applicants, as they may not proactively ask questions in front of their family or community members, particularly if these questions relate to their own personal situation.

Women and girls may have more limited access to communication channels than men and boys. Male applicants may have better access to digital information through computers or mobile phones, if they are more digitally literate and educated than women. Thus, providing oral information is particularly important when communicating with female applicants.

Women and persons whose gender (and/or sexual) identity does not conform with norms may have a particular need for safe spaces for information provision activities. Their questions and concerns relating to the asylum procedure may be particularly sensitive and personal, thus requiring confidentiality.

Practical considerations

- Provide information to female applicants directly, either individually or in an all-women group session.
- Organise information sessions and offer information material in spaces where women spend their daily lives, such as in women-only spaces at reception centres.
- Pay particular attention to ensure confidentiality during information provision, for example by explaining what confidentiality means, delivering information only in small groups, offering an opportunity for individual information provision, etc.
- Provide female interpreters for information provision sessions.



Good practices

Women and girls may have limited access to information due to their social role or may be in a vulnerable situation. For this reason, it is a good practice to reach out to them in areas where men have restricted access. For example, by placing posters or leaflets with specific information in the women's bathrooms.

Information materials to be provided in the waiting area(s) can be compiled into one general document covering all topics. Compiling the information into one document is advised as opposed to separating the (sensitive) information into different documents as the applicant may be reluctant or afraid to collect the information directly relating to their situation (e.g. matters concerning LGBTIQ issues or domestic violence)



(d) Age

Child-friendly information refers to information being adapted to a child's age, maturity, gender and culture ⁽¹⁶⁾. You should adjust the complexity of the information according to the child's situation such as using simple and concrete words instead of abstract concepts. You should also adjust your communication style according to the attention span of the child, for example a series of short sessions with many breaks is preferable to one long session. Your communication should also take into consideration the child's background, including gender and culture, to make your language as understandable as possible. The younger and less mature the child, the more your communication needs to be adjusted ⁽¹⁷⁾.

The age and maturity of a child similarly affects their access to information. A child may not be able to read or not have the patience to focus on written text. For accompanied children, it is necessary to deliver information to all family members, including children who may have their own asylum claims from their family members. For unaccompanied children, it is important to note that they need to receive specific information that is relevant to them. They also need more support in accessing relevant information material, as they do not have parents (or other guardians) continuously available to them to assist them in the procedure or explain information.

In some cultures, individuals are considered and see themselves as adults at a younger age than 18 years old. Moreover, following the experience of their migration journey, they may feel more mature than their actual age. It is therefore necessary to deliver information to the child by using language that is adjusted to their maturity, while explaining the information thoroughly enough to ensure their understanding.

Practical considerations

- Simplify information and use easier terminology than you would normally use.
- Explain difficult words and give examples.
- Repeat central information, verify understanding and allow more time and breaks more often than you would normally do.
- Use information material that keeps the child's attention and provides information in the form of a game, such as an activity book, to make the information interesting.
- Share information in formats that children normally use, including digital tools, visual aids and games.
- Create a safe space for information provision without distractions.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, [Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice](#), 2010, p. 21.

⁽¹⁷⁾ For more information on principles and practical tips relating to child-friendly information provision, see European Commission, [Creating Child-friendly Versions of Written Documents: A guide](#), 2021; Council of Europe, [How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration: A handbook for frontline professionals](#), 2018, pp. 15–30; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [Technical Guidance: Child-friendly procedures](#), 2021, pp. 13–16.



- Make the child feel comfortable with you, for example by starting with a topic that the child feels comfortable talking about.
- Consider individual information provision instead of a group setting.
- Allow enough time for information provision and planned breaks.

You may need to adjust your communication techniques not only when talking to children but also for elderly persons. In this case, their personal circumstances may be related to limited digital literacy, declining hearing or eyesight, or cognitive difficulties. For more information, see Section [1.2.3\(e\) Cognitive and learning difficulties](#) and Section [1.2.3\(f\) Vision and hearing impairments](#).



Good practice

When providing information to children, it is important to consider their age and maturity. It is recommended to develop appropriate information provision materials for different age groups, such as for the categories of:

- school-aged children (until 12 years old); and
- adolescents (12 to 18 years old).

Materials for the first group need to be based on visual aspects. Furthermore, it is necessary to pay attention to the level of provided details and complexity of the information when developing materials for children.

Preschool children are normally informed in an individualised and age-appropriate way by their guardians.

(e) Cognitive and learning difficulties

Cognitive and learning difficulties may not be visible at first glance. However, you might notice that the applicant has difficulty in giving clear and coherent statements, memorising information or focusing on information provision. Cognitive and learning difficulties may result from medical problems such as intellectual disabilities, depression, brain injuries or addiction to drugs or alcohol or may be a side effect of strong medicines.

Depending on the severity of the cognitive and learning difficulties, it may be necessary to provide information in oral form to ensure that the message is conveyed. As providing information to persons with cognitive and learning difficulties can be challenging, support from specialised services can also be considered. Individual information provision is also recommended.

It is important to **note that exposure to traumatic events can cause post-traumatic stress** that may also affect the applicant's memory and behaviour. Traumatized applicants often have poor memory. They may be on constant alert – which decreases their ability to concentrate – and may avoid information that relates to their trauma – which can include asylum matters.



They may also feel numb, which can appear as unresponsiveness. Thus, highly traumatised applicants may need similar communication techniques to persons with cognitive and learning difficulties, depending on the behaviour and reactions of the applicant.

Practical considerations

- Focus on the central messages by using short sentences and simple language.
- Repeat information more often than you would normally.
- Use easy-to-read formats for information material.
- Do not provide too much information at once.
- Use techniques to verify understanding.
- Listen actively and engage the applicant in the discussion to enhance their concentration.
- Use a neutral tone and non-judgemental attitude.
- Pay particular attention to providing information in segments and pause often to allow time to process information and ask questions.
- Plan more time and breaks than you would normally.
- Allow the presence of a trusted support person, if the applicant so wishes.

(f) Vision and hearing impairments

Vision and/or hearing impairments can vary from mild deficits to blindness and deafness. Any applicant may experience such impairments, however they are more common among elderly persons. Your communication techniques should be adapted according to the severity of the impairment(s).

Information provision to applicants with impairments may require specialised skills and knowledge. Depending on the severity of the impairment, you may wish to consider specialised services, such as sign language interpreters, to support the information provision. Individual information provision may be necessary.

The applicant may not be able to access information in certain formats, such as orally, in writing or in visual and/or audio formats. Thus, it is necessary to make information available in various forms to ensure that relevant messages are made available to applicants with different types of impairments.

Speech impairments may also affect your communication if the applicant is not able to orally ask questions and express matters that are relevant for information provision. Alternative methods of communication should be based on the usual form of expression used by the applicant.

Practical considerations in communicating applicants with vision impairment

Depending on the degree of vision impairment, the following tips may be applicable.





- Consider recording the information provision session so that the applicant can access the information again.
- Make easy-to-read information material available with sufficiently large font size and visual aids.
- Use other channels besides communication in person to provide information, including audio material.

Practical considerations in communicating with applicants who have a hearing impairment

Depending on the degree of hearing impairment, the following tips may be applicable.

- Talk slowly and clearly.
- Avoid using a high-pitched voice as it is difficult to hear.
- Face the applicant directly at eye level so that they can lip-read and pick up visual cues.
- Keep your hands away from your face when you speak.
- Be aware that background noises can decrease the ability to hear.
- Use a notepad to write what you are saying. Write down important/key terms.
- Let the applicant know when you are changing topic, for example by pausing briefly.
- Use a sign language interpreter, when appropriate.
- Use written and visual material along with other channels, instead of oral communication.

Make sure to adapt your messages in addition to your communication techniques

Besides adapting your communication techniques to the applicant's personal circumstances, you also need to adapt the information content to those messages the applicant needs to receive.

When providing information on asylum procedure, you need to tailor your messages for the following applicant profiles at least:

- unaccompanied children;
- accompanied children;
- dependent adults;
- applicants with special needs;
- applicants channelled to a particular procedure, such as Dublin procedure, accelerated procedure, admissibility procedure or border procedure;
- applicants in detention.





Practical tip: providing information to a family by adapting both the message and the communication techniques

- Make sure that all family members are individually provided with information that is specifically relevant for them.
- Adapt your communication techniques to children or women as appropriate. For example, information needs to be delivered to children in a child-friendly manner that considers their age and maturity to ensure that it is understood, while women may require space for information provision that ensures confidentiality, to ensure that they can ask all questions that are relevant to their application.
- Proactively observe other potential circumstances to which the communication needs to be adapted.



Practical tip: targeted information material and sessions

- Design targeted information materials and sessions for unaccompanied children and other applicant profiles.

For some applicant profiles, you will need not only to adapt communication techniques according to personal circumstances but also to provide specific information in relation to the asylum procedure. For example, unaccompanied children require specific communication techniques and also need to receive specific information about the procedures.

The content of the messages that need to be delivered to the applicants is elaborated in [Chapter 3. Information provisions topics.](#)

1.3. How to convey information

Information can be conveyed to applicants through a variety of channels, including oral communication, printed information material, digital material and audiovisual material. As each communication channel reaches the applicants differently and communicates certain types of information more effectively, it is advisable to convey information through several communication channels at the same time. It is also often necessary to support the passing of information by using information material.

This section outlines different communication channels to convey information, the benefits of using several communication channels at the same time and how information material can support the delivery of information.





1.3.1. Consider the communication channels to use

Not all communication channels are the same. A certain channel can be a better fit for a certain category of applicants and, similarly, other channels can be a better fit for the specific message you are seeking to communicate at a given time. It is therefore important to choose the most appropriate communication channel(s) to deliver information.

When choosing your communication channel(s), make sure that it is **fit for your purpose** (e.g. considering how detailed or complex your message is) and that it is **fit for the applicant** (considering their personal circumstances).

(a) Oral communication

Oral communication allows you to double check that the information has been understood. For this reason, complex information should be communicated to applicants orally, accompanied by appropriate explanations.

You should adapt your communication techniques to the personal circumstances of the applicant and provide information that is directly relevant to them. You can also apply techniques to immediately verify whether the applicant has correctly understood your message. For these reasons, it is recommended to deliver information orally to each applicant at least once during the asylum procedure.

For more information on oral communication techniques, see Section [1.2.2\(a\) Oral communication techniques](#).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reaches all applicants• Communicates complex information• Communicates personalised information• Adapts communication techniques to the personal circumstance of the applicant• Can ensure confidential discussions• Can ensure understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time-consuming• Can address only individuals or smaller groups• May not be available to applicants at all times• Requires interpretation





Practical tip: create groups of applicants for information provision

- Form groups of applicants for oral information provision sessions by looking into their personal circumstances.

Sometimes larger groups can be formed, for example when general information is delivered to applicants who have similar backgrounds in terms of language, nationality and culture. Other times, smaller groups or even individual information provision needs to be considered, for example when the applicants need to receive specific information and/or the information needs to be communicated to them in a specific manner to ensure their understanding, for example for children or persons with cognitive and learning difficulties.

- Consider the group's size and composition to ensure effective information provision.

The group's size should not be so large as to make it difficult for an applicant to ask questions or for you to apply the verification methods to ensure understanding. The group composition should consider what is needed for an applicant to feel safe to raise questions. For example, women may not speak or ask questions that are personally relevant for them while in the presence of men.

During information provision in a group setting, it is advisable to inform the applicants explicitly that they can also ask questions privately and in a confidential manner.



Practical tip: support oral information with information materials

- Support oral information sessions with printed materials or links to digital sources so that the applicant can revisit the information at their own pace.

Oral information provision has many advantages, but it is fleeting by nature. For the applicant, it can be challenging to absorb and retain large amounts of new content in the given time span. This is why you need to support your oral information sessions with written material.

(b) Printed materials

Printouts primarily include written information, including leaflets, brochures or booklets that can be supported by visual aids, such as infographics, cartoons or flowcharts. For this reason, printed materials can communicate detailed messages and an extensive amount of information.

Printouts are a one-way communication channel that is primarily intended for functionally literate applicants. At the same time, some of the core messages can be illustrated in visual aids to communicate limited content to applicants who are illiterate or have poor reading skills. Printed communication materials can be made available to the applicant at all times.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach large audiences • Are available to applicants at all times • Can be in several languages • Save time in the information provision process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited use for illiterate/low-literate persons • Hard to make fully accessible according to the applicant's personal circumstances • Need tailoring to communicate different information to different applicants • Not possible to verify understanding • Costly to print and keep information up to date



Practical tip: low-literate and illiterate persons

- Use simple summaries and self-explanatory illustrations

People with limited reading skills do understand the importance of written information and have often developed techniques to use it. They can often access the content of written material if it contains simple summaries, such as a box with short summaries at the beginning of each chapter.

An illiterate person will take and keep printed materials if they recognise that the information is relevant for them. This can be achieved by using self-explanatory cover illustrations.

People with limited reading skills and illiterate persons will often ask others from their communities to read more extensive texts out loud to them.

(c) Digital communication

Information can be disseminated via digital platforms so that it is available to the applicant at all times. However, this implies that the applicant has the digital skills required to use the information platforms and access to the relevant equipment (i.e. an internet connection and a computer or mobile phone). Furthermore, information platforms need to be accessible in a language that the applicant can understand.

Digital platforms can be used to store different types of information material, including material with a high level of detail on various information topics. In this way, the applicant can find detailed information on all topics that are relevant to them.

Information can be distributed via a variety of digital platforms, some of which allow interaction with the applicant.



One-way digital communication

Information material that is disseminated digitally is often intended for one-way communication. However, it can be adapted to the personal circumstances of the applicants and include written text, visual communication items and audio.



Practical tip: use digital tools to make information available in different formats

- Use text-to-speech systems to make your written information available in audio format.

This is useful both for persons with limited reading skills and those with limited fluency in the language used.

Two-way digital communication

Digital communication can entail interactive platforms, such as dedicated mobile applications for information provision, social media and chats embedded in a website. These platforms allow the applicant to contact the information provider in order to receive more information or clarifications.

Call-in and messaging services can also be used to communicate directly with the applicant. These include hotlines, emails, phone calls and mobile applications such as WhatsApp. These channels can be used to disseminate specific information or announcements. Interpretation or translation needs to be available to ensure effective communication.

Even though digital interaction cannot replace face-to-face oral information provision, the above-mentioned means can answer the most pressing questions or concerns that the applicant may have in between in-person information provision sessions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches large audiences • Information provision format can be tailored to the needs of the applicants, including text, visual aids and audio • Enables interaction between the applicant and the information provider • Available at all times • Can be made available in several languages • Can provide specific and updated information • Not time consuming or costly to provide information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only for applicants with the appropriate digital skills • Only for applicants who have access to an internet connection and the relevant equipment • Specialised materials need to be developed to communicate information according to the personal circumstances of the applicants • Limited opportunity to ensure understanding



**Practical tip: frequently asked questions**

- Prepare frequently asked questions and answers for each information topic. It will facilitate information provision for both the provider and the applicant.

Frequently asked questions can be automated in digital platforms by using chatbots that 'talk' to the applicant about their most common questions on the asylum procedure and refer to relevant information materials. Chatbots can be programmed to communicate in different languages. They function 24/7 and can also be made available in public spaces in reception centres, or in the waiting area at the asylum service.

(d) Audiovisual communication

Audiovisual communication refers to broadcast media, including loudspeakers, video screens, television or radio. This one-way communication channel is intended for communicating simplified messages or announcements that need to reach applicants within short time limits. Broadcasted information is often delivered in an environment with distractions, which makes broadcasting less suited for detailed, complex or personalised messages.

Even though broadcast media can reach large audiences, this channel is most effective when it targets a well-defined audience. For example, loudspeakers are a useful channel to make announcements and video screens can be used to disseminate videos and animations in reception facilities.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reaches large audiences• Can be made accessible to applicants regardless of their personal circumstances• Not time consuming to provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only for targeted messages or announcements, not for complex, detailed or personalised information• Target audience reachable only in certain contexts, such as operations, refugee camps and reception centres• Difficult to make available in several languages• Not possible to verify understanding

1.3.2. Use several channels at the same time

It is desirable to disseminate the same information through different communication channels for various reasons.

- Information is more accessible when it is made available in several channels that can suit the personal circumstances of each applicant, including various degrees of literacy, education, cognitive capacity, maturity, etc.



- By engaging more senses (listening, watching, speaking), it is easier to understand and retain new information.
- Repeating content increases the understanding of and the trust in the information being provided.
- By using additional channels you increase the chance of reaching the applicant.

Therefore, using various channels to distribute information helps you to reach the applicant and strengthen the message.

Applicants must be given the opportunity to receive personalised information. This can be done through oral communication that adapts the communication techniques according to the applicant's personal circumstances and allows you to deliver messages that are directly relevant to them. Oral communication can be combined with other communication channels to ensure that the information is available to the applicant at all times.

When the information is made available in several channels, it is necessary to ensure that it is consistent.



Practical tip: establish a link between the printed and digital channels

- Use printed materials to direct the applicant to online information. To do so:
 - make all your printed materials accessible on digital platforms;
 - include a link and/or QR code on your printed material.

1.3.3. Support information provision with different information material

In order to disseminate information through different communication channels, you need to have information material available. You can choose among numerous types of information material to host information in written, visual and/or audio format. Most material types allow you to combine different formats, which increases access to information for applicants.

Table 1 lists the most common information material types, grouped in categories by their format and accompanied with the respective advantages and disadvantages.



Table 1. Examples of information material types

Material type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Written communication that can be supported by visual aids		
Leaflet/brochure/newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows targeted messages • Can communicate general and detailed information • Can communicate a number of different information topics • Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions, printouts and digital platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suits complex messages only if they can be simplified • Not suitable to deliver extensive explanations or many details
Booklet/guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suits complex messages and information on a specific theme • Can communicate extensive details • Can communicate many different information topics • Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions, printouts and digital platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary target are not the applicants but information providers • Extensive and detailed information may be difficult for the applicant to absorb • Time-consuming to read
Visual communication that can be supported by written information		
Poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suits simplified messages or announcements • Can be used to highlight or give visibility to an information topic • Possible to distribute through printouts and digital platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only suits simplified core messages • Limited space for information; not for detailed information • Only for maximum two information topics



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed posters require large wall space
Flowchart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suits messages that can be illustrated as a chronological timeline or process Can be used to explain or simplify complex information Can communicate detailed information Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions, printouts and digital platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can cover only for one information topic or a limited number of topics Only for information that can be presented as a chronological process
Cartoon / picture book / colouring book / activity book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suits core messages Can communicate emotionally charged messages Can communicate several information topics Child-friendly format Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions, printouts and digital platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily for simplified messages; no space for explanations Only for messages that can be communicated through a limited number of picture frames Not for detailed information



Audio communication that can be supported by written information

Audio file / podcast

- Can communicate complex messages
 - Often suits information on a specific theme
 - Can communicate general and detailed information
 - Can contain several information topics
 - Can be converted from written format
 - Possible to distribute through different communication channels, such as oral information provision sessions, screens in waiting areas, and digital platforms
- May be difficult to focus on long audio files
 - Detailed explanations may be difficult to follow without visualisation or script
 - Audio cannot be distributed as a printout (transcripts of audio files can be printed)



Combination of written, visual and audio communication

PowerPoint presentation

- Suits targeted messages
 - Can communicate general and detailed information
 - Can communicate a number of different information topics
 - Accessible to all applicants when combining written text, still visuals, audio and even video
 - Catches the attention easily
 - Information can be modified and updated without considerable costs
 - Production is less costly than a video/animation
 - Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions, printouts and digital platforms
 - Can be dubbed in many languages at little additional cost
- Primarily for core messages with limited level of details
 - Not for extensive explanations or details
 - Only for information that can be communicated through a limited number of slides



<p>Videos/animations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suits simplified core messages • Can communicate emotionally charged messages • Can communicate general and detailed information • Accessible to all applicants when written text, visualisation and audio are combined • Catches the attention easily • Possible to distribute through oral information provision sessions and digital platforms • Can be dubbed in many languages at little additional cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily for one information topic or a limited number of topics • Primarily for core messages with limited level of detail • Cannot be distributed as printouts • Requires technological readiness, including sufficient bandwidth • High production costs; difficult to update content
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Further training on information provision

The provision of information to applicants is generally considered a special expertise. Methodologies for the provision of information are briefly explained in this chapter but to understand the full complexity of the subject and to be able to use that knowledge in practice, the EUAA recommends following a dedicated training module on the subject.



Related EUAA training

The EUAA offers the module **‘Communication with and information provision to asylum seekers’** which outlines the skills needed in designing, planning and implementing cross-cultural communication strategies. The aim of this module is to enable practitioners to assess the information needs of persons in need of international protection, applicants and potential beneficiaries of international protection. After attending this training, you will be able to adapt and disseminate accessible messages through the appropriate channels.

If you are interested in attending EUAA training courses, contact the person responsible for training within your authority in order to receive additional information.



2. Organisational set-up of information provision

This chapter introduces the settings regarding when, where and by whom information can be delivered to applicants for international protection. It presents how different settings can affect information provision in practice.

Access to the asylum procedure often includes two settings:

- the arrival, including the procedural step of making an application for international protection; and
- registering/lodging an application for international protection.

After the application is lodged, the information provision that follows is related to the personal interview, the outcome of the decision-making and, if relevant, information on how to challenge a negative decision⁽¹⁸⁾. The authorities are responsible for ensuring that information provision is guaranteed to applicants for international protection⁽¹⁹⁾. Thus, they are responsible for coordinating the delivery of information so that the relevant messages reach the applicant. The authority/organisation that delivers the information varies depending on whether information provision is centralised with one stakeholder or delivered in cooperation with multiple organisations.

Consistent information provision can be guaranteed by identifying, in your national setting, which information should be delivered, when, where and by whom.

2.1. When to provide information

The APD (recast) stipulates that EU+ countries should deliver information to applicants in time to enable them to exercise the rights and to comply with the obligations under the APD (recast)⁽²⁰⁾.

Some rights and obligations apply from the moment an application for international protection is made. For such rights and obligations, information should be given at the very beginning of the procedure.

At the same time, it is important not to overwhelm applicants with too much information at the beginning of procedure.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Article 11(2) APD (recast).

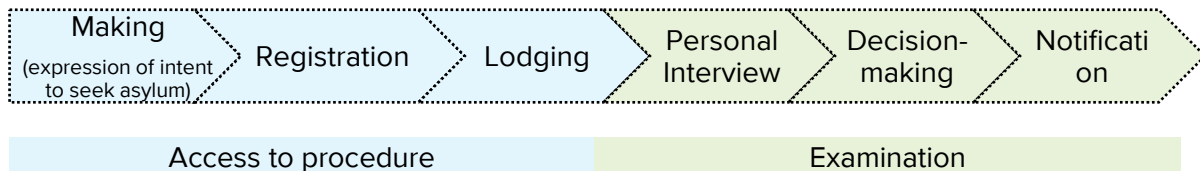
⁽¹⁹⁾ Article 12 APD (recast).

⁽²⁰⁾ Article 12(1), point (a) APD (recast).



Hence, the information to be provided, as well of the level of detail of the information, will depend on the step of the asylum procedure.

Below is a summary of the steps of the asylum procedure at first instance (an explanation of each step can be found in Sections [2.1.1. Access to procedure](#) and [2.1.2. Examination of an application](#)).



In the information provision process, it is recommended to distinguish between:

- when you need to provide core information;
- when you can provide further detailed information.

As information can be delivered in a phased manner, you can first deliver basic information on each topic and then complement it with further details, as follows:

- identify the core messages related to each information topic;
- repeat the core messages during the different steps of the procedure;
- as appropriate, accompany the core message(s) with further details.

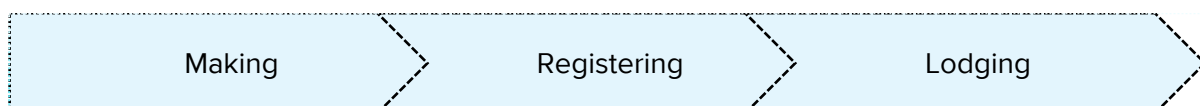
2.1.1. Access to procedure

Access to procedure entails several opportunities to interact with the applicant. The phased approach allows you to deliver information at different times during access to procedure, without overwhelming the applicant with too much information or overly detailed information at the same time. It also allows you to repeat core information to the applicant several times and to build on the core information with more details each time that you interact with the applicant.

Besides phased information provision, information can be made available to applicants at all times through digital platforms and printed materials. For more information refer to Section [1.3 How to convey information](#).

(a) Procedural steps

Procedural steps that happen during access to procedure refer to activities conducted by authorities in order to register applications for international protection. In accordance with Article 6 APD (recast), there are three steps in access to procedure: making, registering and lodging.





Making of an application refers to the act of expressing to an authority the wish to apply for international protection. After this step, the third country national or stateless person is considered to be an applicant and enjoys the rights and obligations attached to this status.

Registering means establishing a record of the applicant's intention to seek protection, thus recording that the applicant is an applicant for international protection. In some national settings basic data is also collected from the applicant during the registration step.

Registration should happen within certain time limits after the application is made (Article 6 APD (recast)):

- maximum three working days for applications made to the authorities responsible for registering them;
- maximum six working days for applications made to other authorities that are not responsible for registering them;
- maximum ten working days for simultaneous large numbers of applications that make it very difficult to respect a three or six-day time limit.

Lodging

Lodging typically refers to a stage when more comprehensive data is collected from applicants. Afterwards, the examination of the application starts.



Keep in mind

Depending on the Member State, **making** can occur before or at the same time as the **registration**. The steps of the **registration** and **lodging** can also be combined into one phase.

(b) Providing information during the procedural steps

The procedural steps provide an opportunity to deliver information, particularly on the procedure to follow and the rights and obligations of the applicant. Authorities often conduct these steps while at the same time providing information to the applicant and explaining procedural information to them in practical terms.

The procedural steps often require that the applicant present themselves in person and offer the opportunity to provide information to the applicant orally. As basic information is often collected from applicants during registration, this allows the message to be tailored to the personal situation of each applicant. This could be the case, for example, on topics such as the available support in relation to potential special procedural or reception needs or a special examination procedure to follow if the application is channelled to a particular procedure. These steps also provide an opportunity to verify understanding and allow the applicant to ask questions and clarify any doubts.

The circumstances related to **when** information is delivered to the applicant vary depending on whether the procedural steps of access to procedure – making, registering and lodging –



happen separately or concurrently and whether there are additional opportunities to interact with the applicant. In practice, there are usually two phases that are relevant in information provision. These include:

- first contact phase (making)
- after the first contact phase (registration/lodging).

Information provision at first contact often takes place in a situation when the person seeking asylum has recently arrived in the country and may have little knowledge of the asylum procedure. The person may have limited ability to absorb information since they may have other pressing needs. Stress can limit their ability to absorb information. For this reason, it is recommended to only provide core information which is less detailed. The registration/lodging stage provides an opportunity to provide further explanations and additional details.

[Chapter 3](#) provides further guidance on the information topics and the level of details for providing information during the first contact and after the first contact.



Related EUAA publications

The EUAA and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), [Practical Guide on Access to the Asylum Procedure](#), 2023 supports first-contact officials in their role of guaranteeing effective access to international protection in the first contact context, for example by providing information.

This practical guide provides information about the core obligations of first-contact officials, the rights of persons in need of international protection and information on the procedural guarantees, and support that is provided in the first-contact context.

The EASO, [Practical Guide on Registration – Lodging of applications for international protection](#), 2021 supports officials in their daily work of registering and lodging applications for international protection, by adhering to common European registration standards.

This practical guide lays down the legal framework related to the three steps of access to procedure, including detailed information on the rights and obligations triggered at different steps of registration. The guide, among others, describes the main characteristics of registering and lodging and provides information for the identification of applicants with potential vulnerabilities or Dublin cases.

2.1.2. Examination of an application

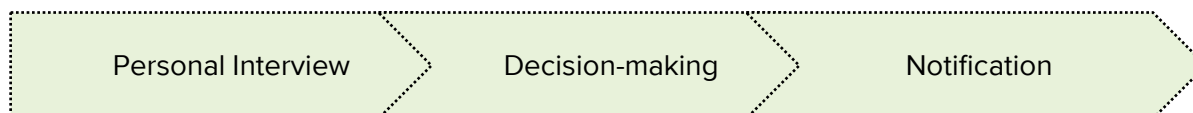
The examination is the phase during which the determining authority assess whether an applicant qualifies for international protection. The determining authority may also decide on the admissibility of the application. For further information, see topic [3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure](#).



(a) Procedural steps

Usually, the examination phase comprises three steps:

- a personal interview;
- decision-making;
- notification of decision at first instance.



Personal interview:

Each adult applicant and dependent adult is given the opportunity of a personal interview before the determining authority takes a decision on their application, unless any of the following exceptions apply. ⁽²¹⁾.

The interview may be omitted in two situations ⁽²²⁾:

- when the determining authority is able to take a positive decision with regard to refugee status on the basis of the evidence available; or
- when the applicant is unfit or unable to be interviewed due to circumstances beyond their control.

Depending on the national legislation, children can be given the opportunity of a personal interview too ⁽²³⁾.

Decision-making

Following the personal interview, the determining authority will assess the evidence gathered, establish the factual circumstances and assess whether the conditions for granting international protection are met. Before deciding on whether the conditions for granting international protection are met, the determining authority may also decide on the admissibility of the application. For further information, see topic [3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure](#).

The determining authority will then make a decision on the application.

Notification

Decision should be given to the applicant in writing ⁽²⁴⁾. The applicant must be notified of the decision in reasonable time ⁽²⁵⁾. The decision is notified to the applicant or to their legal representative or appointed counsellor.

⁽²¹⁾ Article 14(1) APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽²²⁾ Article 14(2) APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽²³⁾ Article 14(1) APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽²⁴⁾ Article 11(1) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a decision by the determining authority'.

⁽²⁵⁾ Article 12(1), point (e) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants'.





The applicant must be notified in a language that they understand or is reasonably supposed to understand unless they are represented by a legal representative, and, if relevant, the applicant should be given information on how to challenge a negative decision in writing ⁽²⁶⁾.

The notification ends the asylum procedure at first instance.

(b) Providing information during the procedural steps

Information is provided to the applicant during the personal interview and the notification. During the personal interview, information is provided directly by the determining authority. During the notification, applicants will receive information either directly by the authority notifying the decision, or indirectly, via their legal representative or appointed counsellor.

The decision-making step does not necessarily imply interaction between the applicant and asylum authorities and hence, information will not necessarily be provided to the applicant during this step. Interactions may however occur, for example if the applicant spontaneously approaches the determining authorities to request information or submit additional elements or documents. On such occasions information can be provided to the applicant.

2.1.3. Other opportunities during asylum procedure

Besides the procedural steps, there are other opportunities to deliver information to the applicant.

During the access to procedure these opportunities include the following:

- arrival context, including activities during first contact at the border;
- medical screening;
- fingerprinting;
- meeting with legal counsellor or guardian;
- referral to specialised actors for second-line support;
- receiving support services.

These opportunities allow you to provide more detailed information on the step at hand, for example, what the medical screening entails or what can be expected from second-line support.

In addition to the above, you can deliver any information related to the asylum procedure, including general procedural information or information that focuses on a particular topic during:

- intake in the reception centre;

⁽²⁶⁾ Articles 12(1), point (f) 'Guarantees for applicants' and 11(2) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a decision by the determining authority'.





- community activities;
- stay in the reception centre.

You can use these opportunities to complement the information provided during the procedural steps and to repeat and explore further previously shared information.



Practical tip: make information available at all times during the asylum procedure

Next to these opportunities for delivering information in person, information should be made available to the applicant at all times through different communication channels. For more information, see Section [1.2. How to communicate information](#).

2.2. Where to provide information

This chapter focuses on the practical aspects related to the location in which information is provided.

Contexts in which information is delivered vary depending on whether you are in an operational environment that responds to large number of arrivals or in an office environment that enables individual meetings with a smaller number of applicants.

The main differences are related to the arrival to the country, especially in situations of mass arrivals, when there are specific considerations that need to be reflected when providing information. These include the situation of the applicant and the arrival setting.

For this reason, this chapter is divided into two sections: [2.2.1. Provide information at first contact](#) (making) and [2.2.2. Provide information during registration, lodging and examination](#).

2.2.1. Provide information at first contact (making)

Information provision at first contact often takes place in a situation when the person seeking asylum has recently arrived in the country and has little knowledge of the asylum procedure. These first-contact situations can happen in different settings, including:

- at the **external border**, such as at border crossing points, green borders, ports and in the transit zones of an airport;
- within **the territory** of an EU+ country, when meeting the authorities with the intention of applying for international protection.

First contact at the external border is often characterised by an operational environment in the context of cross-border movements. It can include simultaneous regular and irregular arrivals, while first contact within the territory typically happens in an established office environment.



One of the main aims of information provision at first contact is to identify those persons who might be in need of international protection and to provide them with information in order to ensure effective access to the asylum procedure.



Related EUAA tool

For more information on how to recognise a potential applicant for international protection, see the EUAA-Frontex, [Practical Guide on Access to the Asylum Procedure](#), 2023.

(a) Providing information in operational environment

The practical aspects of providing the information are strictly linked to the operational setting where access to the asylum procedure takes place.

Usually, the information provision component is part of a broader workflow that regulates the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders concurrent to the implementation of the asylum procedures. A workflow such as this depends on the operational setting. For example, the information flow established in a location receiving a large number of applicants will be different from the one taking place in an office space where applications for international protection are processed individually.

When dealing with large number of arrivals, it is important to distinguish between:

- operational settings where applicants are supposed to be hosted in the same location as the arrival until conclusion of the first instance process (such as in the context of a hotspot);
- situations where applicants are quickly moved from the port or harbour of arrival to a first reception centre.

In the former case, the concerned authorities and operational partners can take advantage of the applicant's longer stay to convey more detailed messages throughout the stages of the asylum procedures. This will allow to clarify doubts and activate relevant referral pathways.

In the latter case, due to time and space limitations, the responsible first-contact officials need to ensure that core messages are clearly and efficiently conveyed to the applicants, particularly with regard to what happens next in the procedure.

The operational setting is another key aspect to consider when it comes to securing a confidential environment to interact with the applicant, particularly with certain profiles such as LGBTIQ persons, victims of gender-based violence or persons with health problems or disability. Confidentiality is a prerequisite when interacting with such persons, in order to ensure their protection and foster cooperation with the authorities.

To ensure effective information provision during first contact, you need to take into account the particular challenges related to information provision in this context.

**Table 2. The challenges and possible solutions to ensuring effective information provision**

Challenges	Possible solutions
<p>Distracting environment</p> <p>An influx of applicants can create time pressure and coordination challenges in receiving new arrivals. External border zones may be crowded and distracting environments, thus limiting the communication channels available for the dissemination of information and the time available for information provision.</p>	<p>Coordinate and establish workflows</p> <p>Advanced levels of coordination and workflows can be established to deliver information effectively during times of high numbers of simultaneous arrivals, for example following search and rescue operations or arrivals in large numbers at land borders. Implementing partners can be contracted for providing information.</p>
<p>Limited ability to absorb information</p> <p>Before arrival, applicants have often completed a long and precarious journey, during which they may have been exposed to exploitation and abuse or other ill-treatment. This can affect their physical and mental state. They may have pressing needs that do not necessarily relate to asylum. Stress can limit their ability to absorb information.</p> <p>Applicants may also have little or no previous knowledge of international protection and asylum procedure or how administrative procedures are conducted in Europe. This lack of previous knowledge can limit their ability to absorb large amounts of new information or understand legal terminology.</p>	<p>Provide less detailed information</p> <p>The information provision can focus on delivering core information with less details in environments that are distracting or when the applicants may have a limited ability to absorb information. This core information can later be complemented with more details and additional information topics.</p> <p>Printed information material that they can later revisit can be handed to applicants. The material can include instructions on how to access more information on digital platforms or orally.</p>
<p>Limited opportunity to provide tailored information</p> <p>It may be difficult to immediately identify the personal circumstances of each applicant, due to limited interaction and data collection from applicants upon arrival. Thus, the</p>	<p>Encourage applicants to bring forward their personal circumstances</p> <p>As it may be difficult to identify personal circumstances that are not visible during first contact, applicants can be encouraged to flag their circumstances to the authorities. Thus, you should</p>



opportunity to provide tailored information in a manner that is adapted to the applicant's situation is limited.

Limited opportunities to meet each applicant individually, including providing interpretation

The arrival context may limit the ability to arrange individual appointments with applicants.

In the context of new arrivals, it is also not possible to predict all the languages that would need interpretation at a given time.

explain clearly and in an understandable way what special needs are and how the applicants can bring them forward.

Disseminate information via different communication channels

Information can be disseminated via different communication channels to increase the efficiency of information provision. For example, you can use leaflets that combine written text with self-explanatory visual details on how to find more information on digital platforms and how the interaction with the authorities will happen. This information can be translated into several languages.

A pool of remote interpreters can be made available to provide ad hoc information provision in rarer languages.



Practical tip: large number of arrivals

Disembarkation: applicants can be screened upon arrival and then transferred to first-reception centres.

- **Use printed and audiovisual materials or QR codes linking to digital material** when providing information about the asylum procedure. This material can complement the information that was provided orally at the time of disembarkation.
- **Group the applicants by language**, based on the available information about nationalities on board. Address the groups to provide information on the asylum procedures in the country of disembarkation.
- **Look out for vulnerabilities.** If vulnerable profiles are pre-identified based on the available indicators, make sure that they are provided with the relevant information. Take confidentiality requirements into account as much as possible, for instance by gathering those persons in a different group.

Hotspot-like settings. As the applicants can be hosted until completion of the asylum procedure, the information flow can be structured by taking into consideration the standard methodological recommendations described in this guidance document.

- **Look after vulnerabilities.** If available, use **safe zones and/or child-friendly spaces** to provide information on asylum procedures to vulnerable profiles and unaccompanied children. This will help meet the confidentiality requirements while allowing for a more participative interaction, as you could use information materials tailored to the communication needs of vulnerable profiles and children.





Practical tip: individual interaction

- **Adjust your workflows to overcome space limitations and ensure confidentiality**

The administrations involved in operational settings are sometimes confronted with temporary or permanent space limitations that could make it difficult to ensure the confidentiality requirements.

- **Schedule one registration at a time to ensure confidentiality**

Workflow adjustments could be considered in order to mitigate the risk of an applicant being overheard. For example, you could consider scheduling only one registration at a time to ensure that the applicants and respective interpreters cannot recognise and/or hear each other.

- **Register applicants speaking different languages at the same time**

If a significant backlog does not allow for individual registrations, you could schedule in the same time slot applicants speaking different languages. This will mitigate the risk of being overheard. The registration officers should check in advance that the applicants being registered cannot understand the language of the other applicant and, therefore, could not understand the account shared by them.

- **Install visibility barriers or hold registrations online**

Confidentiality can be further supported by installing visibility barriers so that the applicants cannot see each other.

Remote processing, such as online asylum registrations, is also an option in case the availability of adequate physical space is an issue. However, the concerned authority should make sure that the IT equipment and technical requirements for remote processing are in place as well as that the principle of confidentiality is respected.

A safe and calm environment is particularly important and should be guaranteed for vulnerable applicants and applicants in need of special procedural guarantees.

2.2.2. Provide information during registration, lodging and examination

During the registration, lodging and examination stages, information is usually provided in an established setting, such as an office environment or an accommodation centre.

An established setting allows for a potentially calm environment in which to provide information. This context often includes an individual appointment with the applicant in an environment that ensures confidentiality and security. However, it can additionally include meetings with groups of applicants. The context often allows for information to be distributed through several communication channels, including oral communication, printouts and digital platforms.



Applicants usually attend **individual appointments** for the collection of personal data during registration and lodging. These appointments are a good opportunity to provide individualised information to the applicant according to their personal circumstances. It is also possible to determine which information material would be the most effective.



Related EUAA publication

For more information on the registering/lodging settings, see the EASO, [Practical Guide on Registration – Lodging of applications for international protection](#), December 2021.

2.3. Who provides the information?

You may not be the only person providing information to the applicant. Other authorities and organisations working in the field of asylum can provide information in partnership with you. The responsibility to secure and coordinate information provision lies with the authorities. At the same time, all involved stakeholders have a responsibility to engage in field coordination and ensure that their information provision is coherent.



Practical tip: counter misinformation received from informal sources

Applicants from certain cultural backgrounds may be drawn to seek advice from members of their own community, for example, because they are not used to seeking information from authorities. This might result in the applicant being, unintentionally, provided with inaccurate and/or incomplete information that they rely on, instead of institutional information.

Disinformation could also come from deliberate attempts of smugglers or traffickers to mislead the applicants by feeding them fabricated and manipulated information.

You can counter this with frequent repetition and consistency of information from authorised sources, through different communication channels.

2.3.1. Determine which organisations should provide information

Information is primarily given by the authorities responsible for conducting the procedural steps of asylum procedure in your national setting. These can include the:

- determining authority,
- police administrations,
- border and coast guard administrations,
- local citizens' offices.



Information provision can also be delivered by other authorities or organisations that interact with applicants during asylum procedure (Article 21(1) APD (recast) ⁽²⁷⁾). These can include:

- actors running reception centres;
- civil society organisations;
- legal counsellors;
- international organisations, such as UNHCR or the International Organization for Migration;
- European Union agencies;
- legal counsellors;
- actors running detention facilities;
- penitentiary institutions.

The lists above are general. In your national settings, the organisations involved in the asylum procedure may not always be the same. Moreover, it is worth highlighting the valuable contribution to information provision given by the civil society organisations and community volunteers.

It is also good to keep in mind that not all organisations necessarily have the capacity to provide information on a wide variety of topics that may be beyond their specialisation.

2.3.2. Coordinate among organisations that provide information

To ensure the trust of the applicant in the asylum procedure, it is of utmost importance that all authorities, services providers and civil society organisations involved spread a consistent message.

As multiple organisations can be involved in delivering information during asylum procedure, coordination may be needed to ensure the delivery of coherent messages to all applicants and to guarantee that information reaches all applicants. Keep in mind that different coordination may be needed for first-contact situations (see Section [2.2.1\(a\) Providing information in operational environment](#)).

When coordinating information provision, you will need to consider at least content and accessibility.

Coordination of content relates to how coherent messages are systematically delivered to applicants. It can consider, for example, what information materials are used, what the reference material is, who drafts these materials and how information providers can be

⁽²⁷⁾ Article 21(1) APD (recast) 'Member States may provide that the legal and procedural information free of charge referred to in Article 19 is provided by non-governmental organisations, or by professionals from government authorities or from specialised services of the State.'



trained. Coordination may also be needed to keep the information up to date and consistent over time.

Coordination of accessibility refers to how all applicants receive information. It can consider, for example, which organisations are responsible for delivering certain information at each phase of asylum procedure and how an appropriate skillset can be ensured so that the communication style can be adapted to the audience.

Coordination includes, for example, the following mechanisms:

- a centralised system where information is delivered by one organisation;
- standard operating procedures;
- referral mechanisms;
- formal partnerships with authorities;
- framework agreements.



Good practice

In complex operational contexts, information provision can be coordinated through thematic working groups. Each working group would coordinate several organisations involved in information provision activities round the same theme. Daily coordination can be organised through liaison points assigned to each working group.

In complex contexts, such as disembarkation events, referral pathways play a crucial role to properly address protection needs and provide the applicants with a timely response, particularly in terms of service and specialised support. To this end, information and service providers must contribute to keep referral pathways functional and easily accessible.

The following practical arrangements can be used to deliver information to different locations, by one or multiple organisations:

- mobile/roving teams travelling to different locations where applicants arrive or reside;
- information booths installed in locations where a high number of applicants are located;
- hotlines that allow the applicants to reach you in multiple locations – make sure to widely announce the numbers of the hotlines in locations frequented by applicants.

If information is provided by multiple organisations, make sure that the applicant understands the role of the organisation that provides information to them. If the information provider is not the authority responsible for their application, the applicant should at least receive information on how they can contact the responsible authority in case they have questions about their personal application.



3. Information provisions topics

This chapter provides an overview of information provision topics in the context of the asylum procedure.

The topics are based on the legal provisions of the Common European Asylum System, which can be mandatory ('shall clauses') or discretionary ('may clauses'). The relevance of the topics connected with the 'may clauses' will depend on the incorporation of the respective articles into the national legislation and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

The guidance presented in this chapter also includes complementary information points, in cases when they significantly enhance the applicant's understanding of the administrative process.

The tables below provide an overview of the information provision topics considered to be the minimum information that should be provided to applicants for international protection during the asylum procedure. EU+ countries can further complement the below listed information with topics that are relevant to their national set-up. Each table corresponds to one of the core steps of the asylum procedure at first instance, i.e. first contact, registration/lodging, personal interview and notification.

You can click on the hyperlinks in the table to be redirected to the complementary guidance that comes with each information topic.

The guidance for each topic contains:

1. **background information** on what the information provider needs to know about the topic;
2. **an information provision message** on the information to be provided to the applicant⁽²⁸⁾.

The guidance is further complemented with **practical tip boxes** on how to provide this information in practice: what to emphasise, what to be cautious about, how to explain the information and ensure it is understood, etc.

Remember to tailor all information provision topics to your national setting so that they are compatible with your national legislation and established practice.

⁽²⁸⁾ This practical guide does not aim to provide specific formulations that should be directly conveyed to the applicant. Rather it outlines the information provision messages. For concrete examples of formulations that should be directly conveyed to the applicant, see the repository of templates available in the EUAA's, [Let's Speak Asylum portal](#).



Remember also to adapt the level of detail of the information provided to each specific step in the procedure and adapt your communication style to the personal circumstances of the applicant.

FIRST CONTACT

Core concepts and principles of the asylum procedure

[What is international protection?](#)

[What is the asylum procedure?](#)

[Confidentiality](#)

[Principle of the best interests of the child](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Procedural information

[Registration procedure](#)

[Registering dependent adults](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Registering children](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Time frame for the examination](#)

Next steps if the application is channelled to special examination procedure

[Dublin procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights of an applicant for international protection

[Right to remain](#)

[Access to an interpreter](#)

[Legal and procedural information free of charge](#)

[Right to material reception conditions](#)

[Withdraw an application for international protection](#)

Rights considering (unaccompanied) children

[Family tracing](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights considering applicants with special needs

[Adequate support to benefit from their rights and to comply with obligations during the asylum procedure](#)



(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Obligations of an applicant for international protection

[Cooperate with the authorities](#)

[Be subject to personal search](#)

[Have biometrics taken](#)

[Submit the elements to substantiate the application](#)

Possible consequences of not complying with obligations

[Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned](#)

Additional topics

[Right to communicate with UNHCR and other organisations providing legal counselling](#)

REGISTRATION and LODGING

Core concepts and principles of the asylum procedure

[What is international protection?](#)

[What is the asylum procedure?](#)

[Confidentiality](#)

[Principle of the best interests of the child](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Complaints mechanism](#)

Procedural information

[Registration procedure](#)

[Registering dependent adults](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Registering children](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Age assessment](#) (when relevant)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Personal interview](#)



[Time frame for the examination](#)

[Detention](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Next steps if the application is channelled to special examination procedure

[Dublin procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Subsequent application](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Admissibility procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Accelerated procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Border procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights of an applicant for international protection

[Right to remain](#)

[Access to an interpreter](#)

[Legal and procedural information free of charge](#)

[Legal assistance and representation](#)

[Right to material reception conditions](#)

[Withdraw an application for international protection](#)

Rights considering (unaccompanied) children

[Appointment of a representative/guardian](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Family tracing](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights considering applicants with special needs

[Adequate support to benefit from their rights and to comply with obligations during the asylum procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Obligations of an applicant for international protection

[Cooperate with the authorities](#)

[Be subject to personal search](#)

[Have biometrics taken](#)





[Communicate contact address and any changes to the address to the authorities](#)

[Submit the elements to substantiate the application](#)

Possible consequences of not complying with obligations

[Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned](#)

[Assessment of relevant elements in the asylum claim may be affected](#)

[Asylum procedure may be accelerated](#)

[Material reception conditions may be reduced or withdrawn](#)

Additional topics

[Right to communicate with UNHCR and other organisations providing legal counselling](#)

[Family reunification \(under the family reunification directive\)](#)
(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Voluntary return](#)

[Right to work](#)
(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Core concepts and principles of the asylum procedure

[Confidentiality](#)

[Principle of the best interests of the child](#)
(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Procedural information

[Personal interview](#)

[Notification](#)

[Time frame for the examination](#)

Next steps if the application is channelled to special examination procedure

[Subsequent application](#)
(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Admissibility procedure](#)
(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Accelerated procedure](#)





(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Border procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights of an applicant for international protection

[Legal and procedural information free of charge](#)

Rights considering (unaccompanied) children

[Family tracing](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Obligations of an applicant for international protection

[Cooperate with the authorities](#)

[Communicate contact address and any changes to the address to the authorities](#)

[Submit the elements to substantiate the application](#)

Possible consequences of not complying with obligations

[Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned](#)

[Assessment of relevant elements in the asylum claim may be affected](#)

Additional topics

[Family reunification \(under the family reunification directive\)](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

NOTIFICATION

Procedural information

[Notification](#)

[Appeal](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Next steps if the application is channelled to special examination procedure

[Subsequent application](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Admissibility procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Accelerated procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)



[Border procedure](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights of an applicant for international protection[Right to remain](#)[Legal and procedural information free of charge](#)[Legal assistance and representation](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Rights considering (unaccompanied) children[Family tracing](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

Obligations of an applicant for international protection[Cooperate with the authorities](#)[Communicate contact address and any changes to the address to the authorities](#)**Additional topics**[Family reunification \(under the family reunification directive\)](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Voluntary return](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

[Right to work](#)

(only if relevant in the personal circumstances of the applicant)

3.1. Core concepts and principles of the asylum procedure

3.1.1. What is international protection?

(a) Background information

International protection is a substitute for national protection. When a state fails to protect its own citizens against persecution or serious harm or when the state itself is the actor of



persecution, the need for international protection arises. International protection includes refugee status ⁽²⁹⁾ and subsidiary protection ⁽³⁰⁾.

The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees (Refugee Convention) ⁽³¹⁾ as well as Directive 2011/95/EU (QD (recast)) ⁽³²⁾ provide five reasons for persecution, on the basis of which refugee status is recognised. These are race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group and political opinion.

Subsidiary protection is granted when applicants are facing a real risk of serious harm which includes death penalty or execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or serious harm resulting from indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.

The reasons for applying for asylum can be very sensitive and personal. This can be the case, for example, when the applicant is a victim of domestic violence, trafficking in human beings (THB), torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, or if the persecution is linked to the expression of one's gender identity, sexual orientation. In such cases, the applicants might hesitate to share information openly. It is important to be aware of these possible situations and to take this into account when providing information.

⁽²⁹⁾ The definition of 'refugee' is provided in Article 2(d) QD (recast):

"refugee" means a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Article 12 does not apply.

⁽³⁰⁾ The definition of 'person eligible for subsidiary protection' is provided in Article 2(f) QD (recast):

"person eligible for subsidiary protection" means a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in Article 15, and to whom Articles 17(1) and (2) does not apply, and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country.

⁽³¹⁾ UN General Assembly, [Convention relating to the status of refugees](#), *United Nations Treaty Series*, Vol 189, Geneva, 28 July 1951, p. 137; UN General Assembly, [Protocol relating to the status of refugees](#), *United Nations Treaty Series*, Vol 606, 31 January 1967, p. 267 (referred to in EU asylum legislation and by the CJEU as 'the Geneva Convention').

⁽³²⁾ Article 2(d) QD (recast).



**Related EUAA publication**

For further guidance regarding qualification for international protection, consult EASO, [Practical Guide on Qualification for International Protection](#), April 2018.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- Everybody has the right to apply for international protection ⁽³³⁾.
- The need for international protection arises when a person is unable to return to their home country because they would be exposed to a risk of persecution ⁽³⁴⁾ or serious harm ⁽³⁵⁾ and their country would not protect them ⁽³⁶⁾. The risk of persecution or serious harm includes threats to life, freedom or physical integrity.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging:

- the forms of international protection: refugee status and subsidiary protection;
- if relevant in your national context, provide information on national humanitarian protection applied by your national administration.

**Practical tip: explaining relevant terminology to the applicant**

Applicants may be familiar with the terms ‘asylum’ or ‘refugee protection’ but not with the term ‘international protection’. When referring to international protection, it is therefore advisable to explain that international protection is the same as ‘asylum’. Explain furthermore that in a legal sense, international protection could mean either refugee status or subsidiary protection status as laid out in the QD (recast). Once this is explained, it is important to remain consistent in your choice of words.

3.1.2. What is the asylum procedure?

(a) Background information

The asylum procedure is the administrative procedure through which a Member State determines whether an applicant for international protection qualifies for refugee status or subsidiary protection. The determining authority may also decide on the admissibility of the

⁽³³⁾ Refugee Convention and European Union, [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#), 26 October 2012, 2012/C 326/02.

⁽³⁴⁾ Article 9 QD (recast) ‘Acts of persecution’.

⁽³⁵⁾ Article 15 QD (recast) ‘Serious harm’.

⁽³⁶⁾ Article 7 QD (recast) ‘Actors of protection’.



application. For further information on admissibility, see topic [3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure](#).

To ensure respect for the principle of *non-refoulement* ⁽³⁷⁾ and for the right to asylum to be effective, every person who may be in need of international protection must be ensured **access** to the asylum procedure ⁽³⁸⁾.

The access to asylum procedures comprises three different phases: making an application, registering and the lodging. Making an application is the act of expressing, in any way and to any authority, one's wish to apply for international protection. Then, the application is registered. Finally, lodging an application means for the applicant to provide information/documents to complete the file created at the time of registering the application ⁽³⁹⁾. Lodging of the application triggers the start of the first-instance examination. These three procedural steps can be conducted concurrently or separately, depending on the national set-up or the location where the application is made. Even in these cases and even if the 3 steps are done at the same time, all procedural guarantees should be ensured.

The asylum procedure then continues with the examination phase, where the **personal interview** is the core. The personal interview provides an opportunity to, the applicant to explain why they cannot return to their home country, even when they cannot provide documentary evidence of the feared persecution or serious harm ⁽⁴⁰⁾. The applicant can submit additional elements, provided a decision has not yet been taken and notified to the applicant.

After the personal interview, the application is assessed and the **decision** on the application is made.

The decision can be:

- granting of refugee status; or
- granting of subsidiary protection; or
- the application is rejected; or ⁽⁴¹⁾
- the applicant is excluded from international protection ⁽⁴²⁾.

The decision on the application has to be in writing and a negative decision must state the reasons for the decision in fact and in law ⁽⁴³⁾.

⁽³⁷⁾ The principle of *non-refoulement*: the obligation of states to refrain from expelling or returning a person in any manner whatsoever to a situation where they may face persecution and/or torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

⁽³⁸⁾ Article 6 APD (recast) 'Access to the procedure'.

⁽³⁹⁾ Article 6 APD (recast) 'Access to the procedure'.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Article 14 APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Article 10 APD (recast) 'Requirements for the examination of applications'.

⁽⁴²⁾ Article 12 and 17 QD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants' and 'Report and recording of personal interviews'.

⁽⁴³⁾ Article 11 APD (recast) 'Requirements for a decision by the determining authority'.



The applicant is notified of the decision ⁽⁴⁴⁾, which ends the asylum procedure at first instance.

If the applicant is granted protection, the applicant will be supported in integrating into the local community/country ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

In the event of a negative decision, the applicant has the right to an **effective remedy** before a court or tribunal (appeal) ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

In case of final negative decision, the return procedure will be initiated ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Figure 1. Asylum procedure infographic



(b) Information provision messages

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- the asylum procedure is a process which determines whether an applicant will be granted international protection or not ⁽⁴⁸⁾;
- the asylum procedure is free of charge;

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Article 12(1) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants'.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Article 34 QD (recast) 'Special rules on an admissibility interview'.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Article 46 APD (recast) 'The right to an effective remedy'.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ For more information see the [Directive 2008/115/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (OJ L 348, 24.12.2008).

⁽⁴⁸⁾ For applicants channelled through a special examination procedure, see topic [3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure](#).



- Unless any exception apply, inform the applicant about their right to remain following making of an application for international protection ⁽⁴⁹⁾;
- the application first has to be registered and lodged (for more information, see topic [3.2.1. Registration procedure](#)).

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging:

- the authorities will assess if no other EU+ country is responsible for the examination of the application in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III regulation ⁽⁵⁰⁾) (for more information, see topic [3.2.10.I. Dublin procedure](#));
- after the registration process is finalised, the applicant will be invited to a personal interview, where they can explain why they left their country (for more information, see topic [3.2.5. Personal interview](#)).

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- After the personal interview, the authority will assess all available information and decide if the applicant will be granted international protection or not. The result can be granting of refugee status, subsidiary protection or the application is rejected or the applicant is excluded from international protection.
- The applicant will be notified of the decision and if they disagree, they can appeal against the decision (for more information and additional information provision messages, see topics [3.2.6. Notification](#) and [3.2.7. Appeal](#)).



Practical tip: introducing information gradually, starting with an overview of the procedure

At the early stage of the asylum procedure, the applicant should only be provided with a basic overview of the asylum procedure in order to be aware of what steps it entails. The applicant should not be overwhelmed with detailed information during the first contact. More elaborated information will be provided at each stage of the asylum procedure. For example, you may adapt the information on the procedural steps and explain at which step the applicant currently is, which steps have been accomplished and what is next. Remember to tailor the information to the applicant's needs.

It is advisable to support the information provision with a visual aid explaining the asylum procedure.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Article 9(1) APD (recast) 'Right to remain in the Member State pending the examination of the application'.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ [Regulation \(EU\) No 604/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast) (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013).





3.1.3. Confidentiality

(a) Background information

The principle of confidentiality underlies the whole asylum procedure. Many applicants come from countries in which there is no presumption that a government will guard the privacy of its citizens. Therefore, it may be difficult for some to understand the concept of ‘confidentiality’⁽⁵¹⁾.

It is important that the applicant understands that confidentiality is guaranteed by the authorities: information provided by the applicant is not disclosed to any party beyond the competent authorities without the permission of the applicant⁽⁵²⁾. In practice, this means that data provided by the applicant is not shared with anyone who does not have the right to access it, that the case management system is ruled by appropriate data protection rules and that the facilities where the applicant is heard ensure adequate privacy.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making), registration/lodging and personal interview.

- Authorities treat all data given by the applicant with the utmost confidentiality. This means that data is not shared outside the authority without the consent of the applicant.
- Data given by the applicant is under no circumstances shared with authorities in the country of origin.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The principle of confidentiality also applies to how data is managed and stored.
- Data provided by the applicant can be shared with other authorities under certain circumstances regulated by your national legislation. If relevant, certain data can additionally be shared with certain services⁽⁵³⁾ that provide assistance to the applicant. Explain to the applicant what is shared, with whom, why, and how (e.g. if the applicant’s consent is needed) in line with your national practice.
- Data can be shared with the applicant’s legal representative, if applicable.

⁽⁵¹⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#), December 2014, 2.4.4. ‘Information on confidentiality’.

⁽⁵²⁾ Article 48 APD (recast) ‘Confidentiality’: ‘Member States shall ensure that authorities implementing this Directive are bound by the confidentiality principle as defined in national law, in relation to any information they obtain in the course of their work.’

⁽⁵³⁾ For example, Article 29(1)(b) APD (recast) implies that Member States shall allow UNHCR ‘to have access to information on individual applications for international protection, on the course of the procedure and on the decisions taken, provided that the applicant agrees thereto’.





- If the applicant applied for asylum together with their family members, inform the applicant about the national practice on the use of the information in the family members' applications. This concerns all family members, including accompanied children. Generally, the examination will take into account all the reasons for applying for asylum stated by the applicant and their family members. It is important to encourage the applicant to indicate to the asylum authorities if there are any reasons for not sharing some information with their family members.



Practical tip: providing information on confidentiality

- If there is a camera in the room, explain to the applicant that the camera is in the room only for security reasons. Explain that the security personnel can only see through the camera but they cannot hear anything that is being said.
- Explain that the transcript (or recording, if relevant) of the interview is being taken for the purpose of the decision-making. Similarly, confidentiality is ensured by specific arrangements during the interview, such as separated interview rooms.
- When interviewing applicants who belong to certain vulnerable groups, e.g. individuals who might have been subjected to THB, gender-related persecution or other forms of domestic violence, it could be advisable to repeat information regarding confidentiality during the course of the interview. This would also be important when there are indicators of previous abuse towards an applicant from relatives who are also in the process of applying for international protection or otherwise also present in the member state.
- As the interview is conducted in the presence of an interpreter, explain that the interpreter is also bound by confidentiality.
- The interviewer should fully ensure that the applicant has understood the information about confidentiality by asking them. Provide the applicant with the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions about the information provided.

3.1.4. Principle of the best interests of the child

(a) Background information

If the applicant for international protection is a child, their best interests are a primary consideration⁽⁵⁴⁾. The principle of the best interests of the child means that in every step of the asylum procedure, the specific circumstances of each child are to be taken into consideration. These include the child's protection and safety, well-being and social development, identity and background, family situation and family unity and the child's views

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Article 25(6) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for unaccompanied minors'.



according to their age and maturity. Specific procedural safeguards and guarantees must be in place to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is applied ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

This means that a child applicant needs to receive specific information related to the special guarantees that are provided in application of the principle of best interests of the child.



Related EUAA publication

For more information see the EASO, [Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures](#), 2019.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- In Europe, everyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child and thus is entitled to certain protection and safeguards. If the applicant is under the age of 18, or they are not sure if they are older, they should inform the officials in order to receive appropriate support.
- Any unaccompanied person should inform the authorities if they are younger than 18 (or if they are not sure if they are). Unaccompanied children are entitled to special protection and assistance. For more information, see topic [3.4. Rights concerning \(unaccompanied\) children](#).
- Offer guidance on how child applicants can express their views regarding their application and how they can report any incidents of harm, abuse, or discrimination.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The child's best interests and well-being are the primary considerations during all steps of the asylum procedure in order to ensure their safety, welfare, social development, etc.
- The child has a right to express their views and opinions (concerns, fears, wishes). These will be taken into consideration if they are in their best interests and well-being.
- When considering the child's views and opinions, their age and maturity will be taken into account.
- The child can share views and opinions with the asylum administration, either through their parents or guardian or directly, according to your national practice.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Recital 18 QD (recast).



- For unaccompanied child minors, depending on your national laws and policies, the child may be obliged to participate in a personal interview with their legal representative. The interview is the moment when the child can share their views and opinion.
- For accompanied children, depending on national practice, they may have the possibility to have their own personal interview.

Explain these additional messages during the personal interview.

- If the interviewer has reservations about the age of the applicant (e.g. reservations about whether the applicant is above 18), information should be provided to the applicant about the possibility to declare that they are under 18.
- The risks related to THB that the applicant could be exposed to and the warning signs of THB. By raising awareness about this issue during the interview process, applicants can be better equipped to protect themselves and seek help if they encounter any suspicious behaviour or situations.

3.1.5. Complaints mechanism

(a) Background information

Complaints mechanisms ensure that the fundamental rights of applicants are respected. The applicant can submit a complaint if they are negatively affected by the actions of the EU, national administrations or a person representing the administration. This is the case especially when an institution does not act in accordance with the law or the principles of good administration or violates their fundamental rights. Depending on the character of the violation and the administration concerned, the applicant can submit a complaint, for example, to a regional or national ombudsman ⁽⁵⁶⁾. If the national administration is supported by an EU agency, such as the EUAA ⁽⁵⁷⁾ or Frontex ⁽⁵⁸⁾ and the misbehaviour concerns support teams sent by these agencies, specific complaint mechanisms are foreseen. For more information regarding your national complaints mechanism, follow your national law and practice.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- Applicants can raise a complaint in different situations, for example, if:
 - their fundamental rights have been violated;
 - a state authority treated them inappropriately or unethically.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ European Ombudsman, [Members of the European Network of Ombudsmen](#).

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Article 51 of the [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2303](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 (OJ L 468, 30.12.2021).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Frontex, '[Complaints mechanism](#)'.



- How to submit the complaint, to whom and in which format and language, including relevant addresses or links.
- Submitting the complaint is free of charge.
- What information is necessary to provide in the complaint (e.g. name, contact details, case file number). It is not possible to follow up on anonymous complaints.
- Reassure the applicant that submitting a complaint will not negatively influence the outcome of their application.
- A complaint is not an appeal against the decision in the application for international protection. A complaint may be raised before a decision on the application has been made.
- If applicable, provide information about deadlines.



Practical tip: providing information on the complaints mechanism

- **Reassure the applicant that it is safe to make non-anonymous complaints**

Applicants might hesitate to provide personal and contact details in the complaint. You may explain that the information is needed in order to be able to inform them about the results, in case additional information is needed, etc.

- **Explain the difference between a complaint and an appeal**

To avoid any confusion, it is useful to explain that complaint procedures are distinct from appeal procedures. The complaint procedure should not be used to request a review of the decision.

3.2. Procedures to be followed

3.2.1. Registration procedure

(a) Background information

After an applicant has expressed the intention to apply for international protection, the application is registered. Registration prepares the grounds for the examination of the application and ensures that applications are effectively channelled to the correct examination procedure.



The APD (recast) specifies three steps of the access to procedure ⁽⁵⁹⁾: the **making**, the **registration** and the **lodging** (for more details see Section [2.1.1 Identify opportunities to provide information](#)).

Depending on the national set-up, the registration and lodging of an application may be conducted at the same time or separately by different authorities.

Full registration (the making, registration and lodging) is deemed to be complete when the following steps have been completed.

- The applicant's data is recorded in national databases.
- The form or official report filed by the applicant has been received by the national authorities.
- Biometrics are collected. The fingerprints of every applicant for international protection of at least 14 years of age are taken promptly and must be transmitted to the central system of Eurodac ⁽⁶⁰⁾ as soon as possible and no later than 72 hours after the lodging of the application for international protection ⁽⁶¹⁾. Depending on the national legislation, a photograph may be taken. A security check might also take place ⁽⁶²⁾.

Furthermore, within three days of the lodging, applicants should receive a **document certifying their status as an applicant for international protection** ⁽⁶³⁾. This document proves that the person is allowed to legally stay in the territory of the state while their application is being examined.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- once a person expresses the wish to apply for international protection, you need to provide practical information on how the application can be registered, including the:

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Article 6 APD (recast) 'Access to the procedure'.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ [Regulation \(EU\) No 603/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of Eurodac for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (recast) (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013).

⁽⁶¹⁾ Article 9(1) Eurodac regulation 'Collection, transmission and comparison of fingerprints'.

⁽⁶²⁾ Article 13(2) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'

⁽⁶³⁾ Article 6(1) RCD (recast) 'Documentation': 'Member States shall ensure that, within three days of the lodging of an application for international protection, the applicant is provided with a document issued in his or her own name certifying his or her status as an applicant or testifying that he or she is allowed to stay on the territory of the Member State while his or her application is pending or being examined. If the holder is not free to move within all or a part of the territory of the Member State, the document shall also certify that fact.'





- location where the registration process will take place and how the applicant can get there;
- time of the appointment and opening hours of the competent office;
- what can be expected from the registration process (submitting a form, short interview, etc.);
- which documents to bring and who should accompany the applicant if there are family members or dependants;
- biometrics will be taken (for more information on the applicant's obligation, see topic [3.6.3. Have biometrics taken](#));
- security checks may be carried out (for more information on the applicant's obligations, see topic [3.6.2. Be subject to personal search for security reasons](#)).
- medical checks may be carried out.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The applicant will receive documentation certifying their status as an applicant for international protection. This is a personal document. It cannot be shared or given to anyone else. Provide further information in line with your national practice, for example:
 - how the document will be delivered;
 - the duration of the certificate's validity and the procedure to renew it;
 - the consequences of the applicant failing to renew the certificate;
 - which steps the applicant needs to follow if the certificate is damaged or lost;
 - the obligation, depending on national legislation, to carry the document with them at all times;
 - the applicant should check if the personal data on the document is correct;
 - how to inform the authorities if the data on the document is not correct.

Explain this additional information to the applicant if registration and lodging are conducted separately.

- If the registration and the lodging phases occur at different times and/or in different places, the applicant needs to understand that the process will not be concluded after the registration. Clear information needs to be provided to ensure the applicant can in fact lodge the application as soon as possible.
- Practical information about the appointment for the lodging of the application, including where and when the application should be lodged. This can be complemented with information on whether it is possible to change the appointment and how to do so.





Practical tip: providing information on the registration procedure

- **Ask test questions to make sure that the applicant has understood the message**

For example, you can ask the applicant to repeat where and when they need to report for the registration and/or the lodging of the application.

- **Collect all relevant contact information of the applicant**

The applicant's contact information (e.g. address of the accommodation and telephone number) can be used to reach out to the applicant when needed to complete the next step of the procedure in a timely manner.

- **Call out for persons under 18 when providing information to a larger group of applicants after arrival**

During group information provision sessions, it is advised to establish that any person younger than 18 years of age is considered to be a child. For this reason, persons below 18 years without parents or a guardian present should inform the authorities to ensure that they receive appropriate support.

3.2.2. Registering dependent adults

(a) Background information

Each applicant has the right to make an application for international protection on their own behalf.

If an application is made through the applicant's relative on their behalf, the dependent adult should be informed, in private, of their right to make a separate application. This is to ensure that every (dependent) adult has an effective opportunity to make a separate application for international protection.

If the application is made through the applicant's relative, the dependent adult should be informed, in private, of the procedural consequences of not lodging an application on their own. Such consequences may include that one single decision will be issued. The dependent adult's consent should be requested at the time the application is lodged or, at the latest, when the personal interview with the dependent adult is conducted ⁽⁶⁴⁾.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Article 7(2) APD (recast) 'Applications made on behalf of dependants or minors'.



(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- While it may be possible (depending on national legislation) that an applicant lodges an application on behalf of dependant adults, any adult applicant can always apply for international protection on their own behalf.
- It is not an obligation to lodge one single application for the whole family. Dependent adults have the right to lodge a separate application for international protection.
- Inform the applicant on how to lodge a separate application.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging

- If an applicant applies on behalf of dependant adults, the dependent adults have to consent to the lodging of the application on their behalf. Information on how to give consent should be provided.
- Regardless of whether an applicant is applying on their own or someone is applying on their behalf, the applicant will be given the opportunity for a personal interview ⁽⁶⁵⁾. This should normally take place without the presence of family members so that confidentiality is ensured ⁽⁶⁶⁾.
- If the application is lodged on behalf of dependent adults, a decision that considers why the family members fear returning to their home country will normally be provided.
- The examination will take into account all the reasons for applying for international protection stated by the applicant and their family members. The applicant should indicate to the asylum authorities if there are good reasons for not sharing the reasons for applying for international protection with their family members.



Practical tips on providing information to dependent applicants individually

- Make appropriate arrangements in order to be able to provide information to the dependent applicant individually and in a place that ensures sufficient privacy.
- Pay particular attention to actively identifying applicants to whom this information is relevant, such as women and elderly people. In such cases, make sure that the (perceived) dependent applicant has an opportunity to take an independent decision without anybody intervening or speaking on their behalf.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Article 14(1) APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Articles 15(1) and (2) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.



3.2.3. Registering children

(a) Background information

If the applicant for international protection is a child, the application for international protection can be lodged in at least one of the following ways:

- on their own behalf (if they have the legal capacity);
- through their parents;
- through an adult family member or an adult responsible for them, if this is in accordance with the national law or practice;
- through a legal guardian ⁽⁶⁷⁾.

National law will further specify the conditions for lodging an application in each of the ways listed above ⁽⁶⁸⁾. At the same time, the best interests of the child should be considered when examining the possibility of making the application on their own behalf or through parents ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain the following messages to the child applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

In the case of an accompanied child, explain the following messages.

- Children can apply for international protection through their parents, an adult family member, an adult responsible for them or on their own behalf, if the child has the legal capacity to do so. Explain any further conditions as stipulated in the national legislation.

In the case of an unaccompanied child, explain the following messages.

- If a person under 18 years old has arrived alone, without a parent or another responsible adult, they are considered an unaccompanied child ⁽⁷⁰⁾.
- The application can be lodged on their own behalf if the child has the legal capacity to do so or through a legal guardian. For more information, see topic [3.4.1. Appointment of a representative/guardian](#).

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Article 7(3) APD (recast) 'Applications made on behalf of dependants or minors'.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Article 7(5) APD (recast) 'Applications made on behalf of dependants or minors'.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Recital 33 APD (recast).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Article 2(l) QD (recast) 'Definitions'.



3.2.4. Age assessment

(a) Background information

If, after considering available information, there are substantial doubts about the age of an unaccompanied child, the authorities may conduct an age assessment to determine whether the person is an adult or a child. Age assessment can include various methods of examination. The least intrusive method should always be used. If less intrusive methods are not reasonably indicative, the age assessment can include a medical examination. In this case, the applicant and/or their guardian are required to provide consent to the examination ⁽⁷⁾.



Related EUAA publication

For more information see the EASO, [Practical Guide on Age Assessment](#), second edition, 2018.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The applicant might be asked to undergo an age assessment to determine their age, if there are doubts about the applicant's age.
- Age assessment does not determine if an application should be accepted or rejected; it helps to determine which guarantees an administration has to put in place.
- The age assessment is performed by qualified professionals in respect of the dignity of the applicant. The procedure does not cause harm or pain.

If an age assessment is conducted, explain these additional messages to the applicant.

- Information about the method of examination and the procedure.
- Practical information related to the appointment (address, time).
- For age assessment involving medical examination, inform the applicant and/or the guardian of the requirement to provide consent to the examination and the possible consequences of a refusal, which will not in any case lead by itself to a rejection decision.
- The possible consequences that could occur if the applicant is considered an adult as a result of the age assessment procedure. The guarantees for unaccompanied children will be lifted and special procedure might be applied. See Section [3.2.10 Next steps if the application is channelled to special examination procedure](#).

⁽⁷⁾ Article 25(5) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for unaccompanied minors'.



3.2.5. Personal interview

(a) Background information

The personal interview is the next procedural step after completing the registration of the application. The Member State selects an interpreter to ensure appropriate communication during the interview ⁽⁷²⁾. Before the interview, the applicant can express specific requests regarding the interview, including the wish to be interviewed by a case officer and/or an interpreter of the same sex ⁽⁷³⁾. The applicant can also express a request for certain third parties (legal representatives, social workers, doctors, guardian, a trusted support person, etc.) to attend the personal interview, under the conditions laid out in your national practice ⁽⁷⁴⁾.

In exceptional circumstances, national authorities can decide not to conduct a personal interview. This can occur when the available information is considered enough for the authority to grant refugee status to the applicant. It can also occur when the authority deems that the applicant cannot attend the interview due to sustained medical reasons. If in doubt, a doctor is to be consulted to establish whether the applicant is expected to recover or whether that medical condition is of an enduring nature ⁽⁷⁵⁾.

During the personal interview, the applicant is given an opportunity to present all elements needed to substantiate their application ⁽⁷⁶⁾. As the interview provides the applicant with an important opportunity to present the relevant elements to substantiate the application, the case officer has an important role during the interview in enabling the applicant to fulfil this duty and, consequently, also fulfilling the duty of the Member state in cooperating with the applicant in order to assess the relevant elements ⁽⁷⁷⁾. Providing information during the interview regarding the rights and obligations of the applicant, as well as the format and the aim of the interview, is therefore also important for the applicant in understanding the asylum process ⁽⁷⁸⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

⁽⁷²⁾ Article 15(3), point (c) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'; For more information, see topic [3.3.2. Access to an interpreter](#).

⁽⁷³⁾ Article 15(3), points (b) and (c) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Article 15(4) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Article 14(2) APD (recast) 'Personal interview'.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Article 16 APD (recast) 'Content of a personal interview' and Article 4(2) QD (recast) 'Assessment of facts and circumstances':

The elements ... consist of the applicant's statements and all the documentation at the applicant's disposal regarding the applicant's age, background, including that of relevant relatives, identity, nationality(ies), country(ies) and place(s) of previous residence, previous asylum applications, travel routes, travel documents and the reasons for applying for international protection.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Article 16 APD (recast) 'Content of a personal interview'; EASO, [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#), December 2014, Section 2.4. Provide information to the applicant.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#), December 2014, Section 2.4. Provide information to the applicant.





- Upon completion of the registration procedures, the applicant will receive an invitation for a personal interview. It should be specified how the applicant will be informed in accordance with national practice. If the interview is omitted, information should be provided to the applicants regarding the reasons for the omission.
- What a personal interview is and that during the personal interview, the applicant will have an opportunity to explain in detail the reason(s) they left their country and why they are not able to return.
- The interview will be in the language preferred by the applicant, or otherwise in a language that the applicant can understand and in which they are able to communicate clearly. An interpreter will be available during the interview.
- The interview is organised in conditions ensuring confidentiality and without the presence of family members, unless their presence is considered necessary ⁽⁷⁹⁾. If relevant, inform the applicant whether they will need to arrange childcare for their children or whether it will be provided during the interview in line with national practice.
- The possibility of having a legal adviser present during the interview and the role of the legal adviser ⁽⁸⁰⁾.
- The possibility to ask for special arrangements, including the wish to be interviewed by a case officer and/or an interpreter of the same sex.
- The consequences of not appearing at the interview without providing a valid explanation to the authority, in line with the national law or practice ⁽⁸¹⁾.
- If the information is available, inform the applicant about the time and place of the personal interview. Other practical information can be included, for example, how to get there and the approximate length of the interview. If it is not possible to provide a date or an exact time frame in your national set-up, provide at least an approximate time frame in order to allow the applicant to prepare for the interview and collect relevant documents.
- The applicant should also bring and present the relevant documents and/or any other evidence that can substantiate the application, including documents relating to the applicant's identity and background ⁽⁸²⁾. For more information, see topic [3.6.5. Submit the elements to substantiate the application](#).
- Those in need of special procedural guarantees will be ensured adequate support ⁽⁸³⁾. Encourage the applicant to declare additional special needs that are not yet known by the authority. Depending on the applicant's special need(s), a broad range of support

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Article 15(2) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'; Article 15(1) APD (recast): 'A personal interview shall normally take place without the presence of family members unless the determining authority considers it necessary for an appropriate examination to have other family members present.'

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Article 23(3) APD (recast) 'Scope of legal assistance and representation'. For more information, see topic [3.3.4. Legal assistance and representation](#).

⁽⁸¹⁾ For more information, see topic [3.7.1. Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned](#).

⁽⁸²⁾ Article 4 QD (recast) 'Assessment of facts and circumstances'.

⁽⁸³⁾ Article 24 APD (recast) 'Applicants in need of special procedural guarantees'.





measures may be taken, for example, special medical assistance, special arrangements for the interview and time extension.

Explain these messages to applicants during the personal interview.

- The aim of the interview to the applicant. The personal interview is the opportunity for the applicant to explain to the authority in detail the reasons why they left their country of origin and why they are not able to return there. Any type of violence, harm or threats, physical or psychological, or restrictions of their freedoms and rights, by authorities or certain groups in the society or by individuals or even family members, may be relevant for their application.
- The applicant is obliged to cooperate and tell the truth during the personal interview ⁽⁸⁴⁾.
- Provide information about confidentiality (for more details, see topic [3.1.3. Confidentiality](#)).
- Present the individuals present at the interview and inform about their roles as well as sharing information regarding potential rules concerning the presence of third parties at the interview, if relevant ⁽⁸⁵⁾.
- Inform and encourage the applicant to indicate any communication/comprehension difficulties during the interview. This aims to limit the potential effects of factors of distortion ⁽⁸⁶⁾.
- Inform the applicant, how the interview will be recorded (e.g. verbatim transcript, audio recording, interview report) and about the possibility to make comments and/or provide clarification orally or in writing with regard to any mistranslations or misconceptions appearing in the interview report/transcript.
- Provide other practical information, such as information about the possibility to ask for a break ⁽⁸⁷⁾.
- At the end of the interview, depending on the material acquired, detailed information about the next steps of the procedure. This can include, for example, the time needed for the authority to assess the applicants' statements and any other available information and issue a decision, and how the decision will be delivered. The applicant will receive a decision in writing. In the event of a negative decision, the reasons will be stated and the way to challenge that decision will be explained (including information concerning the suspensive effects) ⁽⁸⁸⁾.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Article 13(1) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Article 15(4) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ EUAA, [Practical Guide on Evidence and Risk Assessment](#), January 2024.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Article 15(3) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ Article 11 APD (recast) 'Requirements for a decision by the determining authority'. For more information, see topics [3.2.6. Notification](#), [3.2.8. Time frame for the examination](#).



- If, once the interview is over, the applicant remembers any information that they may consider important or they have access to any documentation that is crucial for the resolution of the case, they can provide it to be considered.



Practical tip: information provision on the personal interview

- At the registration/lodging stage, it is advisable to share only basic information and focus on topics that are relevant at that stage, for example, how the applicant can prepare for the interview. At the same time, avoid providing details that are not relevant at this stage and will be elaborated once the interview appointment takes place, such as detailed information about the step after the personal interview is completed.
- When providing information during the interview, you should also use language adapted to the individual and contextual circumstances of the applicant (e.g. age, gender, education, social background, etc.). This is important in order to reach a mutual understanding of the interview situation and to safeguard the applicant's legal rights ⁽⁸⁹⁾.
- During an interview, it is advisable to inform the applicant about the time frame of the interview.
- The case officer should explain why providing all relevant and correct information is beneficial in order to reach a sound decision. When addressing the obligation to tell the truth, the case officer could stress the fact that this is explained to everybody. In doing so, the case officer avoids being perceived as insinuating that the applicant intends to lie. It is also important to signal that it is only if the applicant knowingly provides false information that it may have negative consequences.
- The case officer should also instruct the applicant that if they do not know the answer to a question, they should simply say this and not try to provide an answer by guessing ⁽⁹⁰⁾.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#), December 2014, Section 2.3.4. Encourage the applicant to indicate any communication/comprehension difficulties.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#), December 2014, pp. 8-9.



Good practice

Because of the time lap between an invitation and conducting an interview, sending a reminder of the appointment (e.g. via SMS, email) before the interview helps the applicant to remember it. It is preferable to send the reminder several days before the interview, so that the applicant has time to do all necessary travel arrangements.

3.2.6. Notification

(a) Background information

The notification is the next procedural step after the personal interview. It is the transmission of the asylum decision. The applicant must be notified of the decision in reasonable time ⁽⁹¹⁾. The decision is notified to the applicant, or to their legal representative or appointed counsellor or representative (guardian). The applicant must be notified of the decision in a language that they understand or are reasonably supposed to understand unless they are represented by a legal representative ⁽⁹²⁾.

The date of the decision notification should be clear, notably because the time limit to lodge an appeal starts to run from the date of the notification. The notification ends the asylum procedure at 1st instance.

For more information regarding the types of decision and decision-making, see topics [3.1.2. What is the asylum procedure?](#) and [3.1.1. What is international protection?](#)

(b) Information provision message

Explain this messages to the applicant during the personal interview:

- the means of notifying the applicant regarding the decision (i.e. by post, in person, on a digital account).

Explain these messages to the applicant during the notification stage.

- The outcome of the decision (positive or negative) and, in the event of a negative decision, explain the reasons.
- The possibility to appeal and the deadline to appeal and from which day it is counted ⁽⁹³⁾.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Article 12(1), point (e) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants'.

⁽⁹²⁾ Article 12(1), point (f) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants'.

⁽⁹³⁾ For more information about the appeal procedure, see topic [3.2.7. Appeal](#).





- If in accordance with the national practice, how the passport and other original documents will be returned to the applicant.
- The next steps of the procedure, which includes the below points concerning either a positive or negative decision.
 - Positive decision. Provide information or refer the beneficiary where to receive information about procedure for the resident permit, information concerning the rights and obligations attached to the individual's protection status, such as, if relevant, right to social welfare, access to education, access to employment, family reunification. Information on other consequences related to the protection status.
 - Negative decision. Provide information about the below.
 - › Appeal procedure, especially concerning deadlines and the consequences of missing deadline.
 - › The possibility to benefit from legal aid.
 - › Explanations about the right to stay in the country and the impact of the decision in this regard, and, if relevant, the effects that the negative decision has on the daily allowance and other economic benefits as well as the access to accommodation provided.
 - › Information about voluntary return and available assistance.
 - › That the procedure is not yet terminated and therefore, the fulfillment of obligations must continue. If there are any changes in the contact details, the authorities should be informed.
 - For more information, see topics [3.2.7. Appeal](#), [3.3.4. Legal assistance and representation](#), [3.3.1. Right to remain](#), [3.3.6. Right to material reception conditions](#), [3.8.2. Voluntary return](#).





Good practice

In some Member States, in the event of a positive decision, where international protection was granted for the reason of membership of a particular social group due to the applicant being at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation/cutting, the applicant/parent(s) are informed that female genital mutilation/cutting is illegal. At the same time, the applicant/parent(s) are informed that a medical report must be sent after a certain period and then repeatedly after that to prove that the applicant and/or their children (if applicable) have not since undergone female genital mutilation/cutting.

3.2.7. Appeal

(a) Background information

The applicant has the right to an effective remedy before a court of tribunal against a decision taken on their application for international protection. This includes a decision that considers an application to be unfounded in relation to refugee status and/or subsidiary protection status ⁽⁹⁴⁾.

Although it is important that an applicant is aware at an early stage of the right to appeal a possible forthcoming negative decision, providing the applicant with detailed information about this right is evidently important at the notification stage. For more information about legal assistance, time frames and the right to remain, see Sections 3.3.4 [Legal assistance and representation](#), 3.2.8. [Time frame for the examination](#) and 3.3.1. [Right to remain](#).

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the notification stage.

- The right to appeal a decision.
- How to appeal a decision in the Member State. This would include information about the time limit for submitting the appeal, the possible requirements regarding the format of the appeal and where the appeal should be submitted.
- The right to legal assistance and representation in the appeal stage, if not already assigned to the applicant ⁽⁹⁵⁾.
- The right to remain in the territory of the Member State during the appeal process ⁽⁹⁶⁾, unless exceptions apply ⁽⁹⁷⁾

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Article 46(1) APD (recast) 'The right to an effective remedy'.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Article 20 APD (recast) 'Free legal assistance and representation in appeals procedures'

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Article 46(5) APD (recast) 'The right to an effective remedy'.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Article 46(6) APD (recast) 'The right to an effective remedy'.



- If relevant in the applicant's case, the return process as well as the applicant's rights and obligations regarding the return ⁽⁹⁸⁾.
- Basic information about the appeal process, for example, about which court or tribunal responsible, any contact information relevant at this instance and information about the general proceedings at the court or tribunal as well as relevant actors in this process.



Practical tip: the explanation of the appeal concept

Since the term appeal is legal and might not be easy to understand, you can provide simple explanations to the applicant. For example, appeal means that if you receive a decision and you do not agree with it and you believe that a mistake was made, you can ask a court/judge to review your case (look at your case again) and provide a final decision.

3.2.8. Time frame for the examination

(a) Background information

The general principle is that the examination procedure at first instance (i.e. not including the appeal) is concluded within **six months** of the lodging of the application ⁽⁹⁹⁾. Under certain circumstances, explained in the following section, the time limit can be extended.

The time limit of 6 months can be extended by a further 9 months, i.e. reaching a total time limit of 15 months, in the following cases:

- when complex issues of fact and/or law are involved;
- when there are a large number of applications lodged in a Member State simultaneously;
- if the delay can be clearly attributed to the applicant's failure to cooperate with the authority.

The time limit of 15 months may exceptionally be extended by a further 3 months, i.e. reaching a total time limit of 18 months, where necessary and duly justified, in order to ensure the adequate and complete examination of an application.

Finally, due to an uncertain but temporary situation in the country of origin, concluding the examination procedure may be postponed where the determining authority cannot decide within the time limits stated above.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ For more information see [Directive 2008/115/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Article 6(4) APD (recast) 'Access to the procedure': '... an application for international protection shall be deemed to have been lodged once a form submitted by the applicant or, where provided for in national law, an official report, has reached the competent authorities of the Member State concerned.'



However, in any event, even if the conclusion of the examination is postponed, the examination must be concluded within **21 months** after the lodging of the application ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

A different time frame usually applies for accelerated procedures or other special procedures. For more information, see topic [3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure](#).

In specific cases, the examination of an application may be prioritised and the decision is issued within a shorter time limit ⁽¹⁰¹⁾. These include situations when the application is likely to be well-founded and the asylum status or subsidiary protection will be granted and/or where the applicant is vulnerable and in need of special procedural guarantees, particularly unaccompanied children.

(b) Information provision message

Explain this message to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- the examination procedure can last several months (approximate time frame should be indicated in accordance with national practice).

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and the personal interview.

- The examination procedure should normally be concluded as soon as possible and the applicant should receive a decision within six months after the application was lodged. This does not include the appeal procedure.
- The time frame to issue a decision may be extended in certain circumstances. However, the total time frame will not exceed 21 months. If the examination procedure is extended, the applicant has to be informed within a reasonable time of the reasons for the postponement. There can be different reasons for extending the time limits which can include external factors, for example, in situations where large numbers of applications are made simultaneously. Delays could also be directly linked to the assessment of an application if it is particularly complex.
- Should the time frame to issue a decision be extended (i.e. beyond six months), the authorities will notify the applicant ⁽¹⁰²⁾. Inform the applicant about how they will be notified in line with national practice.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Articles 31(3), (4), (5) and (9) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Article 31(7) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Article 31(6), point (a) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.



- The applicant can enquire about the reasons for this delay and ask for an estimate of when the decision will be made ⁽¹⁰³⁾. Provide additional information on the procedure to enquire about this information based on your national practice.
- If the reason for postponing is due to an uncertain situation in the country of origin which is expected to be temporary, inform the applicant of the reasons for the postponement ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.
- The procedures and time limits might be different if the application is assessed within a special procedure, such as the accelerated procedure, border procedure or admissibility procedure. The application may also be prioritised. In such cases, applicants are provided with specific information by the national asylum authorities.



Practical tip: providing additional explanation and reassurance regarding the length of the procedure

The waiting time to receive a decision might vary, depending on a broad range of factors. An applicant who has arrived later might receive a decision earlier than those that arrived before them. You should reassure the applicant that this is not a reason to worry, every application is different and is examined individually. In specific cases, when it is very likely that the assessment will take a long time, information concerning the time frame for the decision notification could be provided during the personal interview.

It is also recommended to stress that the applicant should not leave the country, as leaving the country and returning will have consequences. For more information, see topic [3.7. The possible consequences of not complying with obligations and not cooperating with the authorities](#).

3.2.9. Detention

(a) Background information

Detention is the confinement of an applicant to a particular place, where they are deprived of their freedom of movement ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

An applicant may be detained for the following purposes, when these cannot be obtained without detention (including when there is a risk of absconding) ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾:

- determining or verifying the identity or nationality of an applicant;
- determining elements of the application when these cannot be obtained without detention, in particular when there is a risk that the applicant will abscond;

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Article 31(6), point (b) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Article 31(4), point (b) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Article 2(h) RCD (recast) 'Definitions'.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Article 8(2) and Articles 8(3) RCD (recast) 'Detention'.



- deciding on the applicant's right to enter the territory;
- preparing or executing a return by virtue of Directive 2008/115/EC ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾;
- for national security or public order;
- in accordance with Article 28 Dublin III regulation ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

An applicant can only be detained for as long as the grounds are applicable and for as short a period as possible ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. For complete information about detention grounds and time limits refer to your national law.

Detention is a measure of last resort in the absence of effective but less coercive alternatives. It is applied based on an individual assessment. At the same time, certain rules and conditions need to be fulfilled. These rules are regulated in Articles 9 and 10 RCD (recast) and are referred to below.

- The applicant needs to be informed in writing of the reasons for their detention and remedies.
- The lawfulness of the detention should be reviewed at regular intervals or on the applicant's request.
- The applicant must have access to free legal assistance and representation for the judicial review of the detention order.
- Applicants should be detained, as a rule, in specialised detention facilities, separated from ordinary prisoners.
- Applicants should have access to open air spaces.
- Access should be given to family members and advisers or counsellors, in conditions that respect privacy (with limited exceptions).
- Applicants must be informed of their rights, obligations and the rules in the detention facility, in a language they understand or are reasonably supposed to understand.
- For specific groups, such as vulnerable persons, (unaccompanied) children and families, certain rules and detention conditions apply, in accordance with Article 11 RCD (recast).

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during registration/lodging.

- Reason(s) for the applicant's detention and the maximum duration envisaged by national law (information to be provided by the authorities in writing).

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ [Directive 2008/115/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (OJ L 348, 24.12.2008).

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Article 8(3) RCD (recast) 'Detention'.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Article 9(1) RCD (recast) 'Guarantees for detained applicants'.



- How to challenge the detention order and how to request legal assistance and representation that is free of charge (information to be provided by the authorities in writing).
- Contacts of organisations or groups of persons that provide legal assistance.
- The possibility to communicate with family.
- The possibility to communicate with a UNHCR representative and how to contact a UNHCR representative.
- Applicant's rights and obligations in the detention facility.
- The same guarantees and standards apply for the examination of the application as for any applicant who is not detained.

**Practical tip: clearly explaining that detention is not prison**

Explain the entire notion of detention and the difference between prison and detention as this might be a new concept for some applicants and might trigger traumatic memories.

3.2.10. Next steps if the application is channelled through a special examination procedure

I. Dublin procedure

(a) Background information

As soon as a non-EU-country national or stateless person lodges an application for international protection in an EU+ country, that country has to assess which EU+ country is responsible for examining the application in accordance with the Dublin III regulation.

If 'Dublin triggers' are recorded during the lodging phase, the applicant is channelled to the Dublin procedure, where their file is handled by the Dublin Unit of your country.

It is therefore recommended to provide basic information on the Dublin procedure as soon as possible. If the applicant is an unaccompanied child, a representative must be appointed to represent and assist the child. An assessment of the best interests of the child will be conducted as part of the procedure to determine the EU+ country responsible for examining the application for international protection ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Detailed provisions regarding implementation of the Dublin III regulation are provided in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1560/2003, as amended by the Commission Implementing

⁽¹⁰⁾ Article 6 Dublin III regulation 'Guarantees for minors'.



Regulation (EU) No 118/2014⁽¹¹⁾). It also contains the full texts of the common information leaflets, including a specific leaflet for unaccompanied minors, which were designed to explain the Dublin procedure to applicants and which must be provided to them.



Related EUAA publication

For more information refer to the EASO, [Practical Guide on Information Provision in the Dublin Procedure](#), December 2021. Information about Dublin criteria is provided in Section 1.7. The criteria used to determine responsibility and their hierarchy.

Refer also to the EUAA training module on identification of Dublin cases.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- The Dublin procedure is an EU system to determine which EU+ country is responsible for examining their application for international protection. This means that applicants cannot choose the country in which they apply for international protection. The authorities will determine which country will be responsible for the examination of their application.
- The applicant must not leave the country responsible for the examination of their application and move to another country on their own initiative before the end of the procedure. If they do so, they will be returned to the country that is responsible for their application.
- The importance of cooperating with the authorities and provide relevant information, in particular if they have a family member in another European country, since they may be reunited with them through the Dublin procedure.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging;

- the criteria for establishing responsibility;
- a list of the countries that apply the Dublin procedure;

⁽¹¹⁾ [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 1560/2003](#) of 2 September 2003 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national (OJ L 222, 5.9.2003), as amended by the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 118/2014 of 30 January 2014.



- if Dublin triggers are detected, provide additional information about the Dublin procedure and share the information leaflet developed for this purpose ⁽¹¹²⁾.



Practical tip: acknowledging the sensitivity of the topic and encouraging the applicant to ask questions

This information provision topic can be sensitive as it includes the prospect of being reunited with relatives. For this reason, encourage the applicant to ask questions. This will help to clarify any misunderstandings and diminish the potential expectations that are not in line with the Dublin procedure.

II. Subsequent application

(a) Background information

If the final decision has been made on the previous application (either a negative decision or a decision granting subsidiary protection), the new application will be registered as a subsequent application and preliminary examination will be carried out to assess the new elements.

The new application will be admissible if new elements significantly add to the likelihood of qualifying as a beneficiary of international protection. In such a case, the subsequent application will be admissible and the examination of the claim will be continued.

The application will be inadmissible if new elements are not provided by the applicant or new findings do not arise. In such an event, the determining authority will not examine the applicant's claim on the merits ⁽¹¹³⁾.

⁽¹¹²⁾ Annex X of [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 1560/2003](#) of 2 September 2003 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national (OJ L 222, 5.9.2003), as amended by as modified by the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 118/2014 of 30 January 2014.

⁽¹¹³⁾ Article 40(2), (3) and (5) APD (recast) 'Subsequent application':
2. ... a subsequent application for international protection shall be subject first to a preliminary examination as to whether new elements or findings have arisen or have been presented by the applicant which relate to the examination of whether the applicant qualifies as a beneficiary of international protection ... 3. If the preliminary examination ... concludes that new elements or findings have arisen or been presented ... the application shall be further examined in conformity with Chapter II. ... 5. When a subsequent application is not further examined pursuant to this Article, it shall be considered inadmissible, in accordance with Article 33(2)(d).



The right to remain in the host country during the examination may be restricted if the applicant has already benefited from a thorough examination of two or more applications for international protection which were rejected ⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

The right to remain in the host country during an appeal against inadmissibility may be restricted. Depending on the national law, the applicant may have the right to remain in the territory during the appeal procedure or at least until a court decides on their right to remain ⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

If the subsequent application is lodged merely to frustrate removal and found inadmissible, Member States may make an exemption to the right to remain as soon as such a subsequent application is found inadmissible pending the decision of the appeal authority ⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

The authorities can only proceed with the return decision if the return does not lead to direct or indirect *refoulement*.

Consult national legislation regarding the time limits applied in case of a subsequent application.



Related EUAA publication

For more information, refer to the EASO, [Practical Guide on Subsequent Applications](#), December 2021.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The previous application has been concluded and their new application is going to be assessed as a subsequent application. The subsequent application is not another chance to appeal against the previous decision but an opportunity to present new elements, either new events that happened after the previous application was rejected or new evidence or documents related to the reasons the applicant cannot return to their country, which could not be presented before.
- The procedural steps. Firstly, the application must be registered again. Secondly, the authority will assess the new elements. This assessment is called a preliminary

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Article 41(1) APD (recast) 'Exceptions from the right to remain in case of subsequent applications':
 1. Member States may make an exception from the right to remain in the territory where a person: a. has lodged a first subsequent application, which is not further examined pursuant to Article 40(5), merely in order to delay or frustrate the enforcement of a decision which would result in his or her imminent removal from that Member State; or b. makes another subsequent application in the same Member State, following a final decision considering a first subsequent application inadmissible pursuant to Article 40(5) or after a final decision to reject that application as unfounded. Member States may make such an exception only where the determining authority considers that a return decision will not lead to direct or indirect *refoulement* in violation of that Member State's international and Union obligations.

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Article 46(8) APD (recast) 'The right to an effective remedy'.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Article 41(1), point (a) and 41(2), point (c) APD (recast) 'Exceptions from the right to remain in case of subsequent applications'.



examination. It can conclude that the subsequent application is either admissible or inadmissible. Inform the applicant about the time frame of the preliminary examination.

- If it is in line with national practice, the examination can be carried out solely based on the written submissions, without a personal interview ⁽¹¹⁷⁾.
- The timeframe for the decision on subsequent application according to the national legislation ⁽¹¹⁸⁾.
- The rights and obligations of an applicant for international protection and consequences if not complying with the obligations.
- The obligation to substantiate. Stress that it is important that the applicant tell the officials as soon as possible off any new information as to why they need protection and cannot return to their country and all documents or evidence that support they need for protection.
- How the new elements and explanations can be submitted in line with national practice.
- The applicant can be also asked to explain why the new elements were not submitted earlier and how, if applicable, the new elements relate to (a) previous application(s).
- If relevant in your national context, the right to remain in the host country may be restricted and the reception conditions can be reduced or withdrawn.

Explain these messages to the applicant if the application is inadmissible:

- the examination will end and the application will not be further examined.
- the applicant will be notified of the decision that explains why the application will not be further examined.
- the possibility to appeal and the time limits.
- If applicable, that the right to remain in the host country will be restricted or that the right to remain in the host country has now ceased and the return procedure will be initiated if it complies with the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Explain these messages to the applicant if the application is admissible:

- the application will be examined on the substance (as in the regular procedure).
- the timeframe for the examination according to the national legislation.
- if applicable, provide information provision messages related to the personal interview (for more information, see Section [3.2.5. Personal interview](#)).
- information provision messages during the notification stage (for more information, see Section [3.2.6 Notification](#)).

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Article 42(2), point (b) APD (recast) ‘Procedural rules’:

Member States may lay down in national law rules on the preliminary examination pursuant to Article 40.

Those rules may, inter alia: a. permit the preliminary examination to be conducted on the sole basis of written submissions without a personal interview, with the exception of the cases referred to in Article 40(6).

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Article 31(8), point (f) and 31(9) APD (recast) ‘Examination procedure’.



III. Admissibility procedure

(a) Background information

Every EU+ country can establish admissibility procedures within their national asylum legislation in order to decide if an application is inadmissible and will not be further assessed on the merits.

The grounds for channelling an application to the admissibility procedure relates to the following circumstances.

- Another Member State has granted the applicant international protection ⁽¹¹⁹⁾.
- The applicant has been recognised as a refugee by another non-EU country or they can enjoy sufficient protection in that country, including benefiting from the principle of *non-refoulement* ⁽¹²⁰⁾.
- The applicant has a connection with a third country that is considered as a safe third country ⁽¹²¹⁾ by the host country, where the applicant can request international protection ⁽¹²²⁾.
- The application is a subsequent application ⁽¹²³⁾.
- A dependent applicant wants to lodge a separate application but the authorities deem that there are no facts justifying such a request after the applicant's consent to an application on their behalf ⁽¹²⁴⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The application is going to be assessed in an admissibility procedure and explain for which particular reason(s). The authority will assess only the reason(s) they have channelled the application to the admissibility procedure but not the reasons the applicant left their country and cannot return there, which will be assessed only if the application is considered admissible.
- Applicants have the right to present their views with regard to the reason(s) they have been channelled to the admissibility procedure through a personal interview ⁽¹²⁵⁾.
- Whenever an application is considered inadmissible, the applicant's eligibility for international protection will not be examined further and therefore the administrative procedure will come to an end.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Article 33(2), point (a) APD (recast) 'Inadmissible applications'.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Article 33(2), point (b) APD (recast) 'Inadmissible applications'.

⁽¹²¹⁾ Article 38 APD (recast) 'The concept of safe third country'.

⁽¹²²⁾ Article 33(2), point (c) APD (recast) 'Inadmissible applications'.

⁽¹²³⁾ Article 33(2), point (d) APD (recast) 'Inadmissible applications'.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Article 33(2), point (e) APD (recast) 'Inadmissible applications'.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Article 34(1) APD (recast) 'Special rules on an admissibility interview'.





- The applicant has the right to appeal against an admissibility decision.

Explain these messages to the applicant if the application is inadmissible:

- the examination will end and the application will not be further examined.
- the applicant will be notified of the decision that explains why the application will not be further examined.
- the possibility to appeal and the time limits.
- If applicable, that the right to remain in the host country will be restricted or that the right to remain in the host country has now ceased and the return procedure will be initiated if it complies with the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Explain these messages to the applicant if the application is admissible:

- the application will be examined on the substance (as in the regular procedure);
- if applicable, provide information provision messages related to the personal interview (for more information, see Section [3.2.5. Personal interview](#)).
- information provision messages during the notification stage (for more information, see Section [3.2.6 Notification](#)).

IV. Accelerated procedure

(a) Background information

Based on the APD (recast) ⁽¹²⁶⁾ and the national legislation, your country can conduct an examination under the accelerated procedure on the following grounds.

- The applicant is presenting facts that are not relevant for the examination of whether they qualify for international protection.
- The applicant is from a safe country of origin.
- The applicant has misled the authorities by presenting false information or documents or by withholding relevant information or documents with respect to their identity and/or nationality that could have had a negative impact on the decision.
- It is likely that, in bad faith, the applicant has destroyed or disposed of an identity or travel document that would have helped establish their identity or nationality.
- The applicant has made clearly inconsistent and contradictory, false and obviously improbable representations which contradict sufficiently verified country of origin information, thus making their claim clearly unconvincing.
- The applicant has introduced a subsequent application that is not inadmissible and therefore will not be examined in the substance.
- The applicant is making an application merely to delay or frustrate a removal order.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Article 31(8) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure accelerated'.





- The applicant entered the territory of the Member State unlawfully or prolonged their stay unlawfully, and, without good reason, have either not presented themselves to the authorities or not made an application for international protection as soon as possible, given the circumstances of their entry.
- The applicant refuses to comply with the obligation to have their fingerprints taken.
- The applicant may, for serious reasons, be considered a danger to the national security or public order of the Member State or the applicant has been forcibly expelled for serious reasons of public security or public order under national law.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The application is going to be assessed under an accelerated procedure and explain for which particular reason(s). This means that the time frame for deciding on the application is shorter. If possible, inform the applicant about the exact time frame in line with your national practice.
- Except for the shorter timelines, their application will be assessed with the same standards, rights and obligations as the regular procedure.

Explain these messages to the applicant during the notification.

- The time frame to file an appeal against a negative decision is reduced. Inform the applicant about the exact appeal deadline in line with your national practice.

Explain these messages to the applicant if they are from a safe country of origin.

- What constitutes a safe country of origin.
- What may be different from the regular asylum procedure:
 - The application will be examined within shorter timeframes. If possible, inform the applicant about the exact time frame in line with your national practice.
 - The obligation to substantiate – since the country is considered to be generally safe, it is up to the applicant to explain and demonstrate valid reasons as to why their country of origin is not safe for them.
 - The right to remain may be restricted during the appeal procedure after the application is rejected. In this case, applicant will be notified in a separate decision.

V. Border procedure

(a) Background information

Your country may have adopted a special procedure for applications made at the border or in a transit zone, whereby the examination takes place in the border or transit zones before access to the territory is granted. The grounds on which an asylum claim can be assessed at the border or transit zones are to examine:

- the admissibility of an application;





- the substance of an application that could be assessed under the accelerated procedure.

In both circumstances, the decision is to be taken in a reasonable time frame. When a decision cannot be taken within four weeks, the applicant is to be authorised to enter the territory of the Member State, where the assessment of their claim under the normal procedure will take place ⁽¹²⁷⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging, personal interview and notification.

- The applicant cannot enter the territory of the country because the country has adopted a special procedure called a border procedure which is conducted at the border or transit zone. Explain why the border procedure was adopted and if the application will be assessed in the admissibility procedure.
- If the request is considered admissible, its substance will be examined in a reduced time frame. If possible, inform the applicant about the exact time frame in line with your national practice.
- If the application is rejected, the applicant will have a reduced time frame to file an appeal, in line with the modalities provided for in your national legislation. Inform the applicant about the exact appeal deadline in line with your national practice.
- In any event, if a decision or final decision has not been taken within four weeks, the applicant will gain access to the territory.

3.3. The rights of applicants for international protection

The applicant's rights apply from the moment of the making of the application ⁽¹²⁸⁾. Therefore, it is important to provide information on these rights as early as possible ⁽¹²⁹⁾.

3.3.1. Right to remain

(a) Background information

Applicants for international protection have the right to stay in the country during the examination of their application. The right to remain is a key principle of the asylum procedure. It applies as a general rule during the examination of an application ⁽¹³⁰⁾.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Article 43(2) APD (recast) 'Border procedures'.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ CJEU, judgment of 25 June 2020, [VL v Ministerio Fiscal](#), C-36/20 PPU, EU:C:2020:495, paragraphs 90–92.

⁽¹²⁹⁾ EASO, [Practical Guide on Registration – Lodging of applications for international protection](#), December 2021, p. 19.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Article 9(1) APD (recast) 'Right to remain in the Member State pending the examination of the application'.





There are limited exceptions to this right (under very strict circumstances) which are different during the first instance and the appeal.

During the first instance, exceptions may apply only in the context of a subsequent application ⁽¹³¹⁾ or of an extradition ⁽¹³²⁾, depending on the national practice.

The exceptions from the right to remain in the context of a subsequent application may apply, depending on national legislation, when an additional subsequent application has been made (when an applicant has made three or more applications and exceptionally when an applicant has made a second application, after the previous one was found to be inadmissible or rejected as unfounded).

The exception in the context of an extradition may apply when the Member State is going to surrender or extradite the applicant following a European arrest warrant or for other reasons to another Member State, to a third country or to an international tribunal or court. Extradition cannot take place unless the authorities are satisfied that the person will not be exposed to risk of direct or indirect *refoulement* ⁽¹³³⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain this message to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- The applicant has the right to stay in the country for as long as their application is being examined. Alternatively, and if relevant, provide information about the exception.

Explain this additional message to the applicant during the registration/lodging and notification.

- The right to remain ends when a final decision rejecting the application is taken. ‘Final decision’ means a decision that is no longer subject to a remedy.



Practical tip: providing details on the exceptions only if relevant for the applicant

There is no need to inform all applicants on the content of the exceptions. Information detailing the exceptions should be given only to those applicants to whom these exceptions may apply, i.e. only to applicants who lodge a subsequent application or applicants concerned by an extradition.

⁽¹³¹⁾ Article 41(1) APD (recast) ‘Exceptions from the right to remain in case of subsequent applications’.

⁽¹³²⁾ Article 9(2) APD (recast) ‘Right to remain in the Member State pending the examination of the application’.

⁽¹³³⁾ Article 9(3) APD (recast) ‘Right to remain in the Member State pending the examination of the application’



3.3.2. Access to an interpreter

(a) Background information

If proper communication cannot be ensured without interpretation, the applicant has the right to receive the services of an interpreter free of charge, for submitting their case to the authority whenever necessary and at least during the personal interview ⁽¹³⁴⁾. The applicant will, when needed, be assisted during the personal interview by an interpreter of the language of their preference or at least of a language they understand and in which they can communicate clearly ⁽¹³⁵⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- the applicant will, when necessary, be assisted by an interpreter.
- interpretation is provided free of charge;
- the applicant should always mention if they have any difficulties understanding the interpreter or when the interpreter is not acting in a neutral way.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The role of the interpreter is strictly limited to translating what is being said, without adding or omitting information.
- The interpreter is bound by the principles of confidentiality and impartiality. They cannot talk about anything that was said during the interview outside the interpretation situation. The interpreter has no influence on the outcome of the decision.
- It is possible to ask for a male or female interpreter if it helps the applicant to present their claim. The request will be accommodated if possible ⁽¹³⁶⁾.



Practical tip: clarifying that the right to interpretation only applies to the asylum procedure

If the applicant asks for interpretation for personal purposes, explain to the applicant that the interpreter is available only for matters related to their application for international protection when dealing with authorities. This means that the support of an interpreter does not include, for example, help in a medical appointment. For such queries, provide advice on where the applicant can obtain support, according to your national practice.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Article 12(1), point (b) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for the applicant'.

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Article 15(3), point (c) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Article 15(3), point (c) APD (recast) 'Requirements for a personal interview'.



3.3.3. Legal and procedural information free of charge

(a) Background information

Upon request, applicants are to be provided with legal and procedural information free of charge, including, at least, information on the procedure in the light of the applicant's particular circumstances. This also applies in the event of a negative decision, when reasons for the decision and explanations on how to challenge the decision are given ⁽¹³⁷⁾.

The legal and procedural information can be provided by non-governmental organisations, or by professionals from government authorities or from specialised state services ⁽¹³⁸⁾. Consult your national law regarding who is responsible for providing legal and procedural information free of charge in your country.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making), registration/lodging, personal interview and notification stage.

- Stress the applicant's right to be informed. The applicant, in general, has the right to ask questions and can ask for information regarding the procedure, legal information or about their application. Receiving such information is free of charge.
- How and where to request information free of charge.

3.3.4. Legal assistance and representation

(a) Background information

The applicant has the right to legal assistance and representation at all stages of the asylum procedure ⁽¹³⁹⁾. Legal assistance and representation should be provided free of charge at least at the appeal stage. For the other stages (registration and first instance), it may or may not be free of charge, depending on national laws and policies ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and notification:

- the right to access legal assistance and representation at any point during the procedure;

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Article 19 APD (recast) 'Provision of legal and procedural information free of charge in procedures at first instance'.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Article 21(1) APD (recast) 'Conditions for the provision of legal and procedural information free of charge and free legal assistance and representation'.

⁽¹³⁹⁾ Article 22 APD (recast) 'Right to legal assistance and representation at all stages of the procedure'.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Article 20 APD (recast) 'Free legal assistance and representation in appeals procedures'.



- the available forms of legal assistance and representation in your country, for example private lawyers, dedicated lawyers cooperating with the asylum service and legal aid provided by civil society organisations;
- how they can access the legal assistance and representation;
- when the legal assistance is at their own cost and when it is provided free of charge depending on national provisions.



Practical tip: explaining the notion of legal representation

Explain the entire notion of legal representation, as this might be a new concept for some applicants. Include an explanation about the role of the legal representative in your country, what kind of services/support the legal representative can provide, for example, legal advice about the applicant's case and the procedures, preparation of the applicant for an interview and assistance with the preparation of appeal and other official documents.

3.3.5. Right to material reception conditions

Depending on the applicant's situation, they will receive accommodation, food or money to buy food, basic and necessary medical care, social assistance and education for children. The reception conditions directive lays down the rights to the material reception conditions.

Further information on the right to material reception conditions is provided on the Let's Speak Asylum platform, which hosts all the products developed under the Let's Speak Asylum project ⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

3.3.6. Withdraw an application for international protection.

(a) Background information

A withdrawal can be implicit or explicit. Explicit withdrawal happens when the applicant explicitly informs the administration that they wish to withdraw their application ⁽¹⁴²⁾. The applicant's request, generally, needs to be recorded in writing. A withdrawal is implicit when the applicant abandons the asylum procedure without informing the authorities. For information about implicit withdrawal see Section [3.7.1 Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned](#).

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ The EUAA Let's Speak Asylum portal is available here <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/>

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Article 27 APD (recast) 'Procedure in the event of withdrawal of the application'.



(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- An applicant can terminate their application for international protection at any time, for example, if they decide to return to their country of origin. This is called explicit withdrawal.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- After the application is explicitly withdrawn, the examination procedure ends. Consequently, the access to rights that are provided to applicants, including the right to remain in the Member State will end (unless there are other grounds for staying in the country).
- To withdraw the application, the applicant needs to express the intention to withdraw their application. Explain how this can be done.
- The possibility to receive assistance with the voluntary return (for more information, see topic [3.8.2. Voluntary return](#)).

3.4. Rights concerning (unaccompanied) children

3.4.1. Appointment of a representative/guardian

(a) Background information

Unaccompanied children are to be provided with a legal guardian as soon as possible and the child should be immediately informed about the appointment. For specifics regarding the appointment of a legal guardian, the procedure and deadlines, refer to your national law. Specific provisions regarding reception applies to unaccompanied children ⁽¹⁴³⁾.

A guardian acts on behalf of the child in line with their best interests and assists the child throughout the asylum procedure, ensuring that the child can benefit from their rights and comply with the obligations ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾. A guardian ensures the best interests of the child, including that their legal, medical and other needs are appropriately addressed throughout the asylum procedure ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. The guardian must have the required expertise to carry out their duties and will be changed only when necessary. For information related to the appointment or the possibility to change a guardian, refer to your national practice.

⁽¹⁴³⁾ Article 24 RCD (recast) 'Unaccompanied minors'; Article 25(1), point (a) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for unaccompanied minors'.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ See Section [3.6 Obligations of an applicant for international protection](#).

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Article 25(1), point (a) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for unaccompanied minors'; Articles 31(1) and (2) QD (recast) 'Unaccompanied minors'.



(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- A legal guardian will be appointed to assist the unaccompanied child and act on their behalf throughout the asylum procedure.
- The role of a legal guardian is to stay in contact with authorities and accompany the unaccompanied child during the appointments, including the personal interview, to inform the child about the procedure, ensure that the child's needs are addressed and ensure that the unaccompanied child's views are taken into consideration.
- The unaccompanied child may refer to the guardian for any concern or question they may have at any time during the asylum procedure.
- With consideration for the child's age, provide additional explanations regarding the procedure for the appointment of a legal guardian.
- The unaccompanied child should inform the authorities if there are any concerns or complaints regarding the cooperation with the legal guardian. Information should be provided on how to reach out to the authorities and file a formal complaint and on the possibility to change the legal guardian.



Related publication

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Guardianship for Children Deprived of Parental Care – A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking](#), 2015.



Practical tip: being very clear about the role of the legal guardian

Ensure that the child understands that the role of the legal guardian is to support them and their well-being. They should not hesitate to tell the guardian their views, needs, concerns, wishes, etc. At the same time, explain what is not in the guardian's competences. For example, the legal guardian does not live with the child or provide money. You may inform the child about their accommodation and the benefits they will receive.

3.4.2. Family tracing

(a) Background information

The QD (recast) highlights the principle of family unity. If the applicant does not know where their parents or guardians are, or is unable to contact them, the administration will initiate a procedure to find out where the family is and contact them. The tracing of family members



must be launched as soon as possible after the application is made⁽¹⁴⁶⁾. Family members include at least mother and father. Consult your national legislation regarding who is considered a family member for the family tracing process in your country.

Collecting information about a child's relatives must be conducted in line with the principle of confidentiality.

The family tracing should be initiated if it is in the best interests of the child⁽¹⁴⁷⁾.



Related EUAA tool

For more information see the EASO, [Practical Guide on Family Tracing](#), March 2016.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making), registration/lodging, personal interview and notification stage.

- It is important that the applicant provides any information about the whereabouts of their parents or guardians, their contact details and any other relevant information.
- Finding their parents or guardians is not an obligation and the child should inform the authorities about any reasons not to contact the parents or guardians. It is important that the applicant shares any concerns and reasons they would not want the parents or guardians to be contacted.
- Reassure the applicant about confidentiality. The information they provide about family members will not be shared with people not entitled to know, for example in the home country. The family members will not be put in danger.

3.5. Rights concerning applicants with special needs

3.5.1. Adequate support to benefit from their rights and to comply with obligations during the asylum procedure

(a) Background information

Certain applicants may be in need of special procedural guarantees due, inter alia, to their age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability,

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ Article 24(3) RCD 'Unaccompanied minors' is also relevant, as the obligation to start family tracing as soon as possible after the application is made comes from there.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Article 31(5) QD (recast) 'Unaccompanied minors'.





serious illness, mental disorders or as a consequence of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾.

The authorities are obliged to assess if the applicant is in need of special procedural guarantees. When this is the case, applicants should be provided with adequate support and time as well as the appropriate conditions to ensure effective access to asylum procedures and to ensure that they can benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

The procedures related to the identification of special needs and the nature of the support will depend on the individual procedural needs of the applicant and on national practice. This may include, for example, specific services for specific groups, such as:

- medical and psychological assistance for disabled applicants or applicants with health problems;
- support for victims of THB, such as the national referral mechanism for victims of THB;
- specialised social services for children, such as childcare;
- appointment of a representative/guardian, providing extra assistance with the relevant procedures and formalities or information on the possibility to appoint a representative for applicants with intellectual disabilities or severe mental health disorders.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- Applicants should inform the authorities if they are unwell, if they need psychological or medical support, if they are pregnant, if they had serious traumatic experiences, such as torture, rape and serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence in order to receive adequate support. This should also include informing the authorities about any protection concerns in the host country.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- If the applicant has special needs, how these needs will be addressed, the available support and relevant procedural safeguards in accordance with national practice. This may include providing additional time, appointing specialised staff to the case and the possibility to a request male or female case officer and interpreter.

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Recital 29 APD (recast).

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Article 24(1) and (3) APD (recast) 'Applicants in need of special procedural guarantees'.





Practical tip: considering the need for special arrangements for the personal interview

Specific profiles (e.g. disabled applicants, single parents with children) might need additional information regarding specific arrangements for the personal interview.

3.6. Obligations of an applicant for international protection

The applicant's obligations apply from the beginning of the asylum procedure. Therefore, it is important to provide information on these obligations as early as possible.

Inform the applicant that if they cannot comply with one or more obligations they should address the authorities and explain the reasons.

3.6.1. Cooperate with the authorities

(a) Background information

The applicant has the obligation to cooperate with the authorities to establish their identity and other elements such as their statements and any documentation at their disposal regarding their:

age, background (including that of relevant relatives), identity, nationality(ies), country(ies) and place(s) of previous residence, previous applications for international protection, travel routes, travel documents and the reasons for applying for international protection ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾.

Moreover, depending on your national laws and policies, the applicant may have the obligation to report or to appear in person before the competent authorities ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ either as soon as possible or upon appointment.

It may also be applicable in your national context that the oral statements during the personal interview are recorded ⁽¹⁵²⁾.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Article 13(1) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants' and Article 4(2) QD (recast) 'Assessment of facts and circumstances'.

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Article 13(2), point (a) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ Article 13(2), point (f) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.



(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making), registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The applicant has to cooperate with the authorities to allow the authorities to process their case.
- The applicant should appear in person before the authority if they have an appointment. Explain what to do and which steps to take if the applicant cannot attend the appointment.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The applicant must provide the authorities with all information and documents available to establish their identity and nationality.
- The applicant must provide to the authorities all information that is relevant to their application, including documentary and other evidence at their disposal.
- The applicant must not provide false information to the authorities.
- The applicant should respond to requests for information (if this is required in your national law).
- How applicants can, in practice, provide information and submit documentary evidence to the authorities. This includes to which office the information should be provided and by what means (e.g. by mail, by email or by appearing in person).
- The applicant should remain available to the authorities throughout the asylum procedure.
- If relevant, the authority will record the applicant's oral statements. The recording will be stored and used in full respect of the principle of confidentiality.
- During the interview, the applicant's obligation to provide information concerning the reason(s) they applied for asylum and answer the questions asked.
- Other obligations that may be applicable in your national context.

Explain these messages to the applicant during the notification stage.

- If they are notified of a positive decision, possible further obligations to cooperate with authorities based on national practice (e.g. submitting documents from their country of origin if it was not yet done so).



Practical tip: information provision on cooperation with authorities during interview

- When providing information about obligations in the presence of an interpreter during the interview, ensure that the applicant has understood the information by asking them. Consider also giving the applicant an opportunity to ask follow-up questions about their obligations.



3.6.2. Be subject to personal search

(a) Background information

Depending on your national laws and policies, the competent authorities may search the applicant and the items they are carrying ⁽¹⁵³⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- Applicants may be subject to a personal search, including a search of the items they are carrying.
- The search of their person is to be carried out by a person of the same sex, without prejudice to any search carried out for security reasons.
- The search will be conducted with full respect for the principles of human dignity and of physical and psychological integrity. Their personal belongings will be handed back to them.

3.6.3. Have biometrics taken

(a) Background information

The applicant is obliged to have their fingerprints taken latest within 72 hours after lodging their application, if they are older than 14 years of age ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging.

- Applicant will have their fingerprints taken. The applicant has the obligation to allow their fingerprints to be taken ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾.
- The authority will take a photograph of the applicant. The applicant has the obligation to allow their photograph to be taken ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- All fingerprints will be taken ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Article 13(2), point (d) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Article 9(1) Eurodac regulation 'Collection, transmission and comparison of fingerprints (excerpt)'.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Article 9(1) Eurodac regulation 'Collection, transmission and comparison of fingerprints (excerpt)'.

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Article 13(2), point (e) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Article 9(1) Eurodac regulation 'Collection, transmission and comparison of fingerprints (excerpt)'.



- At the time when fingerprints are taken, explain where, when, why and by whom the fingerprints are taken.
 - To make the information less overwhelming, when explaining the reason why fingerprints are taken, you could tell the applicant, for example, that fingerprints are taken to see if they are already known to the authorities and to assist with determining which EU country is responsible for examining their application.
- If the applicant refuses to have their fingerprints taken, the accelerated procedure may apply along with other possible consequences, depending on your national context ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾.
- The photograph and the biometric data will be stored and used in full respect of the principle of confidentiality.



Related publication

Consult the leaflet European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Right to information – Guide for authorities when taking fingerprints for Eurodac](#), 2019. It assists officers and authorities in informing applicants for international protection in an understandable and accessible way about the processing of their fingerprints in Eurodac.

3.6.4. Communicate contact address and any changes to the address to the authorities

(a) Background information

The applicant is obliged to inform the competent authorities of their current address and any changes thereof, so that they can be contacted by the authorities ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾.

Moreover, depending on your national set-up, authorities may also decide on the applicant's place of residence ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging, personal interview and notification stage.

- Although the applicant may move freely within the territory of the Member State, or within an area assigned to them by the Member State, the applicant must inform the competent authorities of their current address and of any changes thereof as soon as possible so that the authorities can reach them. This is very important because if the

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Article 31(8), point (i) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Article 13(2), point (c) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Article 7(2) RCD (recast) 'Residence and freedom of movement'.



applicant is not reachable, it may be considered as a failure to appear before the authorities.

- Authorities may decide on the residence of the applicant or put restrictions on where the applicant may move.



Practical tip: remind the applicant about the obligation to provide their contact details at different stages

- Remind the applicant about their obligation to communicate their current address to the authorities. Verify the address with them during the interview. This might also be relevant at the notification stage, if in direct contact with the applicant.
- Inform/remind the applicant that it is also in the interest of the applicant to keep the authorities informed about their current address, as this makes it possible to provide them with relevant and updated information regarding the application.

3.6.5. Submit the elements to substantiate the application

(a) Background information

The applicant has the duty to substantiate their application for international protection and submit all relevant elements ⁽¹⁶¹⁾. Depending on your national set-up, the applicant may have the obligation to submit such elements as soon as possible, or within the time limit set in your national law if such a time limit exists ⁽¹⁶²⁾. If according to national legislation the applicant is required to submit evidence as soon as possible, this information should be provided to the applicant early in the process. Depending on the circumstances, ‘as soon as possible’ means both as soon as the elements are **available** and as soon as the applicant **has knowledge** of such elements.

These elements consist of the applicant’s statements and all the documentation at the applicant’s disposal regarding themselves, including:

- age,
- background, including that of relevant relatives,
- identity,
- nationality(ies),
- country(ies) and place(s) of previous residence,
- previous applications for international protection,
- travel routes,

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Article 4(2) QD (recast) ‘Assessment of facts and circumstances’.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ Article 4(1) QD (recast) ‘Assessment of facts and circumstances’.





- travel documents, and
- the reasons for applying for international protection.

Example of types of documents include:

- personal/identity documents:
 - passport,
 - ID card,
 - school ID card,
 - birth certificate,
 - driving licence,
 - family book,
 - wedding certificate,
 - military ID card,
 - evidence of employment,
 - certificates, etc.,
 - card indicating membership to a political party;
- documents supporting the application for international protection:
 - photographs,
 - court judgements/orders,
 - arrest warrants,
 - reports from police investigations and other documents from the police,
 - threatening/warning letters,
 - newspaper articles (including reference to specific names),
 - baptism certificate,
 - social media posts, etc.;
- medical/psychological reports and attestations:
 - medical report/letter from a doctor,
 - psychological report,
 - attestation of violent acts or torture, etc.;
- documents including digital material:
 - websites,
 - blogs or other social media,
 - videos, etc.





Depending on your national laws and policies, the applicant may also be obliged to submit all documents in their possession that are relevant to the examination of their application, such as their passports ⁽¹⁶³⁾.

The applicant has the right to submit any new element ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ to substantiate their claim, even after the interview, provided a decision has not been made. The case officer must explain how these new elements can be presented in order to be taken into account in the assessment of the claim.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging

- The applicant's duty to cooperate includes an obligation to submit elements to substantiate their application for international protection (as soon as possible).
- The elements consist of:
 - the applicant's statements, including the reasons for applying for international protection;
 - all the documentation at their disposal, including personal/identity documents, documents related to their application and medical/psychological reports and attestations.
 - other evidence such as social media content, videos or other digital material.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The means, place (addresses), recipient and time that the applicant can submit evidence, according to your national laws and policies.
- Cover the following points regarding documentation.
 - The applicant must not submit documents that are false or have been forged as this may negatively affect their application.
 - Destroying ID documents may negatively affect their application.
 - The applicant should provide their original documents, if available.
 - Relevant documents should be submitted as soon as possible to the relevant authorities.
 - If applicable, inform the applicant of time frames to submit documents to complete the registration.
 - There is no need to present documents that only contain general information about their country of origin.
 - Their obligation to obtain any missing documents to the extent feasible. You should, however, make it very clear that that it is not expected from the applicant to expose themselves or any other person to risk by attempting to obtain documents,

⁽¹⁶³⁾ Article 13(2), point (b) APD (recast) 'Obligations of the applicants'.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ New elements can be *inter alia* documents, statements or any type of additional information.



including by contacting the authorities of the country of origin if this would entail a risk.

- How original documents will be dealt with (e.g. whether the authority will keep them, whether they will be copied and how and when they will be returned).
- It is not a problem if the original documents are in a foreign language.

Explain these additional messages to the applicant during the personal interview.

- At the beginning of the personal interview:
 - explain why providing all relevant and correct information is beneficial in order to reach a sound decision;
 - address the obligation to tell the truth, stressing the fact that this is explained to everybody;
 - signal that it is only if the applicant knowingly provides false information that it may have negative consequences;
 - instruct the applicant that where they do not know the answer to a question, they should say that they do not know and not try to provide an answer by guessing.



Practical tip: tips regarding the submission of elements to substantiate the application

- **Advise the applicant to make a copy of original documents**

If the applicant is submitting original documents, they should make a copy for themselves to keep.

- **Use communication techniques to cover this complex topic**

As information regarding the obligations is rather complex, after providing the information, you can summarise the information and highlight the main points again. It is also practical to divide the information, allowing for short discussions/questions before you continue.

3.7. The possible consequences of not complying with obligations and not cooperating with the authorities

The possible consequences of not complying with obligations may apply during the registration process and during examination of the application. As such consequences may be applied at the beginning of the asylum procedure, it is important to provide information on these consequences as early as possible.



3.7.1. Application can be considered as implicitly withdrawn or abandoned

(a) Background information

Depending on the national legislation, the authority may assume that the applicant has implicitly abandoned their application in one of the following situations ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ if the applicant:

- failed to lodge their application after having made one ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾;
- failed to respond to requests to provide information essential to their application;
- failed to appear for a personal interview;
- (permanently or for a long time) leaves the place where they lived without informing the relevant authority;
- did not comply with reporting duties or other obligations to communicate.

The assumption is lifted if the applicant demonstrates within a reasonable time that their acts were due to circumstances beyond their control.

In the event of an implicit withdrawal, the determining authority will take a decision to either:

- discontinue the examination; or
- reject the application.

If the decision is to discontinue the examination but the applicant reports again to the competent authority:

- the case can be reopened; or
- the applicant can submit a new application which will not be considered as a subsequent application.

The EU+ country may set a time limit of at least 9 months, after which the case cannot be reopened or the new application will be considered as a subsequent application.

The EU+ country may provide that a case can be reopened only once ⁽¹⁶⁷⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Article 28 APD (recast) 'Procedure in the event of implicit withdrawal or abandonment of the application'.

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Article 6(2) APD (recast) 'Access to the procedure': '[...] Where the applicant does not lodge his or her application, Member States may apply Article 28, [the procedure in the event of implicit withdrawal or abandonment of an application], accordingly.'

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Article 28(1) APD (recast) 'Procedure in the event of implicit withdrawal or abandonment of the application'.



(b) Information provision message

Explain this message during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- if the applicant does not cooperate with the authorities, (permanently) leaves the accommodation without informing the authorities or does not appear for appointments, it may negatively affect the application, which might be discontinued or rejected and, consequently, the applicant would no longer be considered an applicant.

Explain these additional messages during the registration/lodging and, if relevant, in relation to the personal interview

- The situations in which the application can be discontinued or rejected, unless the applicant demonstrates that their acts were due to circumstances beyond their control. (For more information, see the background information for this topic).
- However, if the application is discontinued, it can be reopened, or a new application can be submitted without being considered as a subsequent application. This can occur if the applicant reports again to the competent authority within a certain time frame, defined in your national context.



Practical tip: providing examples to understand non-compliance and its consequences

- It is useful to provide practical examples, for example, if an applicant has an appointment to lodge their claim and does not show up despite being invited multiple times, this would be considered failure to conclude lodging unless there are valid reasons for not following the lodging process (e.g. medical reasons).
- Emphasise that the obligations are relevant for the applicant to be aware of also after the interview stage.

3.7.2. Assessment of relevant elements in the asylum claim may be affected

(a) Background information

The applicant generally has the obligation to submit all elements needed to substantiate their application as soon as possible. Such elements include information relevant to their claim along with all the supporting evidence at their disposal ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾.

The provision of incomplete or false information or evidence may lead to a rejection of the application. If the applicant misrepresents or omits facts, including the use of false documents,

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Article 4(1) QD (recast) 'Assessment of facts and circumstances'.



which were decisive for granting the protection, the refugee status and the subsidiary protection status can also be revoked⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages during the registration/lodging and personal interview.

- The applicant should bring forward all relevant elements.
- If the applicant provides misleading information, statements or documents related to their identity or reasons for applying for international protection, this may negatively impact the assessment. Incomplete or false information will affect the credibility assessment of the application, and lack of credibility may be a reason to reject the application for international protection.
- The provision of misleading information, statements or documents related to their identity or reasons for applying for international protection could be considered as a refusal to cooperate with authorities.
- If an applicant previously applied in another Member State, the applicant should be informed about the possibility to be asked to accept the transmission of information concerning previous applications for international protection in other member states⁽¹⁷⁰⁾.

3.7.3. Asylum procedure may be accelerated

(a) Background information

In a limited number of situations, the authorities can decide to apply the accelerated procedure, in which case an application is examined within shorter time limits.

Depending on your national legislation, the accelerated procedure can be applied, inter alia, when the applicant provides false or incomplete information or documents, if the applicant refuses to have their fingerprints taken or if it is likely that, in bad faith, they destroyed or disposed identity document⁽¹⁷¹⁾. For more information, see topic [3.2.10.IV. Accelerated procedure](#).

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- The accelerated procedure can be applied if the applicant does not cooperate with the authorities. For example, if they present false information or false documents, refuse to have their fingerprints taken or have destroyed or disposed of identity documents.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Article 14(3), point (b) 'Revocation of, ending of or refusal to renew refugee status' and Article 19(3), point (b) QD (recast) 'Revocation of, ending of or refusal to renew subsidiary protection status'.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Article 34(3) Dublin III regulation 'Information sharing'.

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Article 31(8), points (c), (d) and (i) APD (recast) 'Examination procedure'.



3.7.4. Material reception conditions may be reduced or withdrawn

(a) Background information

Depending on your national legislation, material reception conditions may be **reduced or, in exceptional cases, withdrawn** if the applicant ⁽¹⁷²⁾:

- abandons the place of residence determined by the competent authority without informing it or, if requested, without permission; or
- does not comply with some of their obligations (i.e. reporting duties, responding to requests for information, appearing for their personal interview); or
- has lodged a subsequent application;
- has concealed financial resources and has therefore unduly benefited from material reception conditions.

Material reception conditions may also be **reduced, but not withdrawn**, if it is established that the applicant, for no justifiable reason, has not lodged an application as soon as possible upon his arrival to the Member State ⁽¹⁷³⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain this messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging.

- Depending on your national law and practice, the possible consequences of not cooperating with authorities or of not being reachable by the authorities include that reception entitlements may be reduced or withdrawn. Decisions related to the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions may be subject to an appeal procedure.

3.8. Additional topics

3.8.1. Right to communicate with UNHCR and other organisations providing legal counselling

(a) Background information

The applicant has the right to communicate with UNHCR at all stages of the asylum procedure, including if the applicant is in detention or in airport or port transit zones ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ Article 20(1), points (a) and (b) RCD (recast) 'Reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions':
Member States may reduce or, in exceptional and duly justified cases, withdraw material reception conditions where an applicant: a. abandons the place of residence determined by the competent authority without informing it or, if requested, without permission; or b. does not comply with reporting duties or with requests to provide information or to appear for personal interviews concerning the asylum procedure during a reasonable period laid down in national law.

⁽¹⁷³⁾ Article 20(1) RCD (recast) 'Reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions'.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Article 29 APD (recast) 'The role of UNHCR' and Article 12(c) APD (recast) 'Guarantees for applicants'.



Almost every country is covered by UNHCR representation and there will usually be a UNHCR website covering your country, providing contact details and information regarding UNHCR's persons of concern.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the first contact (making) and registration/lodging:

- UNHCR is the United Nations agency mandated to protect asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons worldwide;
- the right to communicate with UNHCR and to seek legal counselling or advice from UNHCR (and the organisations working on its behalf) at any stage of the asylum procedure;



Practical tip: explaining what UNHCR is, what it does and how to access UNHCR

The role of UNHCR might be unclear for the applicant and they might not understand to what extent UNHCR is relevant for their situation and what to expect or not expect. For this reason, explain the position of UNHCR, what kind of support UNHCR can provide, for example, legal advice about the applicant's case and the procedures, preparation of the applicant for an interview and assistance with the preparation of official documents.

To facilitate the opportunity to communicate with UNHCR, provide information how to access UNHCR, including contact details.

3.8.2. Family reunification (under the family reunification directive)

(a) Background information

The possibility of family reunification applies to third-country nationals who have been granted refugee status ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. Consult your national law regarding other possibilities when the family reunification can be applied in addition to the refugee status.

Family reunification apply to members of the nuclear family (the spouse and the minor children). Consult your national law regarding other possible cases ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Article 3(1) and Chapter V of [Council Directive 2003/86/EC](#) of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification (OJ L 251, 3.10.2003) (family reunification directive).

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Recital 9 family reunification directive.





In case of a polygamous marriage, where a spouse already lives in the territory of a Member State, the Member State concerned must not authorise the family reunification of a further spouse ⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

An application needs to be submitted to the competent authorities together with documentary evidence of the family relationship. Where this cannot be provided, the Member States must take into account other evidence. A decision rejecting an application may not be based solely on the fact that documentary evidence is lacking ⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

Additional documents (proof of accommodation, sickness insurance and resources) may be requested, if the application is not submitted within a period of three months ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾. Consult your national law regarding the competent authorities and additional documents and evidence.

(b) Information provision message

Explain this messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview:

- if the topic is raised by applicant, provide explanation regarding the family reunification, including when it is possible to apply and which family members can be reunited.

Explain these messages to the applicant during the notification stage.

- If refugee status is granted and, if applicable, the possibility to apply for family reunification, including information on:
 - which family members qualify for family reunification;
 - how to apply for the family reunification and where to receive further information;
 - what documents needs to be submitted;
 - possible time limits.

3.8.3. Voluntary return

(a) Background information

Providing information on voluntary return is not intended to be an encouragement to pursue voluntary return and should not be understood in this way by the applicant. However, voluntary return may respond, for various (personal) reasons, to the need of the applicant, also among those who recently arrived.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Article 4(4) family reunification directive.

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Article 11 (2) family reunification directive.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Article 12 family reunification directive.





Applicants can leave voluntarily at any point during the asylum procedure and return to their country of origin or habitual residence. Applicants may face doubts and uncertainties when it comes to the possibility of return and often receive conflicting information. Timely information about the possibilities of return may prevent persons from staying in the asylum procedure and/or in difficult circumstances on the territory of the host country for an unnecessarily long time after a final decision has been issued.

If the applicant decides to return, depending on the national practice, they may be able to obtain advice and assistance from the administration or other organisations ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. The authorities can provide:

- general information and advice on voluntary returns;
- procurement of the necessary travel documentation;
- flight booking and travel organisation;
- the financial cost of their travel;
- a small integration grant upon return;
- enrolment in a reintegration programme.

(b) Information provision message

Explain these messages to the applicant during the registration/lodging and notification:

- an assistance programme for voluntary return exists and has availability;
- the main elements of the assistance programme;
- which authorities or organisations to contact for further information on the assistance programme for voluntary return.

3.8.4. Right to work

(a) Background information

During the asylum procedure, if a decision at first instance is not taken within a certain period from the date of the lodging and this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant, then the applicant must be granted the right to work. This period is defined in your national legislation, but in any case, it is not longer than 9 months from the date on which the application for international protection was lodged ⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ The International Organization for Migration is one of the most important organisations assisting in returns. Assistance can also be provided by other organisations and non-governmental organisations (e.g. Caritas International) or directly by state authorities, etc.

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Article 15 RCD (recast) 'Employment'.





As to beneficiaries of international protection (i.e. refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection), they are granted the right to work immediately after protection has been granted ⁽¹⁸²⁾.

(b) Information provision message

Explain this message to the applicant during the registration/lodging and personal interview:

- the right to work and when the applicant can start working according to your national legislation.

Explain this message to the applicant during the notification stage:

- if the decision grants refugee status or subsidiary protection, the individual is immediately granted the right to work.

⁽¹⁸²⁾ Article 26 QD (recast) 'Access to employment'.





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