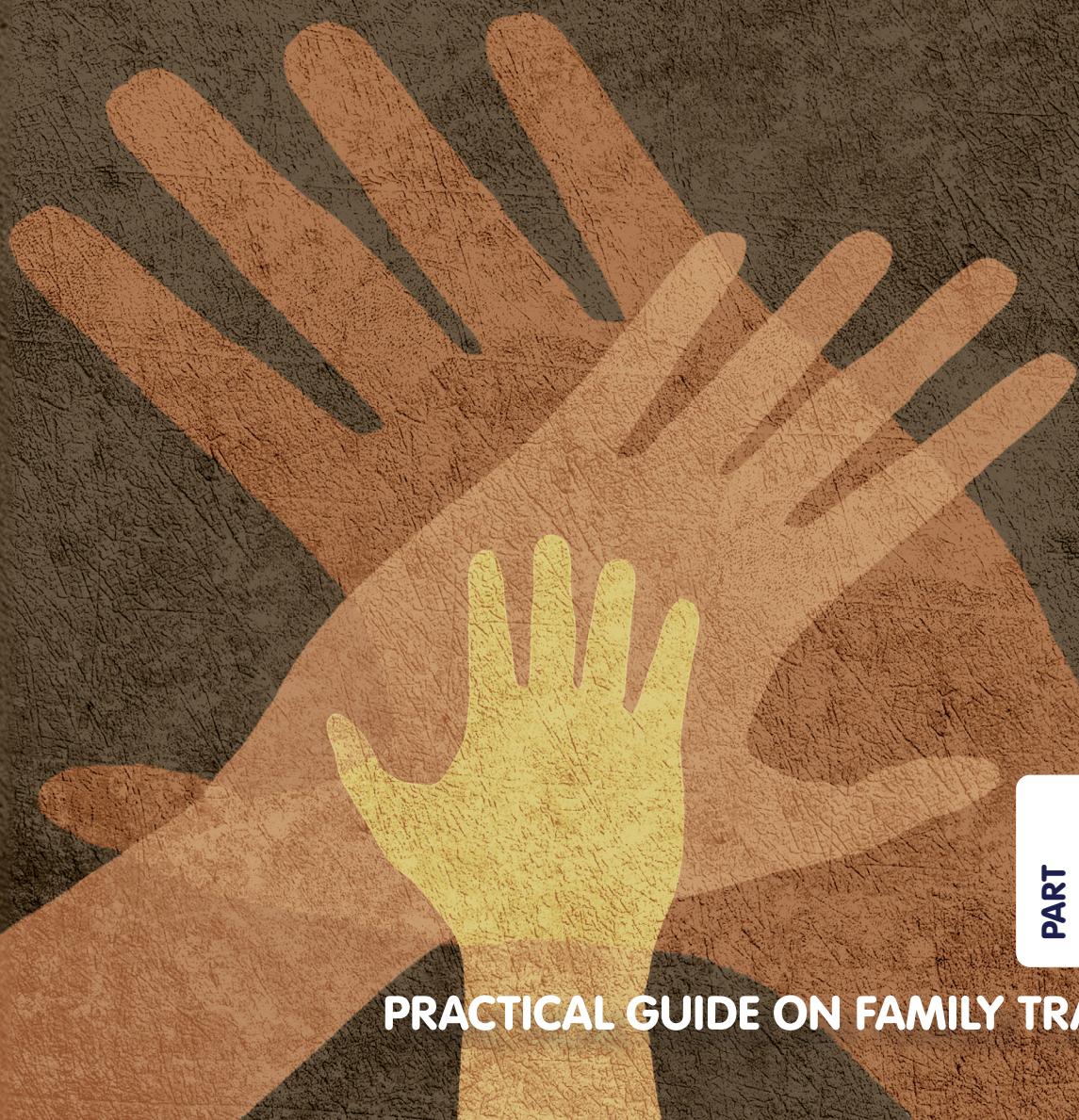


Tracing and identifying family members under the asylum and migration management regulation



PART **2**

PRACTICAL GUIDE ON FAMILY TRACING

Part II – Tracing and identifying family members under the asylum and migration management regulation

April 2025

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.

The decision to grant or deny international protection should never be based on the results of the family tracing efforts of the EU authorities.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.



Manuscript completed in February 2025

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

Print	BZ-01-25-005-EN-C	ISBN 978-92-9418-302-6	doi:10.2847/7175212
PDF	BZ-01-25-005-EN-N	ISBN 978-92-9418-303-3	doi:10.2847/4843325

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Contents

Contents	5
List of abbreviations.....	7
Legal framework.....	8
The asylum and migration management regulation	8
Novelties brought by the asylum and migration management regulation.....	9
Preventing secondary movement	10
The place and importance of family links within the responsibility criteria....	10
The responsibility determination procedure in the asylum and migration management regulation	11
The applicant's family links in the EU	12
The dependency clause (Article 34)	15
The discretionary clauses (Article 35)	16
Timelines for determining the responsible EU+ country	16
Obligations related to the family tracing procedure under the asylum and migration management regulation	20
Information provision	20
Family tracing possibilities.....	20
Family tracing organisations	20
The procedure and the personal interview	20
Assisting the applicant in engaging with family tracing organisations.....	21
Legal counselling	21
Prioritisation.....	22
Emphasis and attention on family reunification procedures	22
Early detection and referral.....	23
Prioritisation of cases of family reunification in both EU+ countries	23
Cooperation between AMMR Units, the authorities and organisations.....	24
Proactiveness of information providers, case officers, representatives and the applicant.....	24
Ensuring sufficient resources within the AMMR Unit	24
Step-by-step organisation of the family tracing procedure.....	27
1. Screening	28



Indication of presence of family members in the EU+ countries	29
Immediate referral to appropriate procedure	29
2. Registration	30
Awareness of time limits	30
Identifying potential family members of an applicant in the EU+ countries..	30
Information provision about rights and obligations of the applicant	31
Possibility to organise the asylum and migration management regulation interview	32
Family tracing template	32
3. Referral to the AMMR Unit.....	37
4. Responsibility determination.....	38
Screening cases per priority	39
Review the available information.....	39
Determining the next steps	40
Organising the personal (asylum and migration management regulation) interview	40
Sending information requests to trace and identify family members or dependent persons	44
Prioritisation by the requested EU+ country	46
Outcome of the procedure.....	47
Stakeholders in family tracing and their roles in the procedure	48
Family tracing organisations in the EU+ countries	53





List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AMMR	asylum and migration management regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 [the Dublin III regulation]
AMMR Unit	The EU+ country authority (the unit) responsible for conducting the procedure to determine the EU+ country responsible for examining an application for international protection in accordance with Article 52 AMMR.
APR	asylum procedure regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU
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)
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU+ countries	Member States of the European Union and the Schengen associated countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland
Member States	Member States of the European Union
NGO(s)	non-governmental organisation(s)



Legal framework

This is part II of the *Practical Guide on Family Tracing*.

Before reading this guide, it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with [Part I: Principles and practices on family tracing in the EU+ and third countries](#). Part I explains the concept of family tracing, the guiding principles and the general practices of family tracing across EU+ and third countries. It also covers terminology, definitions and an overview of the applicable legal framework.

Part II focuses on family tracing in the context of the determination of the EU+ country responsible for examining an application for international protection. This part explains the determination procedure set out in Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 (AMMR) ⁽¹⁾, the obligations that are related to family tracing, and the step-by-step organisation of the procedure to trace family members of an applicant who are present in an EU+ country.

The principles described in part I (respect for family life, procedural safeguards, giving primary consideration to the best interests of the child and actively seeking family reunification possibilities) should be respected when conducting family tracing. This chapter focuses on the description of the AMMR.

The asylum and migration management regulation

The AMMR aims to strike a balance between clear rules on assuming responsibility for migration management and ensuring solidarity among Member States of the European Union and the Schengen associated countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (EU+ countries) in order to support those facing disproportionate pressure. To this end, the AMMR sets out a common framework for migration management.

The AMMR establishes a permanent solidarity framework, which lays down the steps needed to ensure that EU ⁽²⁾ countries receive the necessary solidarity measures. Each EU country can choose the type of solidarity that they are willing to provide, which can be the relocation of applicants or beneficiaries of international protection, financial contributions or what is known as the ‘responsibility offsets’ to take charge of the examination of applications. The solidarity mechanism is outside the scope of this publication.

The AMMR sets out clear rules on responsibility for examining an application for international protection. Persons who would like to apply for international protection will have to register their application in the first country of entry and they will have to stay in that country until a

⁽¹⁾ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1351](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (OJ L, 2024/1351, 22.5.2024).

⁽²⁾ Denmark and the Schengen associated countries are not bound by the provisions related to the solidarity measures set out in the AMMR.





decision on responsibility is made. The EU+ country where the application is registered can send a request for the taking charge of the examination of the application to another EU+ country that is deemed responsible based on the criteria set out in the AMMR. In this guide, the country sending the request is called the 'requesting EU+ country'. The country receiving the request is called the 'requested EU+ country'.

The AMMR replaces Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III regulation) ⁽³⁾. The AMMR brings some novelties to the procedure that aim to strengthen the family criteria and the implementation of the family-related provisions.

The provisions of the new regulation mean applicants will be less likely to engage in secondary movement. This is due to a faster and more efficient procedure, emphasis on family links and prioritisation and more information on the criteria, family links, the right to legal counselling and the consequences of absconding.

Novelties brought by the asylum and migration management regulation

The AMMR introduces the obligation:

- to prioritise family reunification cases both by the requesting and requested EU+ country;
- on the part of the authorities and applicants for international protection to fill out the family tracing template as specified in Article 22 AMMR;
- on the part of the authorities of EU+ countries to provide extensive information to applicants;
- on the part of the authorities of EU+ countries to conduct a personal interview with persons applying for international protection for the first time to facilitate the determination of the responsible EU+ country (the AMMR interview).

It also introduces:

- the possibilities to involve family tracing organisations in both the requesting and the requested EU+ countries;
- the applicant's right to request legal counselling in the take charge procedure;
- new criteria on diplomas and qualifications.

⁽³⁾ [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).

Preventing secondary movement

The prioritisation of family reunification cases and the simplification of take back procedures, which enables EU+ countries to put more emphasis on family tracing introduced under the AMMR, serve to prevent secondary movement. The procedure ensures that applicants can be reunited with their family member or dependent person as soon as possible, without the need to wait too long for the outcome or the transfer. The aim of identifying potential family members in the EU+ countries already at the point of entry to the territory is an important step in family tracing. This ensures that the right to family life can be exercised and will enable applicants to join their family members legally through an efficient procedure.

In addition, the Eurodac regulation, which establishes an interoperable asylum and migration database to support the asylum system helps the implementation of the AMMR. The Eurodac database will contain fingerprints and facial images, identity data and copies of identity or travel documents of applicants for international protection. The information available in Eurodac will make it possible to quickly determine the responsible EU+ country. The recast Eurodac regulation, together with the strengthened rules under the AMMR, aim to prevent and discourage the secondary movement of applicants for international protection.

The Eurodac system

One of the aims of Eurodac is firstly to support the implementation of the AMMR and to effectively detect secondary movements within the EU ⁽⁴⁾. For this purpose, Eurodac will allow the comparison of fingerprints of a person to identify their status (e.g. if they are applicants for international protection or have been granted international protection by an EU+ country.) When a search in Eurodac is conducted, the search result will also show which EU+ country is responsible for examining the person's application, provided that the responsibility determination was conducted.

Eurodac will also allow for the counting of applicants (instead of applications). It will link datasets that belong to the same person, making it easier to understand the number of applicants in the EU+ countries and detecting secondary movement.

Children above the age of six are also to be fingerprinted. If the child is accompanied, a family member should be present when their biometric data is taken. If the child is unaccompanied, the representative/guardian or a trained person who is able to protect the child's best interests should be present when biometric data is taken.

The place and importance of family links within the responsibility criteria

The existence of family links of an applicant in an EU+ country was always the first criterion to examine in the procedure under the Dublin III regulation (the Dublin procedure). This principle is unchanged in the AMMR and is reinforced by several measures. These measures are set

⁽⁴⁾ Recital 4 Eurodac regulation.



out in the AMMR to address the challenges experienced in the application of the Dublin procedure. The three main challenges are:

- family links remain unidentified;
- there is not enough information on the family member;
- there is lack of time to sufficiently explore the case.

To enhance the importance of family ties, EU+ countries are now obliged to make a bigger effort to trace and identify the family members of an applicant in the EU+ territory at the point of arrival to the territory of the EU+ countries. This will help to avoid situations where family links remain unidentified.

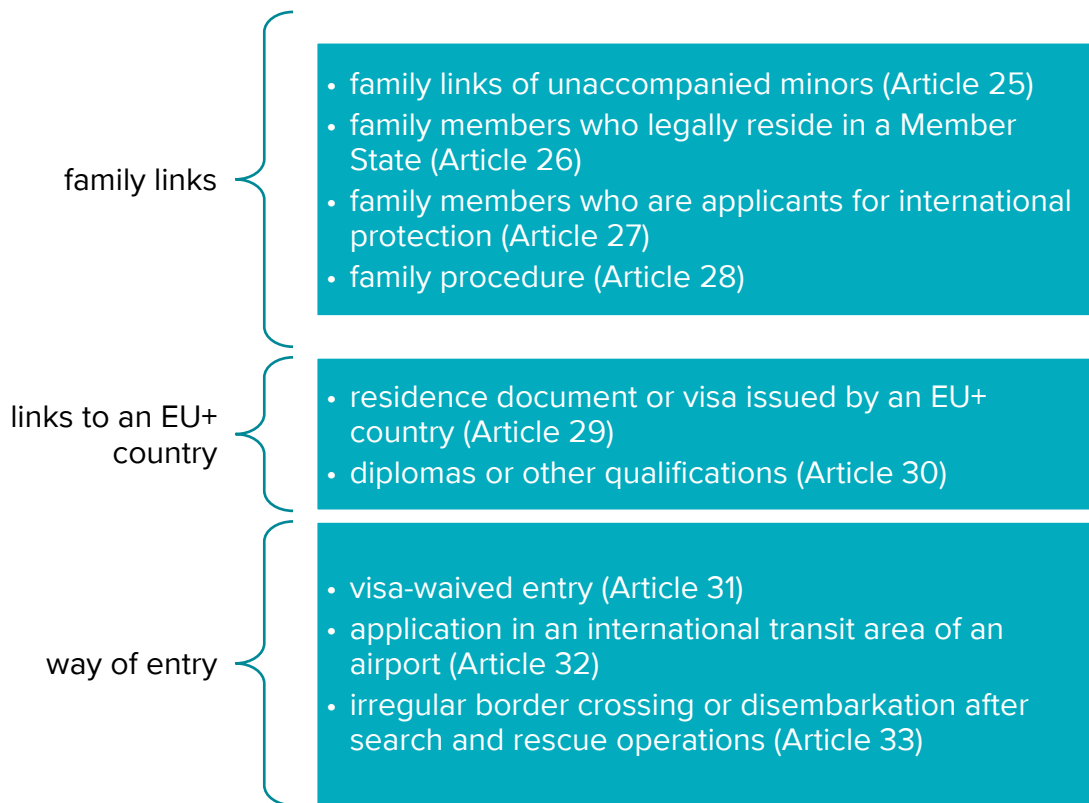
An efficient tool for collecting information early on is the [family tracing template](#) that is to be filled in by the applicant as soon as possible but no later than at the time of the interview to determine the responsible EU+ country for examining an application for international protection. This will ensure that initial information on family links is available to the authorities, which can then be further explored during the interview.

Member States should prioritise potential family cases to ensure that there is enough time available to explore the circumstances of such cases. If flagged for prioritisation, case officers can already start exploring the family links of a person or tracing organisations can be contacted (See [Part I, Section 4.2. Technical tools](#)).

The responsibility determination procedure in the asylum and migration management regulation

Part III of the AMMR sets out the criteria and mechanisms to determine which EU+ country is responsible for the examination of an application for international protection. The procedure guarantees that an application for international protection registered by a third-country national or stateless person is examined by one single EU+ country. The responsible EU+ country is determined based on the criteria set out in Chapter II of Part III of the AMMR.

The criteria are set in a hierarchical order and are detailed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The AMMR criteria of responsibility determination in hierarchical order

In case of vulnerable persons, or due to compelling reasons, Chapter III of Part III of the AMMR may become applicable according to the following Articles:

- dependent persons (Article 34);
- discretionary clauses (Article 35).

When a person applies for international protection for the first time, the family criteria must be assessed first. If the person does not have any family members in the EU+ countries, the next criterion is examined.

The applicant's family links in the EU

When determining which EU+ country is responsible for examining an application for international protection which is registered for the first time, the first criterion that should be examined is related to the potential family links of the applicant.



Figure 2. The first assessment criteria in Chapter II: family links

Family links
<p>• Unaccompanied minors (Article 25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU+ country where the family member or a sibling of an unaccompanied child is legally present should be the responsible Member State. • The EU+ country where the relative of the unaccompanied child is legally present should be the responsible Member State. • If unaccompanied child has family members, siblings or relatives legally present in more than one EU+ country, the responsible Member State is determined on the basis of the child's best interests. • If an unaccompanied child does not have a family member, sibling or relative legally present the EU+, the country where their application is first registered should be the responsible one, unless this is not in their best interests. <p>• Family members legally residing in a Member State (Article 26)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU+ country where the family member (who is residing in a Member State either as a beneficiary of international protection or with a long-term residence permit) of the applicant is responsible, if both parties expressed their consent in writing. • The EU+ country where the family member (who has become a citizen of a Member State following residence as a beneficiary of international protection in that Member State) is residing should be the responsible one, if both parties expressed their consent in writing. <p>• Family members who are applicants (Article 27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU+ country where the family member of an applicant who applied for international protection in a Member State and no decision on the substance has yet been made is responsible, if both parties expressed their consent in writing.



Related EUAA publication

The assessment of the child's best interests is a complex procedure that involves several stakeholders and requires cooperation. A general overview of the best interests assessment in the asylum procedure can be found in EASO, [Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures](#), 2019. This guide will be updated in 2025 and will include aspects of the best interests assessment in the AMMR family procedures.



Why is consent to family reunification not required in cases concerning children?

The AMMR does not require unaccompanied children to provide their consent to family reunification.

Even if no formal consent is required from the child, the best interests assessment should always include the views of the child. The authorities should always ask the child about their willingness to be reunited with a family member, sibling or relative. The authorities should

take into account the views of the child in accordance with their age, maturity and any risks to the safety, security or well-being of the child.

If the child or their parent(s), sibling(s) or relative(s) do not wish to be reunited, this should not necessarily exclude family reunification as it may still be in the best interests of the child. However, it is important to consider that unwillingness of the child to be reunited may result in a lack of cooperation on the part of the child or a risk of absconding. Reunification must not take place when it is proven that it would not be in the best interests of the child.

Where the child has a parent and a relative present in the EU+ countries, the relationship with the parent should be investigated first before considering reunification with the relative. If the reunification with relative is initiated, the request should include why it was not in the best interests of the child to be reunited with the parent. The decision should always be made based on the best interests of the child.

If the applicant is an adult and has a family member in an EU+ country, they can be reunited provided that both parties give their consent in writing to the reunification.



Considerations regarding the consent

The written consent of the (adult) applicant and the family member to family reunification is a formal requirement for making a take charge request based on family grounds. Without this consent signed by the persons acting in their full legal capacity, the persons cannot be reunited. The consent to reunification is necessary so that the authorities of the EU+ countries can protect people from being reunited against their will.

Applicants should be informed about the formal requirement of providing written consent to family reunification. They should be informed that such consent should only be provided if they would like to be reunited with the family member. The consent should never be coerced (e.g. by a family member), is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time.

If the applicant or the family member does not want to be reunited, they should not provide their written consent, or, if provided, they should withdraw it. The persons can choose to inform the authorities about the reason(s) they do not wish to be reunited. This information should always be treated confidentially. For example, if the person is not willing to be reunited because they were a victim of domestic violence or abuse by the family member, if this is reported to the authorities, the person can be better protected in the future from any contact by the family member.

The criteria under the AMMR may link the person to an EU+ country if they have been issued documents by an EU+ country or if they have entered the EU+ territory through another EU+ country. In cases where none of the other criteria under the AMMR link the person to an EU+ country, the first EU+ country in which the application was registered will be responsible for the examination of the application for international protection. This is the case unless the dependency clause applies or the EU+ country applies one of the discretionary clauses.



The dependency clause (Article 34)

The existence of a relationship of dependency between an applicant or another person (child, sibling or parent) is also a binding responsibility criterion in the AMMR. Reuniting or keeping the applicant together with a person on whose assistance they depend is possible under this clause.

It is important to highlight that for the dependency clause to apply, several conditions must be met.

1. The person concerned (the applicant or the applicant's child, sibling or parent) must be in a situation of vulnerability based on at least one of the following grounds:
 - pregnancy
 - having a newborn child
 - serious mental illness
 - serious physical illness
 - severe disability
 - severe psychological trauma
 - old age.
2. The applicant's child, sibling or parent must be legally residing in one of the EU+ countries.
3. It has to be proven that the applicant or the child, sibling or parent actually depend on the assistance of the other person.
4. The family tie (child, sibling, parent) between the persons should have existed before the applicant arrived on the territory of the EU+ countries.
5. The person must be able to take care of the dependent person.
6. Both persons must express their consent to reunification and/or keeping them together in writing.

For instance, if the applicant's mother, due to old age and poor health condition, is dependent on the applicant's assistance, the applicant and the mother have to prove the existence of dependency with evidence. The authorities will also assess if there is no other person who would be able to support the applicant's mother. They also examine who supported the applicant's mother before the applicant's arrival to the EU+ country and why such assistance can no longer be provided.

Article 34(3) AMMR empowers the European Commission to adopt delegated acts in relation to dependent persons. These delegated acts can cover:

- elements that should be considered to assess the relationship of dependency;
- the criteria for establishing that a family link exists;
- the criteria to assess one's capacity to take care of the dependent person;

- the elements that are to be considered for assessing one's inability to travel for a significant period.

The discretionary clauses (Article 35)

An EU+ country can decide to examine an application for international protection even if that EU+ country is not responsible according to the criteria. The application of this clause is at the discretion of the EU+ country in accordance with Article 35(1) AMMR.

In practice, the experiences of the implementation of the equivalent provision in the Dublin III regulation, Article 17(1), show that the sovereignty clause was often applied in cases where transferring the applicant would have led to the separation of family. Article 35(1) AMMR would also allow EU+ countries to use this provision to keep families together.

Article 35(2) AMMR also allows deviation from the standard criteria of the regulation. This provision helps to bring together any family relations on humanitarian grounds based on meaningful links regarding family, social or cultural considerations. In this case, an EU+ country can request another EU+ country to examine the person's application even if the other EU+ country would not be the responsible one.

In practice, this means, for example, that even if an applicant does not have family members in the EU+ countries, or if they do not have a dependency link with their child, sibling or parent, reunification with another relation can still be initiated, provided that both parties consent to it. This can concern, for example, family relations not covered by the AMMR provisions. This is however not based on any binding responsibility criteria and thus the requested EU+ country is not obliged to accept the request. It is at the discretion of the requested EU+ country to accept or refuse a request made on this ground. The EU+ country must however state the reasons for which the request is not accepted.

Timelines for determining the responsible EU+ country

The AMMR sets out strict time limits for the determination of the responsible EU+ country. This is to ensure that the applicant has quick and effective access to the asylum procedure.

The responsibility determination starts when the request for international protection is first registered in the EU+ country. With the registration, the time limit to send a request to the responsible EU+ country will start to run. If the applicant has family members in the EU+ territory, a request for taking charge should be sent as soon as possible but at the latest within two months of the registration. EU+ countries must prioritise cases of family reunification.

If an EU+ country fails to meet the time limit, it becomes responsible for examining the application for international protection, unless the applicant is an unaccompanied child.



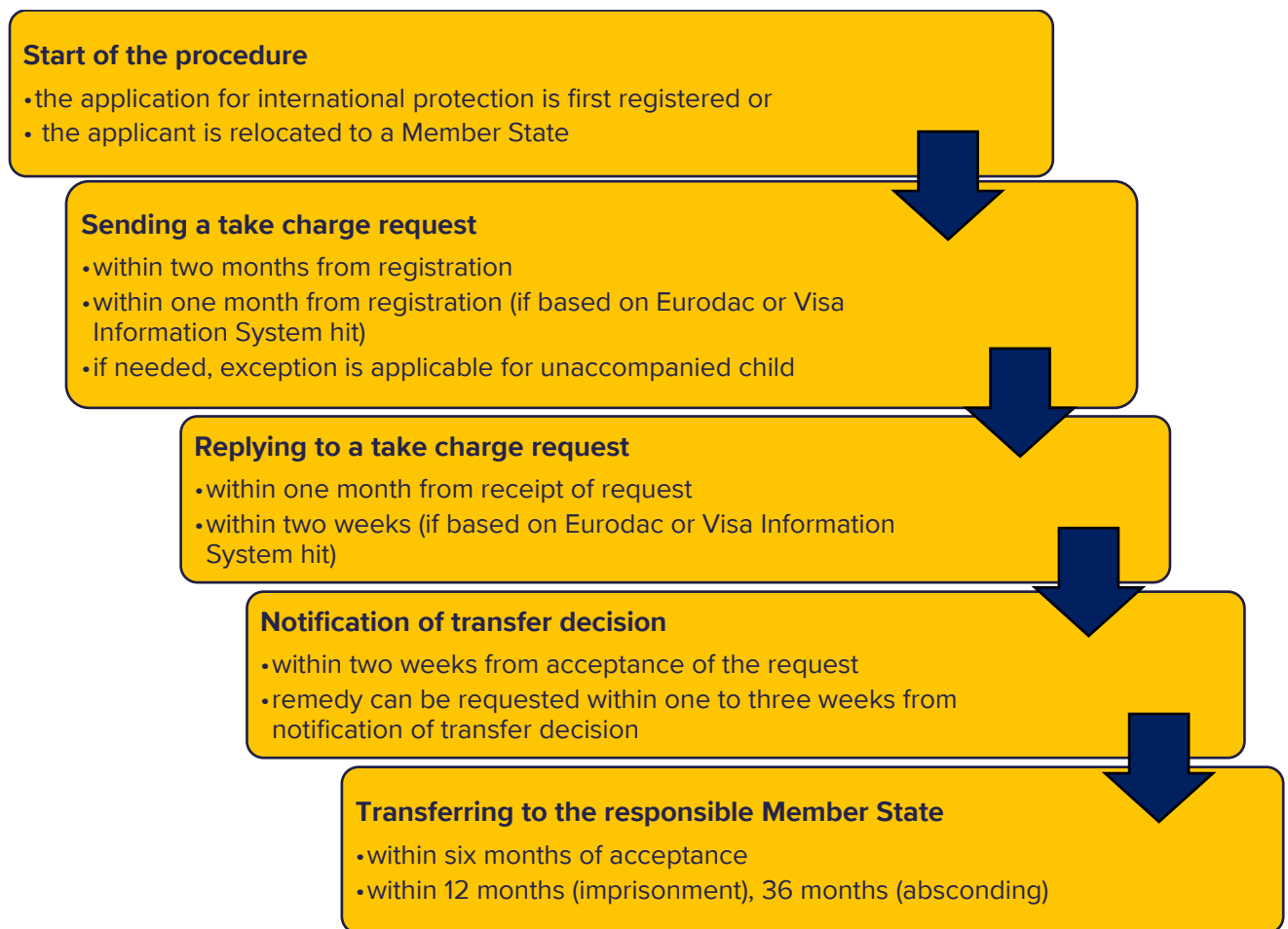
Considerations regarding the registration

Once an application is made, registration of the application follows. The registration of the application is done not more than five days after the making by the competent registering authority.

The registration of an application for international protection consists of providing the necessary information to the applicant about their rights and obligations. It requires registration of the applicant's personal information, identity documents, or other documents that the applicant might be carrying, the date and place of the application and the contact details and location or address of the applicant.

When the application is registered, a document is issued which indicates that the registration has been completed. The applicant should receive a document indicating that fact.

It is important that EU+ countries have established practices on efficiently and unambiguously identifying the moment of registration. The document should clearly indicate the date the registration was done. This date should be considered the starting day for the family reunification procedure under the AMMR.

Figure 3. Timelines set out in the AMMR for responsibility determination

The deadlines explained in Figure 3 are linked to the take charge procedure, which is used in family reunification cases. The only exception is sending a request under the discretionary clause (Article 35(2) AMMR), which can be done at any time before a first decision regarding the substance is made.

The EU+ country in which the application is registered will send a request for taking charge of the examination of the application to the EU+ country where the applicant's family member is legally residing or is legally present. The requested EU+ country will have one month to reply to the request. Failure to reply will result in accepting responsibility to examine the application.

Requests and replies should be sent as soon as possible. Missing the deadlines has consequences in terms of responsibility. As the AMMR aims to ensure that the applicant has efficient and swift access to the asylum procedure, it is important to set strict deadlines that guarantee this access. At the same time, there may be situations where it is impossible to meet the time limits.



The AMMR also sets out specific provisions for such situations, as follows.

- The applicant must submit all the relevant documents and information to the authorities within a time limit set out by the national authority. If evidence is submitted after expiry of this time limit, the EU+ country's authority still has the obligation to examine it if the time limit to send a take charge request has not yet passed.
- Notwithstanding the expiry of time limits, the determination of the responsible EU+ country can continue even after the expiry of the time limit in the case of an unaccompanied child.

Obligations related to the family tracing procedure under the asylum and migration management regulation

Information provision

In the AMMR, a greater emphasis is placed on the importance of information provision ⁽⁵⁾. It is crucial that applicants for international protection are informed about their rights and obligations, including the consequences of not complying with the latter.

Family tracing possibilities

The applicant should receive information about family tracing possibilities, which includes locating and identifying family members or dependent persons, restoring or maintaining contact and the possibility to reunite with family members ⁽⁶⁾. The applicant should be informed about the provisions related to family unity in the AMMR, about the right to request and receive the family tracing template ⁽⁷⁾ and be informed about the deadlines for submitting it, about persons or entities that can support in filling out the template and about national, international or other organisations that can facilitate the identification of family members.

Family tracing organisations

The AMMR lays down that EU+ country authorities have the obligation to facilitate the applicant's access to family tracing organisations. Where there are indications that a person has a family member or dependent person in the EU+ territory, the applicant should be informed about the organisations that can help reestablish contact with the family member in the other EU+ country and how tracing services can be requested. For this, the [Family tracing organisation](#) template can be used by EU+ countries. You can read more about family tracing organisations in part I of the *Practical Guide on Family Tracing*.

The procedure and the personal interview

The applicant should also be informed about the personal interview, its purpose and modalities ⁽⁸⁾. The interview's purpose is to explore the applicant's family relations, in particular any relevant information that could help to establish the presence of family member

⁽⁵⁾ Article 19 AMMR.

⁽⁶⁾ Article 19(1)(f) AMMR.

⁽⁷⁾ Article 22(1) lays down:

Where there are indications that the applicant has family members or relatives in a Member State, the applicant shall receive a template, to be developed by the Asylum Agency. The applicant shall fill that template with the information available to him or her in order to facilitate the application of Article 39.

Where possible, the applicant shall complete that template before the personal interview set out in this Article, as laid down in Article 22(1) AMMR.

⁽⁸⁾ Article 19(1)(g) AMMR.



or dependent person, relatives or any other family relations in the EU+ countries. The applicant receives information about the means to submit information, documents related to family links and about the assistance the EU+ country can offer to trace family members or relatives.

Assisting the applicant in engaging with family tracing organisations

When information is provided about the tracing organisations, or when the applicant receives the list of family tracing organisations that can be contacted, they can reach out to these organisations. In the case of an unaccompanied child, the representative should assist the authorities and organisations in providing information that is relevant to assess the best interests of the child and in engaging with organisations working with family tracing.

Legal counselling



Related EUAA publication

The EUAA's forthcoming guidance on the organisation of legal counselling will help EU+ country authorities to design a national system of legal counselling. The guidance will outline the key features of the content of legal counselling, the requirements for implementation and the essential qualifications for the provision of legal counselling.

The primary target group of this guidance are process managers of national authorities or personnel responsible for the setup and management of the organisation of the provision of legal counselling as well as officers responsible for procurement procedures and contract managers.

Information provision and legal support on the responsibility determination procedure are key elements to increase the effectiveness of the procedure. Legal counselling is different to legal representation before a court or tribunal. It is also different to the provision of legal information to a group of people, without any specific relevance to the individual case.

The objective of free legal counselling is to provide guidance to support the applicant in the responsibility determination procedure. It aims to provide information about the applicant's obligations and advice on the possibilities related to the application of the criteria for determining the responsible EU+ country. This can include advice and support to the applicant in filling out the family tracing template. It can also include counselling the applicant on how to substantiate their claims on family ties and explaining what kind of evidence can be submitted to prove family relations. EU+ countries should ensure that legal counselling can be accessed by the applicant. This service should be available for applicants in a take charge procedure who request it free of charge ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽⁹⁾ The scope of legal counselling is specified in Article 19(1)(l) AMMR:
[the applicant should be informed about] the right to be granted legal counselling free of charge on matters

The authorities can organise the provision of legal counselling according to their national systems. Legal counselling should be provided by a person or entity that is admitted or permitted to provide such services under national law. These entities can also be non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are accredited under national law to provide legal services or representation to applicants.



Practical tip: organising legal counselling

Authorities should keep an updated list of accredited organisations, entities or persons that can provide legal counselling to applicants as well as an overview about the type of support they can provide. Authorities should ensure that the legal counsellors have the necessary qualifications and expertise to be able to provide relevant counsel to the applicant. Where possible, it should be ensured that legal counsellors are knowledgeable on the procedure and the expectations (related to their obligations) that the administration has towards them, depending on their individual circumstances. This help ensure the applicant will have access to the services they need, whether it is an explanation of the responsibility determination criteria or support with filling out the family tracing form.



Good practice: cooperation with NGOs on legal counselling

Some EU+ country determining authorities work with NGOs that provide legal counselling to applicants, including advising on their case, explaining the evidence to submit and guiding the applicant through the procedure. These organisations actively cooperate with the responsible AMMR Unit ⁽¹⁰⁾, for example by meeting regularly, discussing outstanding, pending or complex cases and the next steps. This cooperation can prove useful in addressing issues and supporting the applicant and the family member or dependent person throughout the procedure.

Prioritisation

Emphasis and attention on family reunification procedures

To avoid long waiting times and to ensure thorough exploration of all elements of a case, more emphasis should be put in general on the applicant's family links and the whereabouts

relating to the application of the criteria set out in Chapter II or the clauses set out in Chapter III of this Part at all stages of the procedure for determining the Member State responsible, as set out in Article 21.

In addition, as stated in Article 21(1) AMMR:

Applicants shall have the right to consult, in an effective manner, a legal adviser or other counsellor, admitted or permitted as such under national law, on matters relating to the application of the criteria set out in Chapter II or the clauses set out in Chapter III of this Part at all stages of the procedure for determining the Member State responsible provided for in this Regulation.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The EU+ country authority (the unit) responsible for conducting the procedure to determine the EU+ country responsible for examining an application for international protection in accordance with Article 52 AMMR.



of the family members or dependent persons in all stages of the procedure. This is to ensure these cases are prioritised and picked up by the responsible case officers.



Good practice for an overall emphasis on family reunification

Having dedicated ‘family reunification’ supervisors within the administration that are trained on the relevant stages of the procedure (e.g. screening, registration, responsibility determination and reception) can help maintain an emphasis on family reunification cases. Family reunification supervisors can support case officers working with such cases, oversee their work, guarantee timely and effective referral and the quality of cases and ensure proper follow-up.

Early detection and referral

With shorter deadlines for the responsibility determination, it is important to have a procedure in place that allows for the early detection of potential family reunification cases. This ensures that potential family members can be quickly identified and that the cases can be referred to the AMMR Unit as soon as possible.

Prioritisation of cases of family reunification in both EU+ countries

Cases of family reunification should be prioritised both by the requesting and requested EU+ country in all stages of the procedure ⁽¹⁾. This is to ensure that waiting times are shorter and that all elements of a case can be explored in time.



Good practice for prioritisation at AMMR Units

To ensure prioritisation, cases that are referred to the AMMR Unit can be screened to identify if there are any family reunification cases referred to the unit. In a digitalised setup, the screening can be done automatically by the case management system based on key words, tags or other modalities. In a non-digitalised setup, the referred cases can be screened by a staff member who can identify potential family reunification cases.

Screening incoming cases can help prioritisation in the receiving EU+ country, too. When a take charge request is received, it should be checked whether it is a family reunification case. A case can be identified as family reunification case based on the subject line of the received message or on the legal ground of the request.

After the screening, the case should immediately be assigned to a case officer who should continue the examination of the case and prioritise family cases in their workload.

⁽¹⁾ Recital 54, Articles 23(1), 39(1), 40(1) and 46(1) AMMR.

Cooperation between AMMR Units, the authorities and organisations

EU+ country authorities and relevant organisations, such as those in the field of family tracing, should cooperate with each other to locate and identify the family members of applicants in the EU+ countries. It is important that all partners involved in the procedure cooperate with each other to explore all aspects of a case and consider all views to make an informed decision. Both the requesting and requested EU+ country have the obligation to verify the information.



Good practice: cooperation with NGOs in family tracing

Some AMMR Units have good working relationships with international organisations, NGOs or civil society organisations who are specialised in family tracing. Cooperation with these specialist organisations can be beneficial for all parties involved.

In France, Safe Passage is an active partner in the family reunification procedure. They support the applicant with information provision and guide them through the procedure, restoring or maintaining contact with the family member. They support the French Dublin Unit with the collection of relevant information, evidence and in locating and identifying the family member in the other EU+ country.

Proactiveness of information providers, case officers, representatives and the applicant

It is important to take a proactive approach in family reunification cases to actively seek family reunification possibilities. The information provider, the case officer, any person conducting the personal interview or the representative should encourage the applicant to present information on family members and ask questions about the presence of family members or dependent persons in the EU+ countries. The applicant should also actively seek possibilities for reunification.

Ensuring sufficient resources within the AMMR Unit

For the procedure to be effective, it is crucial to ensure enough capacity within the team or teams that handle the incoming requests and the outgoing requests. There should be dedicated staff who are trained to work with cases of children and families in all procedures. In addition, the authorities should also have sufficient resources and tools in place to safeguard the procedural and fundamental rights of applicants and ensure swift procedures for reuniting family members.

As specified in Article 6(2)(b) and Article 52 AMMR, it is a legal obligation for EU+ countries that the relevant authorities have the necessary human, material and financial resources for carrying out their tasks related to the determination of responsibility. It is useful for the authorities to carry out a needs assessment to establish the sufficient resources needed to effectively and swiftly carry out the family reunification procedure.



When calculating the necessary resources, the authorities can consider the following points.

- **The average number of applicants or overall workload and the ratio of family reunification cases**

Considering the average ratio of family reunification cases compared to the overall workload can give an estimation about the necessary number of staff required to work on these cases. If the unit usually sends or receives a higher number of family reunification requests, it is useful to have a dedicated team focusing on such cases whether on the outgoing or incoming side. Where the average number of family reunification cases is low, a few case officers can be trained to work with family-related cases.

- **The average length of time that family reunification cases require**

It is useful to examine how much time is required for a successful family reunification case from the moment of registration until the transfer. Considering the strict deadlines in the AMMR and the prioritisation requirement, it is advisable to increase capacity if the outgoing procedure including the transfer takes more than 6 months. Similarly, if the unit is not able to handle the incoming cases with priority or does not have enough time to properly assess the cases, it is worth considering increasing capacity.

Information requests have a crucial role in a family reunification procedure, therefore sufficient capacity should be ensured for the timely requests and replies both for outgoing and incoming cases.

- **The number of staff that is trained to handle family reunification cases**

It is important to assess if the necessary number of persons are trained. To prepare for fluctuations in staff, it is best to have more trained officers than the actual number of persons who work on family reunification cases.

- **Potential need for family reunification focal points**

In some EU+ countries, especially where the number of family reunification cases is high, it is useful to have a focal point who can be contacted by internal stakeholders where necessary. For example, a focal point can be contacted with questions related to registration, referral, identification of a potential family case, the use of family tracing template or a transfer.

- **Quality assurance and knowledge management needs**

Sufficient capacity is needed to ensure quality assurance, process monitoring and knowledge management are in place.

Resources are necessary for ensuring the quality of the procedure, which includes the overall quality of requests and replies, the completeness of files and monitoring the overall efficiency of the procedure. Quality assurance can be put into practice by using tools (e.g. checklists, digital tools via the case management system) or by specific personnel, such as team leaders or supervisors.

It is also important to regularly monitor the procedure, review internal processes, keep track of processing times, identify bottlenecks or gaps in the process and seek solutions.

Knowledge management is crucial in quality assurance. Having the necessary tools, such as guidelines, a repository of information and reference materials can support the

case officers in their work. Knowledge management tools need to be reviewed and updated regularly.

**Practical tip: ensuring sufficient resources within the authorities**

When calculating the necessary resources, consider that several authorities may be involved in family tracing or family reunification. Even if the authority's main function is not related to family tracing, some resources may still need to be allocated to carry out tasks for family tracing.

Police, border guards, registration officers and reception staff must be aware of their obligations in detecting potential family members of an applicant in the EU+ countries. An adequate number of trained personnel is needed in all procedural stages to carry out their duties, which may include the following tasks for the suggested personnel.

- Collect information and documents from applicants (e.g. reception staff).
- Conduct a personal interview (in the registration or during the responsibility determination) (e.g. case officers).
- Verify documents, information, medical information or other information, when received (e.g. police, forensic experts, document expert or country of origin information experts).
- Translate any necessary documents. This requires, for example, that a certain number of either in-house translators or a pool of external translators are always available for translation where needed for a thorough assessment of the evidence (e.g. in-house translators or pool of translators).
- Maintain contact with the applicant, representative or other stakeholders (a task for the AMMR Unit and/or reception staff).

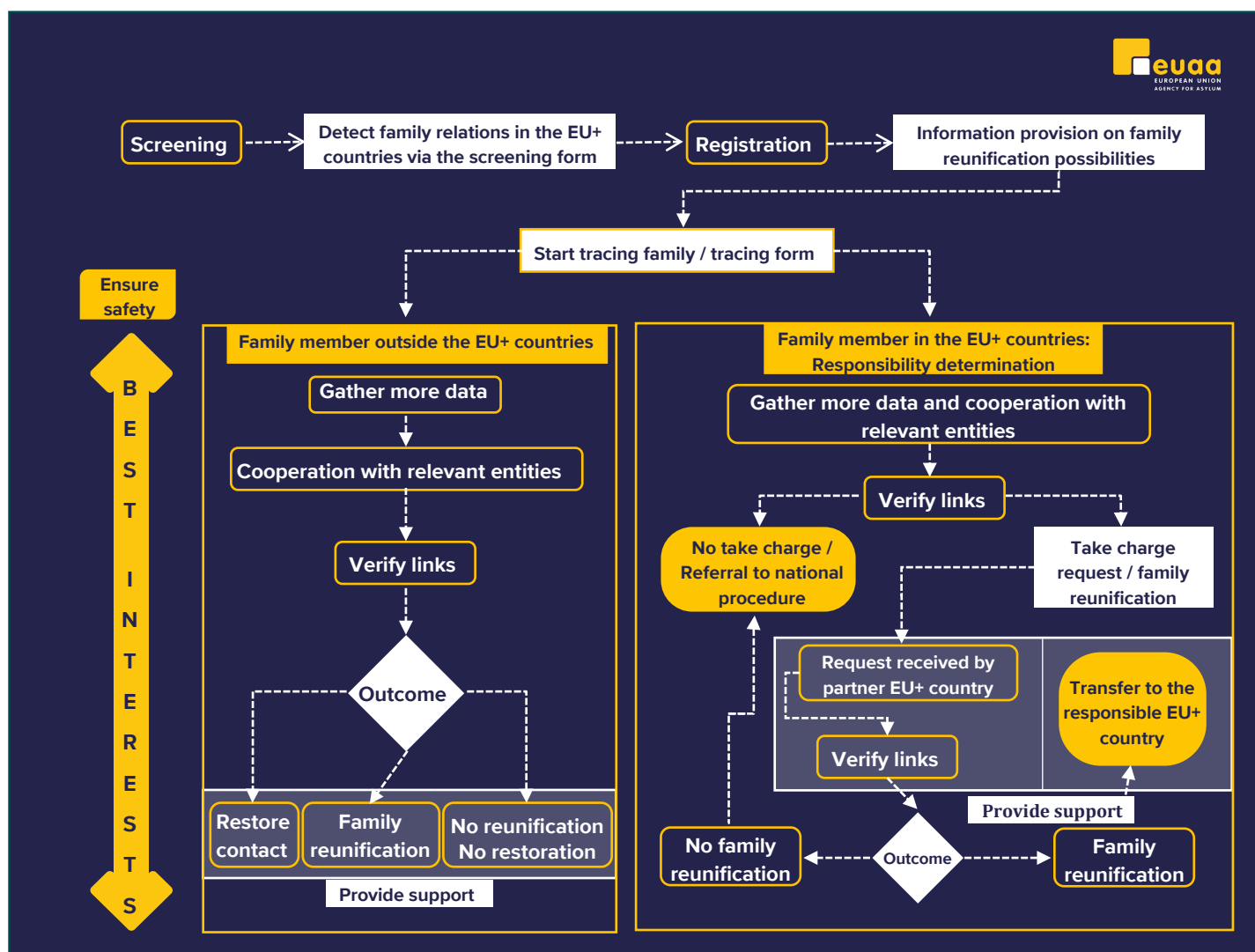


Step-by-step organisation of the family tracing procedure

Identifying potential family members of an applicant is the responsibility of the EU+ country authorities. Therefore, they should ask about the presence of family members or dependent persons of the applicant in the EU+ territory and endeavour to locate and identify them. In this regard, family tracing is continuous. Officers in contact with the applicant have a responsibility in family tracing irrespective of the stage of the procedure until a decision on the substance of the application is made.

Below is a flowchart showcasing the main steps of family tracing from the screening to the responsibility determination.

Figure 4. Family tracing flowchart for AMMR





The following step-by-step guide lists every stage of the process where family tracing is possible. It explains the possible actions that can be done to trace the family members of an applicant. The boxes at the end of each paragraph highlight the main steps that can contribute to the prioritisation of the case and to ensure the identification of potential family links.

1. Screening

What happens at the screening phase in relation to family tracing?

-
- Information is submitted to Eurodac.
- A Eurodac hit is received, if available, with information on the person.
- Hits from the Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System become available, if any.
- Information on vulnerability become apparent.
- Initial information on family members is collected through the screening form ⁽¹²⁾.

Given the importance of family ties, applicants who may have family members in the territory of the EU+ countries should be identified as soon as possible. For unaccompanied children, it is crucial that the procedural safeguards are met and that a guardian is appointed as soon as possible. This ensures the safety of the child is duly considered when starting the process.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1356 ⁽¹³⁾, third-country nationals who have crossed the external border without fulfilling the entry conditions and who have applied for international protection during border checks, or those who have been disembarked after search and rescue operations, should undergo a screening procedure before being referred to the appropriate procedures.

The objective of screening is to reinforce the control of third-country nationals who cross the external borders, to identify each individual and to check against their data in relevant databases to see if they pose a threat to internal security. During screening, information on the person is submitted to Eurodac. If the person's data has already been registered in the system, a Eurodac hit is received. Information from the Visa Information System or the Schengen Information System may also become available at this stage. In addition, the screening also includes preliminary health and vulnerability checks, which is why situations of dependency can potentially be detected. Hence, screening supports the referral to appropriate procedures.

⁽¹²⁾ The screening form pursuant to Article 17 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1356](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 introducing the screening of third-country nationals at the external borders and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/817 (OJ L, 2024/1356, 22.5.2024).

⁽¹³⁾ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1356](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 introducing the screening of third-country nationals at the external borders and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/817 (OJ L, 2024/1356, 22.5.2024).





Indication of presence of family members in the EU+ countries

Screening is not part of the asylum procedure but through the collection of information on potential family members, it can contribute to identifying potential family links of an applicant at an early stage. The authorities carrying out the screening process should fill in the screening form. This form requires the authorities to fill the form with the information provided by the person concerned, including whether they have family members located on the territory of any of the EU+ countries.

Immediate referral to appropriate procedure

Where the person claims to have family members in the EU+ territory, the case should immediately be referred to the appropriate authorities, for example, to the authority that will register the person's asylum claim. Upon referral to the appropriate procedure, it is paramount to **mark all cases for which potential family links are identified**. This will enable the registration authority to prioritise the cases of applicants who may have family members on the territory EU+ countries.



Identifying potential family links in the screening phase

- Ask the applicant (adult or child) of the whereabouts of their family members, in particular regarding those members present in the EU+ countries.
- Inform the applicant about the possibility to be reunited with a family member in an EU+ country.
- Fill out the screening form. Make sure to answer the questions on the presence of family members in the EU+ countries.
- Check if information on family members is available in the relevant databases (e.g. if an alert was placed in Schengen Information System for searched family members).
- Refer the case to the appropriate procedure.



Good practice: prioritisation in screening

EU+ countries can decide to disseminate the family tracing template to all persons who, during the screening, claim to have family members in the EU+ countries. When the family tracing template is given to the person, information should be provided about the tracing possibilities, how to fill out the template and where and how the person can request support to fill it out. The family tracing template can therefore already be given to the applicant at the making stage.



2. Registration

What happens in the registration phase in relation to family tracing?

- This is the start of the responsibility determination procedure and time limits start to run.
- At this step, there is a possibility for early identification of potential family reunification cases.
- Information is provided to the applicant, including on the AMMR.
- The registration interview takes place, which might be combined with the AMMR interview.
- AMMR responsibility indicators may be identified.
- The family tracing template is provided to the applicant, where possible, unless it was provided earlier.

Awareness of time limits

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 (APR) ⁽¹⁴⁾, an application for international protection should be registered within five days from when it was made. Remember the date of registering the application is the starting date for the responsibility determination procedure in cases of family reunification.

In accordance with Article 27(1)(a) APR, registration must include the following information on the applicant:

- the applicant's name;
- date and place of birth;
- gender;
- nationalities or the fact that the applicant is stateless;
- family members present in an EU+ country or dependent persons (as well as siblings and relatives, in the case of unaccompanied children) ⁽¹⁵⁾;
- any other information that may be relevant for the determination of the responsible EU+ country.

Identifying potential family members of an applicant in the EU+ countries

Filling out the registration form or complementing any measures that had been started during the screening phase can contribute to identifying potential family links. In the registration phase, the applicant should be asked once again whether they have family members or

⁽¹⁴⁾ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1348](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (OJ L, 2024/1348, 22.5.2024).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Article 27(1)(a) APR.



dependent persons located on the territory of any EU+ country. If so, information should be provided about the possibility to reunite family members in accordance with the AMMR provisions. Information on the applicant's rights and obligations should also be provided. Where possible, the family tracing template should be provided to the applicant already at this stage to help prioritisation.

Information provision about rights and obligations of the applicant

Information provision is crucial at this stage. It is important to take a proactive approach to encourage the applicant to come forward with information on family members. Providing the main elements of the information orally and giving the applicant an opportunity to ask questions can significantly contribute to building trust and ensuring that the information is correctly understood.

The applicant should understand that it is their obligation to provide all information on family members or dependent persons, to submit evidence that prove their statements and that both the applicant and the family member are required to give their consent to the reunification if they are willing to be reunited. If the applicant does not want to be reunited with the family member, they should inform the authorities about this as soon as possible. Even if consent was already provided, it can be withdrawn.

If, despite having been informed about the right to be reunited with a family member, the applicant willingly fails to provide information on family members, moves and applies for international protection in another EU+ country, it will no longer be possible for them to claim the application of the family reunification clauses in the AMMR.

The applicant should also be provided with information on the deadlines of the procedure. If the authorities have specific time limits for submission of documents, these should be explained.

In the case of an unaccompanied child, it is important to provide information in a child-friendly and age-appropriate manner. Information provision should also entail the distribution of the relevant information leaflets. These leaflets can be further supported, for instance, by posters placed in waiting rooms, explaining the possibility of family reunification and the obligations of the applicant to provide information on family members.



Identifying potential family tracing cases in the registration phase

The registering officer should:

- Ask the applicant or, in the case of child, the child and the representative about the presence of family members, in particular in the EU+ countries and record their answer in the registration form.
- Inform the applicant about the possibility to be reunited with a family member in the EU+ countries.
- Inform the applicant about the possibility to request and receive the family tracing template.



- Inform the applicant about the possibility to request support in filling out the template and to access legal counselling.
- Inform the applicant about their right to request the assistance of organisations that can help them tracing their family members.
- Inform the applicant about how to provide documents and information on the family links and the timeline for doing so.
- Inform the applicant about the consequences of not providing information.
- Inform the applicant that both the applicant and the family member must provide consent to the reunification in writing.
- When the applicant claims to have family members in the EU+ countries, mark the case for referral so that it is easier to identify and prioritise.

Possibility to organise the asylum and migration management regulation interview

Depending on the way the procedure is organised in your country, a personal interview, focusing on exploring the responsibility criteria may take place at the registration phase or later, after referral to the AMMR Unit. You can read more about family tracing during the personal interview in Section [Organising the personal interview](#).

Family tracing template

Article 22(1) AMMR sets out that the applicant has the right to request and receive the template on family tracing. The EUAA has developed this form for the identification and tracing of family members for adults and for unaccompanied children ⁽¹⁶⁾.

It is important that even if a child has legal capacity in a certain EU+ country, it is always the representative or guardian of the child who fills in the form. Legal capacity of a child is governed by national legislation, a child may therefore have legal capacity in one country and may not have legal capacity in another.

⁽¹⁶⁾ EUAA, [Family Tracing Form – Adult](#), 2025 and the EUAA, [Family Tracing Form – Child](#), 2025.

Figure 5. Family tracing form – for adults (cover page and Part 1 of the form)

Figure 5. Family tracing form – for adults (cover page and Part 1 of the form)

The figure displays two pages of the 'Family Tracing Form for Adult Applicants'.

Left Page (Cover Page):

- Header:** euada EUROPEAN UNION ASYLUM FOR ADULTS
- Title:** FAMILY TRACING FORM FOR ADULT APPLICANTS
- Form Fields:**
 - Name of the EU+ country
 - Address of the national authority
 - EU+ country specific information on how and where to submit this form
- Text:**

This is a placeholder for EU+ countries to include the relevant modalities concerning the submission of this form. How should this form be submitted? To which address? By when?

Family Tracing Form (Adult)

Why have I been given this form?

The authorities in this country have given you this form because you have applied for international protection and said you have a family member in a Member State of the European Union or an associated country (referred to as the EU+ countries).

The Member States of the European Union are Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden. The four associated countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The information you provide in this form will help the authorities in this country find your family members, prioritise your case and find the EU+ country that should examine your application. As you have family members in another EU+ country, the country where your family member is present may be responsible for examining your application.

Important. Let the authorities know if you need any support filling in this form.

Why have I been asked to fill in this form?

The authorities in this country need to know if you have family members in any of the EU+ countries. If you do, the country where they are residing might be responsible for handling your application.

The authorities in this country also want to help you reunite with your family members in the EU+ countries if you want to be with them. If you want to be reunited with your family member, let us know and we will explore if this is possible and try to make this happen. If you do not want to be reunited, tell us as soon as possible.

Right Page (Part 1: Personal Information of the Applicant):

- Header:** euada EUROPEAN UNION ASYLUM FOR ADULTS
- Title:** FAMILY TRACING FORM FOR ADULT APPLICANTS
- Section:** PART 1. PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE APPLICANT
- Form Fields:**
 - Case number:
 - First name
 - Surname
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Date of birth (day/month/year)
 - Place of birth
 - Date of departure from country of origin
 - Nationality/ies
 - Address/accommodation
 - Contact details (email address, social media account, phone number)
 - ☐ I confirm that I have a family member who is residing in an EU+ country.
 - My family member is (multiple options can be selected):
 - ☐ my spouse or unmarried partner (Part 2)
 - ☐ minor child (Part 3)
 - ☐ person dependent on my assistance or I depend on this person's assistance (Part 4)
 - Other relevant information
 - Date and signature of the applicant

Figure 6. Family tracing form – for unaccompanied children (cover page and Part 1 of the form)

Figure 6. Family tracing form – for unaccompanied children (cover page and Part 1 of the form)

The figure displays two pages of the 'Family Tracing Form for Unaccompanied Child Applicants'.

Left Page (Cover Page):

- Header:** euada EUROPEAN UNION ASYLUM FOR ADULTS
- Title:** FAMILY TRACING FORM FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILD APPLICANTS
- Form Fields:**
 - Name of the EU+ country
 - Address of the national authority
 - EU+ country specific information on how and where to submit this form
- Text:**

This is a placeholder for EU+ countries to include the relevant modalities concerning the submission of this form. How should this form be submitted? To which address? By when?

Family Tracing Form (Child)

This form is to be filled in by the guardian/representative (1) of the child. The guardian/representative should read the form all the way through with the child and explain all the details.

Why have I been given this form?

You are in a foreign country and you are alone. You have applied for asylum and told someone that you have family members in a Member State of the European Union or an associated country (referred to as the EU+ countries).

The Member States of the European Union are Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden. The four associated countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The authorities in this country want to help you find your family and be reunited with them again. That is why they are giving you this form to fill in. You need to tell the authorities in this country information about your family, such as who they are, where they live and how to contact them.

You do not have to fill out the form by yourself. A special helper, called a guardian, will help you. If you need more help, you can also ask other people, such as case officers, reception staff and legal advisors.

Why have I been asked to fill in this form?

The authorities in this country need to know if you have family members in any of the EU+ countries. If you do, the country where they live might be responsible for handling your application.

(1) In this form, in accordance with the legislative framework detailed in the EUAA, Practical Guide on Family Tracing, 2023, section 'Terminology', the terms 'representative' and 'guardian' are used interchangeably.

Right Page (Part 1: Personal Information of the Child):

- Header:** euada EUROPEAN UNION ASYLUM FOR ADULTS
- Title:** FAMILY TRACING FORM FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILD APPLICANTS
- Section:** PART 1. PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE CHILD
- Form Fields:**
 - Case number:
 - First name
 - Surname
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Date of birth (day/month/year)
 - Place of birth
 - Date of departure from country of origin
 - Nationality/ies
 - Address/accommodation
 - Contact details (email address, social media account, phone number)
 - Contact details of the guardian**
 - First name
 - Surname
 - Phone number
 - Email address
 - ☐ I confirm that I have a family member who is staying in an EU+ country.
 - My family member is (multiple options can be selected):
 - ☐ my parent (mother or father) (Part 1)
 - ☐ my sibling (brother or sister) (Part 2)
 - ☐ my aunt or uncle (Part 3)
 - ☐ my grandparent (grandmother or grandfather) (Part 4)
 - ☐ other family relation (Part 5) (please specify):
 - Other relevant information:
 - Date and signature of the guardian/representative

What is the purpose of the family tracing form?

The objective of the form is to ensure that potential family links of the applicant are identified at an early stage. The form can also serve the purpose of identifying the applicant's willingness to be reunited with a family member and can indicate to the applicant which documents or evidence may be needed later. Collecting all available documents/evidence on family links is important because it helps in tracing the family member if the applicant has lost contact.

When should the applicant receive the form?

The form should be given to the applicant as soon as possible, ideally at the stage of making an application or during registration, but in any event, it should be provided at the latest during the personal interview. The form can be handed over to the applicant at any stage when it is identified that the applicant may have potential family links in an EU+ country. In any case, it should be provided in reasonable time before the time limit to send a take charge request expires.



Good practice: providing the form before registration

Best practice would be to hand out the form before or during the registration of the application. If, at the stage of screening, the person has already indicated having family members in the EU+ territory, the information from the screening form can already be extracted and included in the family tracing form. In this case, the applicant should have the opportunity to check, confirm or correct the information or add new information.

Who should fill in the form?

Applicants for international protection who have family members in the EU+ countries should fill in the form if deemed capable of understanding and completing it. Otherwise, the authority should provide support to ensure the applicant can comply with their rights and obligations, especially considering any vulnerabilities or special procedural needs. Applicants should be informed about how they can request support for filling in the form. If the applicant is an unaccompanied child, the guardian/representative should fill in the form.

What information should be provided to the applicant about the form?

The applicant should be informed about the possibility to be reunited with a family member for the purpose of having their application examined by the EU+ country where the family member is staying.

EU+ countries should add specific information on how to submit the form, for example, via email, post or in person, where the form should be submitted and by when, if the country has a specific deadline for this.

They should also be informed about the purpose of the form, how to fill it in and which organisations can support them during the procedure, especially if they would like to request the support of tracing organisations. The applicant should also be informed about their obligations. This notably includes the need to inform the authorities of the whereabouts of



family members in the EU+ territory, that they must cooperate with the authorities and they must stay in the EU+ country which is carrying out the responsibility determination procedure until the responsible EU+ country is established.

The applicant should be informed that providing information in the form is necessary even if they do not want to be reunited with the family member. Their willingness to be reunited is recorded in the form and if they do not wish to be reunited, no further action will be taken by the authorities. The formal consent of the applicant to the reunification will be requested in another form. The applicant should be informed that they can only claim the application of the family criteria in the country where their application is first registered.

What support is available for filling in the family tracing form?

EU+ countries should add specific information on any persons, organisations or entities that can assist the applicant in filling in the form.

The authorities responsible for registration, such as the police or border guards can support the applicant. In the case of a child, the guardian should assist the child. Legal counsellors or advisors can be involved at this stage, either to support the applicant in filling in the form or to support family tracing if requested to do so by the applicant. Case officers who conduct the personal interview can also support the applicant with filling in the form or use the form as the basis for the interview. If the applicant has any special procedural needs, these should be identified and adhered to.



What information is available in the family tracing form?

The family tracing form for adults contains the following information.

- General information about the objectives of the form, what information is collected and why.
- Part 1. Personal data of the applicant (this can include information from the registration or screening form).
- Parts 2–3. Information on family members present on the territory of the EU+ countries (spouse or unmarried partner, minor child).
 - Personal data of the family member.
 - Contact details of the family member.
 - Legal/residence status of the family member.
 - Case number.
 - Any type of identification number of the family member, if available.
 - If there is willingness to be reunited. This is not to be confused with the formal written consent to be reunited.
 - Any vulnerabilities or specific conditions of the family member that the authorities in the country should be aware of.
- Part 4. Information on dependent persons.
 - Relationship with the person.
 - Who is dependent on someone's care: the applicant or the family member?



- Personal data.
- Type of dependency link.
- Contact details of the family member.
- Legal/residence status of the family member.
- Case number.
- Any type of identification number of the family member, if available.
- If there is willingness to be reunited. (This should not be confused with the formal written consent to be reunited.)
- When and where they last had contact, for example in person, via phone or other.
- If any tracing efforts have been made already.
- Any evidence they can submit to prove the relationship.
- Part 5. Family tree (optional).
 - The applicant can draw a family tree. Here family members or relatives residing outside the EU+ countries can also be indicated.

The family tracing form for unaccompanied children follows a similar structure and requests similar information as detailed below.

- General information about the objectives of the form, what information is collected and why.
- Part 1. Personal data of the child. This can include information from the registration form) and personal data of the guardian/representative.
- Parts 2–5. Information on family members present on the territory of the EU+ countries (parent, sibling, relative, other person).
 - Personal data of the family member, sibling, relative or other person.
 - Contact details of the family member, sibling, relative or other person.
 - Legal/residence status of the family member, sibling, relative or other person.
 - Case number.
 - Any type of identification number of the family member, sibling, relative or other person, if available.
 - If there is willingness to be reunited.
 - When and where they last had contact, for example in person, via phone or other.
 - If any tracing efforts have been made already.
- Part 6. Family tree.
 - The applicant can draw a family tree. Here family members or relatives residing outside the EU+ countries can also be indicated.

How is the family tracing form used in the family reunification procedure?



The family tracing form helps to prioritise cases of applicants who have family members in the EU+ countries. It enables the authorities to access basic information on potential family links at an early stage and initiate the procedure.

The family tracing form helps the interviewer to explore the applicant's family relations in the EU+ countries. The interviewer can use the form to ask specific questions about family members. This can help locating or identifying the person in the other EU+ country, understanding their relationship, the situation of the family member or dependent person. It can also help the case officers understanding what other information should be collected from the applicant.

The family tracing form can also support the applicant in understanding what information is necessary to provide to the authorities and why. If the applicant is not in contact with the family member, the family tracing form can help to locate and identify the family member based on the information that the applicant shares.

The completed form can also be used for sending an information request concerning the family member so as to locate and identify them and verify their presence in an EU+ country.

If the applicant indicated in the form that they do not want to be reunited with the family member, the information in the form will not be used and no further action will be taken.

3. Referral to the AMMR Unit

What happens in the referral phase in relation to family tracing?

- At this step, there is a possibility for the early identification of potential family reunification cases.
- At this stage, priority cases are flagged, for example applicants with family members in the EU+ territory are referred to the AMMR Unit as soon as possible.
- Documents are submitted to the AMMR Unit.

When the application for international protection is registered and potential family links (or other indicators of responsibility of another EU+ country) are identified, the case should immediately be referred to the AMMR Unit for further action.

To ensure the identification and prioritisation of potential family reunification cases, it is important to flag these files.



Considerations regarding discretionary clauses and 'meaningful links'

Before sending the file, the registration officer can consult the AMMR Unit on the potential application of the discretionary clause. This may be the case in situations where the applicant claims to have 'meaningful links' to someone in another EU+ country or in the EU+ country of application. Depending on practices, some EU+ countries may have internal guidance about the application of the discretionary clause or decide to develop internal guiding principles on 'meaningful links' in accordance with Article 35 AMMR. The best way



to explore any reasons to apply the discretionary clauses is the personal (AMMR) interview with the applicant.



Identifying potential family cases at the stage of referral

To ensure effective and efficient processing, the officer responsible for the referral to the AMMR Unit should:

- refer the case as soon as possible (do not wait to send the referral until everything is collected);
- flag that this is a potential family reunification case;
- flag if the case concerns an unaccompanied minor;
- clearly mark the case for prioritisation;
- include all available documents from the applicant;
- flag if information about any documents or other elements of proof or circumstantial evidence still need to be collected, indicating by when and whom;
- indicate any identified vulnerabilities of the applicant;
- include the family tracing form, if available;
- flag any information on potential indicators that another EU+ country may be responsible.

4. Responsibility determination

What happens in the responsibility determination phase in relation to family tracing?

- At this step, there is a requirement for prioritisation.
- The request should be sent within two months of the date of registration of the application at the latest.
- The review of available evidence takes place.
- The personal (AMMR) interview takes place, if not conducted earlier.
- Documents are collected and best interests assessment are conducted, when applicable.
- The applicant, or the child's representative, is contacted for documents, consent or more information.
- An information request is sent, if needed, and a reply is collected or received.
- The take charge request is sent to the EU+ country where the family member, sibling or relative of the unaccompanied child is present or where the family member of the applicant is present.
- A response to the take charge request is received.
- The responsible EU+ country is determined.



Screening cases per priority

Once the case is referred to the AMMR Unit, it must be ensured that it is identified as a priority case and is assigned to a case officer responsible for handling such cases. This ensures that the case can be handled with priority and immediately examined.

The AMMR Unit may receive several cases that require prioritisation. If the priority cases are too many as compared to the cases, or there are not enough available case officers, it should be identified which cases among those needing prioritisation need to be treated first. This decision may be based on the special needs of the person, the type of case, the steps needed in the procedure or other, as set out in the unit's internal guidance.

Review the available information

In family reunification cases, the file might not be complete and more information might be necessary. To identify the next steps, the case's completeness should be assessed.



Checklist to verify the completeness of the received case file

Personal data of the applicant

- ☐ The file contains the personal data of the applicant.
- ☐ The information on personal data is clearly identifiable.
- ☐ The contact details of the applicant are available.
- ☐ Document proving identity and/or age is available.

Personal data of the family member

- ☐ ID document or any document of the family member is available.
- ☐ The contact details of the family member are available.

Information on family ties and identity

- ☐ The family tracing form was filled out and is available.
- ☐ Statements of the applicant are available on the family link between the persons and information on their relationship.

Evidence on family link

- ☐ Documents supporting the family link, such as birth certificate, family book, passport (e.g. where the name of the family member is visible), other.
- ☐ Circumstantial evidence is available, such as statements from the applicant or the family member.
- ☐ Records from the EU+ country or a photo of the family member is available.
- ☐ The applicant's documents have been translated either into a national language of the EU+ country where the applicant is registering the application or English.

Consent or, in the case of a child, willingness



- ☐ The willingness to be reunited is confirmed with the consent of the person.

In the case of dependency

- ☐ Information on the nature of the dependency.
- ☐ Medical files (translated) are available.
- ☐ Information is provided as to why they were separated.
- ☐ Information is provided on who is the dependent person.
- ☐ Information is provided on how the dependent person will be cared for by the other person.

If the applicant is an unaccompanied child

- ☐ Identify whether there were doubts about the age of the person, such as any relevant information on their age, including whether an age assessment was conducted.
- ☐ Information from screening: is information on the age available or is there information on whether doubts were raised concerning the age?
- ☐ If an age assessment was conducted, information on the method used (medical, statements or documented) is available.
- ☐ Information on the best interests assessment (it may also contain information relevant for the tracing).
- ☐ The family tree of the child is available.
- ☐ There is explanation on the relative's ability to take care of the child.
- ☐ The child's views and willingness to be reunited with the parents, siblings or relatives is confirmed.
- ☐ Information on the special needs of the child is available.

Determining the next steps

If the evaluation concludes that the information is not complete, the case officer:

- conducts a personal interview with the applicant and their guardian, if not already done;
- conducts an additional interview to clarify doubts or to collect more information;
- contacts the representative of the child to collect more information;
- facilitates the applicant's access to tracing services;
- requests information from the EU+ country where the applicant's family member is present or requests information specifically about the family member.

Organising the personal (asylum and migration management regulation) interview

EU+ country authorities must conduct a personal interview with the applicant in accordance with Article 22 AMMR.



The purpose of the personal interview is to help deciding which EU+ country is responsible for the examination of the person's application for international protection. The personal interview should also help to support the applicant's understanding of the information that was provided in writing in the form of the common information material. This material is provided to the applicant as soon as possible, but at the latest at the stage of registration. It should also help the applicant to understand the procedure of the determination of the responsible EU+ country, including their rights and obligations and the consequences of not complying with their obligations.



Practices for organising the interview

Depending on internal processes, the interview can take place at different procedural stages and in various ways across the EU+ countries. Some EU+ countries combine the registration with the 'AMMR interview' or provide a questionnaire to identify the potential indicators of responsibility of an EU+ country at an early stage. Some EU+ countries have a built-in interview template in their case management tool focusing on questions related to the identification of family members. Other EU+ countries organise a specific interview soon after the case is referred to the AMMR Unit.

If not done prior to the referral, the AMMR interview should be organised with the applicant, and in the case of an unaccompanied child, the representative. This interview should be conducted as soon as possible and before any take charge request is made so as to identify potential family links in another EU+ country. The family tracing form, filled in by the applicant, can be the basis for the interview. The interviewer can further explore the family relations of the applicant. You can read about what information should be provided with the form in the section on [family tracing template](#).

Considering the prioritisation obligation, it is best to organise the personal interview as soon as possible once potential family links are identified. The personal interview should explore the applicant's family links to a person in an EU+ country or dependent person and focus on the areas covered by the family tracing template. These concern the person's situation and their relationship with the family member or dependent person, or, in the case of a child, their relationship with the parent, sibling or relatives. An assessment of the best interests of the child should always be conducted in such cases.

The interview can also serve to provide information to the applicant about family reunification possibilities (if not already done). It serves to build trust between the applicant and the authorities. In this way, it encourages the applicant to come forward with any relevant information or documents, even if they become available later in the procedure, as well as the relevant deadlines for providing such information or documentation.





Practical tips for identifying and processing dependency cases

Cases of dependency require thorough examination by trained personnel with the right expertise and skills. A detailed interview with the person is the best way to explore the type of dependency and to assess the person's capacity to take care of the dependent person.

If an (adult) **applicant** is identified as being **in a situation of vulnerability** it is important that they are informed about the right to be reunited or kept together with their child, sibling or parent if they depend on their support. They can fill in the family tracing template (Part 4) and indicate the cause of dependency and the person who can support them.

If an **applicant is not in a situation of vulnerability**, they should always be asked if they have a child, parent or sibling who is in a vulnerable situation and depends on the applicant's care. They should be informed about the possibility of being reunited or kept together with the dependent person.

The personal interview should explore the applicant's family links, including if they have adult children, parents or siblings in the EU+ countries and if there are any potential dependency links. For potential areas to cover in the interview, see the box [Aspects related to family links to cover in the personal interview](#).



Practical tips for identifying potential discretionary clauses

The applicant should always be informed about the fact that EU+ countries can apply the discretionary clauses if there are compelling reasons to do so. They should be informed about the possibility of having their application examined in the country where they registered their application or being reunited with a family member in another EU+ country. This can be the case even if the relation does not meet the definition of a family member according to the AMMR.

In the interview with the applicant, case officers should always ask questions to explore whether there are any conditions that would potentially trigger the application of the discretionary clauses. Even if an applicant for international protection did not indicate having any family members in the EU+ countries, it is useful to ask in the personal interview whether the applicant has any relations in the EU+ countries and explore potential dependency links or humanitarian reasons that may be applicable in their case. Meaningful family links of an applicant to a person in an EU+ country and potential dependency links can be explored in all cases.

For potential areas to cover in the interview, see the box [Aspects related to family links to cover in the personal interview](#).



Aspects related to family links to cover in the personal interview

It is important that the interviewer proactively asks questions related to the person's individual situation. The points below are a reminder of the issues that may need to be explored, depending on the circumstances of the applicant, to gather the information necessary for determining the responsibility. It is up to the interviewer to cover the topics below phrasing the questions in the most appropriate way in each case.

These aspects complement the collection of information through the family tracing form. The interviewer should build the interview on the information that is already available from other sources.

Personal situation of the applicant



- ☐ Is the applicant an unaccompanied child?
- ☐ Is the applicant vulnerable or has any special needs?
- ☐ Is the applicant dependent on someone else's care? If yes, in what way?
- ☐ Is the applicant able to support their statements with documents or other relevant elements?

Potential family links of the applicant – spouse or unmarried partner



- ☐ Did the applicant fill out the family tracing form? If not, the form should be provided.
- ☐ Does the person have family members in any of the EU+ countries?
- ☐ What are the personal details of the family member?
- ☐ In which EU+ country does the family member live?
- ☐ What is the residence status of the family member in the EU+ country?
- ☐ Where and when was the relationship formed? If the family member in question is the applicant's spouse, when, where and how were they married?
- ☐ Is the applicant able to support the relationship with any evidence?
- ☐ Is the applicant in contact with the family member? If so, how often?
- ☐ What are the contact details of the family member?
- ☐ If they have lost contact, when did it happen and how?
- ☐ When and how did they separate?
- ☐ Has the person used the services of tracing organisations in the past?
- ☐ Is the applicant willing to be reunited with their spouse?

Potential family links of the applicant – dependency



If the applicant is the dependent person

- ☐ What is the nature of the dependency?
- ☐ How are the persons related?
- ☐ What is the nature of their relationship?
- ☐ How can the child, sibling or parent take care of the applicant?



- ☐ How did the child, sibling or parent take care of the applicant in the past?

If the applicant is the person providing the care to a dependent person

- ☐ What is the nature of the dependency?
- ☐ How are the persons related?
- ☐ What is the nature of their relationship?
- ☐ How can the applicant take care of the dependent person?
- ☐ How did the applicant take care of the dependent person in the past, for example in the country of origin or the country of transit?

If a dependency link is identified

- ☐ Is the applicant able to substantiate the relationship with any proof, such as medical documents, psychological or social reports?
- ☐ Would the person like to be reunited?

Potential family links of the applicant – child



- ☐ Does the child have family members, siblings or relatives in any of the EU+ countries?
- ☐ Where does the family member, sibling or relative live?
- ☐ How often are they in contact?
- ☐ How do they keep in touch?
- ☐ What is the status of the family member, sibling or relative in the EU+ country?
- ☐ What is the nature of their relationship? How close are they?
- ☐ How was their relationship in the country of origin or the country of transit?
- ☐ What are the child's views about the potential family reunification?
- ☐ Is the child willing to be reunited with the family member, sibling or relative?
- ☐ Are there any supporting documents related to the child's age?

Sending information requests to trace and identify family members or dependent persons

If the case officer decides to send an information request to the EU+ country where the applicant's family member or dependent person is present, the correct form and the correct email subject should be used for unaccompanied minors and dependent persons. This will help the requested EU+ country to identify these cases and prioritise these information requests. It is good to mark these cases as urgent, particularly in the subject line, to help prioritisation of these requests.

Sending an information request to another EU+ country should not delay any other steps that can be taken to identify family members or relatives on the part of the requesting EU+ country. Any such steps should be carried out in parallel whilst waiting for the answer from the requested EU+ country.



Information requests have a crucial role in tracing and identifying family members or dependent persons. It is therefore important that these requests are treated and replied to in time. When the information request is received, the requested EU+ country should prioritise the cases that concern families. They should make sure that the requested information is collected as soon as possible and that a reply is provided in time.



Prioritising information requests related to family links

Once an information request is received and assigned to a case officer in the requested EU+ country, the case officer should take the following steps related to the identification of potential family links.

- Prioritise the information requests related to family unity, especially for minors.
- Check the databases.
 - Assess whether all information on the family member's or dependent person's legal presence or data on family member corresponds.
- Locate the family member or dependent person.
 - Confirm whether the person is still present on the territory or not.
- Collect additional information.
 - The requested EU+ country can consider the possibility/need to hold a personal interview with the family member or dependent person (there may be time constraints).
 - The requested EU+ country may consider requesting the help of organisations that can support with tracing the family member, if the person cannot be located.
- Confirm the willingness of reunification.
 - Consider the privacy of the family member: do they want to be contacted by the applicant or the authorities?
 - Is the family member or dependent person willing to be reunited?
There could be reasons for not being willing to be contacted or reunited. This should be taken into account and it should be checked what information can be shared with the partner EU+ country.
- Confirm the family member's understanding of the information.
 - The family member or dependent person (and the applicant) should be provided with information about the procedure (e.g. to prevent that they do not decline the possibility of reunification because they fear that it may have financial implications on them) by the requested EU+ country.

When the case officer in the requesting EU+ country receives the reply to the information request, they must continue the assessment of the information on family links and the completeness of the file. If it is deemed that the case file is complete, the information is then verified and the take charge request should be sent to the responsible EU+ country as soon as possible.



Once the take charge request is sent and it is accepted by the requested EU+ country, the preparations for the transfer can start so as to conclude the successful family reunification process. It is important to manage the applicant's expectations about the travel and arrival to the responsible EU+ country.

Prioritisation by the requested EU+ country

It is not enough to prioritise a family reunification case by the requesting EU+ country. The requested EU+ country should also ensure that family reunification cases are properly identified in the caseload and are treated appropriately.

If the requested EU+ country does not find any or sufficient information on the family member or dependent person who is allegedly on its territory, the authorities can request the services of tracing organisations or other stakeholders that might help locating the person.



Steps in family tracing cases at the AMMR Unit stage

- **Screen the referred cases**

Screen the cases that were referred to the AMMR Unit to identify if there are any potential family reunification requests. Assign the cases to trained officers so they start working on the cases as soon as possible.

- **Verify completeness of the information**

Examine the available information and determine what is missing. Based on this assessment, establish the next steps (e.g. a personal interview with the applicant, contacting family tracing organisations, etc.).

- **Monitor time limits**

Once the steps in the procedure are known and the time available, set out a plan for the processing of the case, such as which steps to take before sending the take charge request.

If the case is complete and there is no need to take any extra steps, send take charge request as soon as possible in view of the obligation to prioritise family reunification cases.

- **Coordinate**

Involve the relevant stakeholders in the processing of a case. Where the applicant is a child, their representative should be involved in all steps of the procedure. The applicant must also be involved, for example to provide their consent or documents to prove a family relation. Staff from the reception centre might also have to be contacted from time to time.

The need for continuous coordination should therefore be kept in mind and accounted for when calculating time limits.

- **Communicate**



Communicate up-to-date information to the applicant and the guardian, in the case of a child, about their case.

Keep the communication lines open and ensure information about the stage of the process is accessible to the applicant.

Outcome of the procedure

Once a take charge request is received, the requested EU+ country examines the case. This includes an assessment of all facts stated in the request, verifying information, carrying out additional checks in the national database and corroborating the information. If need be, an interview with the family member or dependent person is conducted.

If the request concerns an unaccompanied child or a dependent person, the requested EU+ country should also take due consideration of the special needs of the person. If any information suggests that the reunification is not in the best interests of the child, this should be communicated to the requesting EU+ country.

If the request for taking charge is accepted, the requested EU+ country informs the requesting EU+ country that this is the case. This means that the requested EU+ country is responsible for examining the person's application for international protection. The person is issued a transfer decision in the requesting EU+ country and is informed about the right to legal remedies and modalities of lodging an appeal or review. If no appeal is lodged, the person is transferred to the responsible EU+ country, where their family member is present.

If the request for taking charge is not accepted, the requested EU+ country informs the requesting EU+ country about the reasons for not accepting the request in sufficient detail. The requesting EU+ country informs the person about their right to legal remedy and modalities to lodge an appeal or review as detailed by the requested EU+ country in its rejection (see the Court of Justice of the EU's case C-19/21 of 2022 ⁽¹⁷⁾).

If the appeal or review is unsuccessful, the application for international protection is examined by the EU+ country where the person has registered their application, unless other responsibility criteria, or the discretionary clauses under the AMMR can be considered.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Court of Justice of the EU, judgment of 1 August 2022, [I, S v Staatssecretaris van Justitie en Veiligheid](#), C-19/21, EU:C:2022:605. Summary available in the [EUAA Case Law Database](#). In line with recital 62 AMMR:

In order to guarantee the effective protection of the applicants' fundamental rights to respect for private and family life, the rights of the child and the protection against inhuman and degrading treatment because of a transfer, applicants should have a right to an effective remedy, limited to those rights, in accordance, in particular, with Article 47 of the Charter and the relevant case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union



Stakeholders in family tracing and their roles in the procedure

Given the requirement to identify and prioritise potential family reunification cases as early as possible, family tracing requires a holistic approach and the involvement of several stakeholders along the way. In all stages, the applicant will be in contact with various authorities and personnel and all stakeholders may have a role in family tracing. This may entail the successful location and identification of family member(s) or dependent person(s) and the successful responsibility determination.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of authorities or staff profiles that may be in contact with the applicant and play a role in family tracing. The table provides a description of their role and notes on relevant requirements. The means of involving stakeholders in the process may depend on the organisational setup of each EU+ country; this list is therefore indicative. The below table lists the different stakeholders. These are example roles associated with these profiles. The exact roles and tasks may differ from country to country.

Table 1. Stakeholders with a crucial role in family tracing

Stakeholders with a crucial role in family tracing	Role in family tracing	Requirements
Applicant and family member (or dependent person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate family tracing by giving information on the presence of family members on the EU+ territory.• The family member can contact the EU+ country where the applicant is or where the family member is to let the AMMR Unit know about potential family reunification.• The family member also has to provide consent to the family reunification.• Need to provide information and evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must cooperate with the authorities to provide information and the relevant evidence.• Must express their consent to be reunited.• Are aware that they may be contacted, requested for interview or provide documentation, to be required to follow-up and need to be available when requested.
Representative/ guardian of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate the communication between the child and the family member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trained to work with children.• Be responsible for a proportionate number



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support in restoring the contact. • Have direct contact with the family member. • Support the collection of relevant documents and information. • Refer/indicate cases to the AMMR Unit (in some countries). • Have a strong role in supporting the best interests assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of children and no more than 30 children at one time. • Where possible, it should be checked if the representative has the time and capacity to commit to the role. A person that does not have the time and capacity should not be assigned as representative of the child.
Registration staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for registering the personal data of the applicant. They can collect relevant information. • Provide information to the applicant. • Support family tracing by handing out the family tracing form. • Flag potential family reunification cases and refer them to the AMMR Unit. • Conduct the personal interview with the applicant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient capacity needs to be ensured to fulfil the tasks that are related to family tracing. • Trained and provided with relevant guidance.
AMMR Unit staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the personal interview with the applicant. • Collect information on the applicant's situation • Determine the responsibility for examining an application for international protection. • Carry out an evaluation of the available evidence and information. • Take into account a finalised best interests assessment of the child before sending a request or reply to the other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient capacity needs to be ensured to fulfil the tasks related to family tracing. • Trained and provided with guidance. • Establish internal guidelines on the role of the AMMR Unit in tracing, such as to determine the extent of efforts that the unit will undertake for tracing family members (contacting family



	<p>EU+ country, or before organising the transfer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the tracing process. • Oversee information provision and conduct an interview. • Cooperate with other EU+ countries. • Cooperate and collaborate with all stakeholders involved. • Support other stakeholders (registration, police, etc). 	<p>members, which databases to check, what organisations to collaborate with).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Fill in the gaps’ in the process.
NGOs or tracing / support organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to collecting documents and information. • Oversee referral to the AMMR Unit (in some EU+ countries). • Support family tracing using databases (e.g. Red Cross), exchange information between the different organisations in the EU+ countries, where possible. • Collaborate with the AMMR Unit or other authorities on searching family members. • Provide training on tracing to the relevant authorities (e.g. reception staff, registration staff or other as relevant). • Support information provision to applicants to encourage the applicant to use the AMMR procedure, explaining how to start it and what is needed. • Provide legal counselling to applicants (in some countries). 	
Liaison officers within the determining authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to streamlining the information requests. • Flag urgent cases. • Ease the quick processing of urgent cases. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to clarifying misunderstandings. • Mediate between the two authorities. • Urge the EU+ country to respond or investigate cases that are pending for a long time. • Provide general information on the EU+ country's procedures and development for the partner country where needed. • Support the collection of information in complex cases. 	
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Table 2. Stakeholders with a limited role in family tracing

Stakeholders with a limited role in family tracing	Role in family tracing	Requirements
Police (immigration or border police may also be the registration staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the identification of the applicant. • If the applicant is detained, may be the contact/reference point. • May collect any available documents. • May provide information related to the potential security risks of a family member that could be relevant for the assessment of the child's best interests. • Carry out security check of the family member (in some countries). • Might verify documents. 	
Legal representative of an adult applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the applicant on the possibility of reunification, the process and the requirement to express the willingness to be reunited. • Provide support in restoring the contact with the family member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the capacity to take on the role to avoid one legal representative being responsible for too many persons. Where possible, it should be checked if the legal representative has the



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have direct contact with the reference person, family member. • Support the collection of relevant documents and information. • Facilitate the contact of the applicant with the authorities. • Might refer/indicate cases to the AMMR Unit (in some countries). • Be the link connecting the applicant and the AMMR Unit. 	time and capacity to commit to the role.
Social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in assessing the child's best interests. • May be involved in the evaluation of the capacity of the relative to take care of the minor. • May be involved in tracing the family member / can be contacted by the family member. 	
Juvenile court or public prosecutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the appointment of the guardian. • Perform quality monitoring of the guardianship system. • Oversee the best interests of the child. • May have a final say in the determination of the child's best interests before the request and before the transfer. 	
Document or forensic experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might verify the authenticity of documents and evidence • Might verify medical information. 	
Translators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate documents received. 	

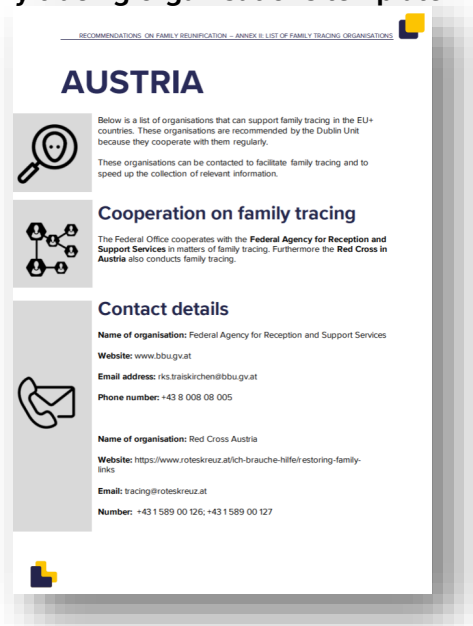
Family tracing organisations in the EU+ countries

EU+ countries may request the services of organisations to trace, locate or identify an applicant's family members in an EU+ country. The services of such organisations may be invaluable in finding the family member and reuniting them with the applicant as soon as possible. In most cases, these organisations also use family tracing forms (such as those of the Red Cross) that are broader in scope. These forms tend to be made for humanitarian purposes to enable individuals to learn of their family's whereabouts unrelated to administrative/responsibility determination procedures. These tracing organisations can only initiate tracing upon the applicant's consent and only for humanitarian purposes that are beyond family reunion.

Applicants for international protection have the right to request the services of organisations in family tracing. EU+ country authorities have the obligation to inform the applicant about this right and they should facilitate the applicant's access to such organisations.

Several organisations are actively involved in family tracing in Europe. In 2023, EUAA's recommendations on family reunification within the Dublin procedure⁽¹⁸⁾ were developed. As an annex to this publication EU+ countries were asked to provide information on tracing organisations that they work with in Dublin cases in their countries.⁽¹⁹⁾ The country specific leaflets contain specific information on the list of NGOs and other organisations that are or can be involved in the family reunification⁽²⁰⁾. The list can be shared with applicant and or other EU+ countries to support the applicant's access to tracing services. These leaflets can be downloaded and provided to the applicant to inform them about the tracing organisations that can be contacted to support the search of family members.

Figure 7. Example of family tracing organisations template – Austria, 2023



⁽¹⁸⁾ EUAA, [Recommendations on Family Reunification within the Dublin Procedure](#), September 2023.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Through the Member Area, Dublin Units can access the lists of organisations that can be contacted to support family tracing.



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