

Practical Tool for Guardians

The asylum procedure



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June 2026

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About this series

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) have joined forces in the development of a series of practical tools for guardians of unaccompanied children with international protection needs. The objective is to support guardians in their daily tasks and responsibilities during the asylum procedure, including the procedure under Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (AMMR) ⁽¹⁾ and temporary protection. The series of practical tools addresses the following topics:

- temporary protection;
- introduction to international protection;
- the asylum procedure;
- transnational procedures.

The four tools complement each other.

The aim of these practical tools is to allow the guardian to better inform and assist children in the process and thus help children to better understand the relevance of the steps involved. The child's meaningful participation and capacity to make informed decisions will be improved.

Good functioning guardianship systems are essential in promoting the best interests of the child and children's rights. Guardians are responsible for ensuring that any legal, social, medical and psychological needs are addressed throughout the specific procedure and until a durable solution is secured for the child.

In preparation for the drafting of these practical tools, the EUAA and FRA have consulted the European Guardianship Network through a rapid needs assessment to define the objectives and the topics covered by the practical tools.

Considering the target group of this series, the tools are based on the handbook on guardianship by FRA and the European Commission ⁽²⁾ and are consistent with the FRA training modules for guardians ⁽³⁾ as well as with the EUAA training curriculum ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽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, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1351/oj>.

⁽²⁾ FRA and European Commission, *Guardianship for Children Deprived of Parental Care — A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking*, 26 June 2014 (second edition forthcoming in 2026), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care>.

⁽³⁾ The FRA e-learning website is available at: <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>.

⁽⁴⁾ The EUAA training catalogue is available at: <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/training-catalogue>.

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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
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
The Charter	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU+ countries	EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Member States	EU Member States
QR	Qualification Regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
RCD (2024)	Reception Conditions Directive – Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection
Screening Regulation	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
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

About this tool

EU law provides for the appointment of a representative for unaccompanied children applying for international protection ⁽⁵⁾ and a guardian for children granted international protection ⁽⁶⁾. To facilitate reading, this tool refers to the term guardian for both figures ⁽⁷⁾. Guardians should be qualified and equipped to deal with the wide variety of laws and procedures that regulate asylum, migration or other issues they may need to engage with ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ Article 23 of 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), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1348/oj> (APR).

⁽⁶⁾ In accordance with Article 3(18) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L, 2024/1347, 22.5.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1347/oj> (QR):

‘guardian’ means a natural person or an organisation, including a public body, designated by the competent authorities to assist, represent and act on behalf of an unaccompanied minor, as applicable, in order to ensure that the unaccompanied minor can benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations under this Regulation, while safeguarding his or her best interests and general well-being.

⁽⁷⁾ The term ‘representative’ is used in the APR, Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (OJ L, 2024/1346, 22.5.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1346/oj> (RCD (2024)), 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), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1351/oj> (AMMR), 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), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1356/oj> (Screening Regulation) and Regulation (EU) 2024/1358 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on the establishment of ‘Eurodac’ for the comparison of biometric data in order to effectively apply Regulations (EU) 2024/1351 and (EU) 2024/1350 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 2001/55/EC and to identify illegally staying third-country nationals and stateless persons and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States’ law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L, 2024/1358, 22.5.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1358/oj> (Eurodac III Regulation). Recital 25 Screening Regulation lays down: ‘A representative should be appointed to represent and assist the unaccompanied minor during the screening or, where a representative has not been appointed, a person trained to safeguard the best interests and general wellbeing of the minor should be designated.’ Article 13(3), first subparagraph Screening Regulation further specifies: ‘The representative shall have the necessary skills and expertise, including regarding the treatment and specific needs of minors.’ Similar mentions occur in Article 23 APR and in Article 2(13) RCD (2024), which states: ‘representative’ means a natural person or an organisation, including a public authority, appointed by the competent authorities, with the necessary skills and expertise, including with regard to the treatment and specific needs of minors, to represent, assist and act on behalf of an unaccompanied minor, as applicable, in order to safeguard the best interests and general well-being of that unaccompanied minor.’ Article 2(12) AMMR defines representative as ‘a person or an organisation appointed by the competent bodies in order to assist and represent an unaccompanied minor in procedures provided for in this Regulation with a view to ensuring the best interests of the child and exercising legal capacity for the minor where necessary.’ The term ‘guardian’ is used in the context of the QR. According to the respective definitions, guardians/representatives have the same role but different tasks. However, for the sake of ensuring the continuity of the representation of the unaccompanied minor, the guardian in the context of the QR can be the same person as the representative appointed in the context of the RCD (2024) and the APR

⁽⁸⁾ For more information, refer to European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Commission, *Guardianship for children deprived of parental care — A handbook to reinforce guardianship*

This tool aims to support guardians as well as trained individuals temporarily acting as guardians assigned to children while they are in the screening phase and in the asylum procedure. It includes an overview of the screening and of the asylum procedure with a specific focus on children, the guarantees in the asylum procedure and your role as a guardian in the different phases of the asylum process. There is also a section on what to do if something unexpected may happen, or if the age of the applicant is disputed.

The tool contains boxes with practical tips for guardians and further reading materials.

Disclaimer

This tool reflects the legal framework of the Common European Asylum System as reformed under the Pact on Migration and Asylum adopted in 2024. References to previous directives and regulations have been updated accordingly. National implementation measures may further specify certain provisions. The information contained in this tool has been researched, evaluated and analysed with the utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive.

This guide was prepared without prejudice to the exclusive authority of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights to give binding and authoritative interpretations of European Union law and the European Convention on Human Rights, respectively. Following an initial period of implementation of the Pact, this document may require updating, as needed.

systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking, 26 June 2014 (second edition forthcoming in 2026), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care>. Refer also to Article 26(6) RCD(2024).

1. The asylum procedure and your role as a guardian

1.1. What is the asylum procedure?

The asylum procedure is the process by which Member States determine whether a person is in need of international protection.

In the EU context, international protection (or asylum) is granted in the form of refugee status and subsidiary protection status ⁽⁹⁾. To know more about the definitions of these statuses, refer to the tool for guardians on introduction to international protection in this series ⁽¹⁰⁾.

International protection needs may arise because of risks of persecution or serious harm based on the following points.

- Events that took place while the child was in their country of origin.
And/or
- Events that took place after the child left their country of origin, referred to as needs arising *sur place*. In this case, international protection needs may arise once the individual is already on the territory of a Member State.

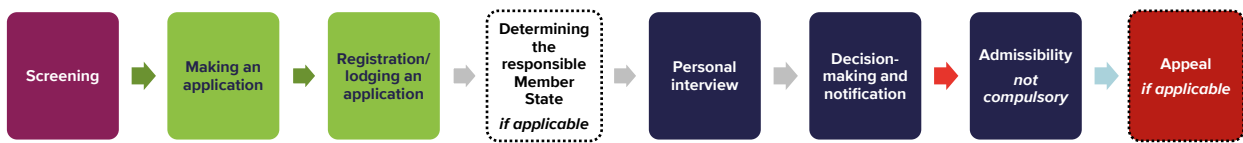
The asylum procedure can be divided in phases:

1. access to the procedure;
2. AMMR procedure, to establish which Member State is responsible for examining an application for international protection;
3. examination phase;
4. appeal phase.

This tool describes phases 1, 3 and 4. The procedure to establish which Member States has to examine an application for international protection is dealt with in EUAA-FRA, *Practical Tool for Guardians – Transnational procedures*, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-transnational-procedures-framework-international-protection>.

⁽⁹⁾ Article 3, point (4) APR.

⁽¹⁰⁾ EUAA-FRA, *Practical Tool for Guardians – Introduction to international protection*, June 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-introduction-international-protection>.

Figure 1. The key stages of the asylum procedure**Key**

Maroon: Screening

Green: access to the procedure

White: AMMR procedure (if applicable)

Blue: examination phase

Red: appeal phase (if applicable)

1.2. Safeguards for a fair and effective procedure

Every person arriving in the EU seeking international protection is entitled to an appropriate examination of their international protection needs. Such people may be in a particularly difficult situation as they find themselves in a foreign environment, facing language and cultural barriers as well as psychological barriers and other obstacles. They may have suffered from trauma.

For these reasons, procedural safeguards are essential for ensuring a fair and effective asylum procedure. The APR provides applicants for international protection with certain procedural guarantees in order to overcome these barriers.

Regardless of the applicant's age, such main procedural safeguards include the following.

- The applicant's right to remain on the territory until a final decision on their application has been made to ensure compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement*.
- Guarantees for the personal interview, which must be conducted in the language the applicant prefers or another language the applicant understands and can communicate in clearly.
- The right to information: Member States have to provide general information on the asylum procedure as soon as possible.
- Free legal and procedural information tailored to the applicant's needs.
- An applicant may request free legal counselling in the administrative procedure ⁽¹⁾, and free legal assistance and representation in the appeal procedure. Depending on national law, free legal assistance and representation may also be provided in the administrative procedure ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ See Chapter III APR

⁽²⁾ Articles 15(2) and (3) APR.

- The right to communicate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at all stages of the procedure as well as with other organisations providing legal advice or other counselling.

Some applicants may be in need of special procedural guarantees. This is especially true for children. Some children move across borders without the care of a responsible adult or may be left unaccompanied after or prior to entering the EU. Children travelling on their own through unknown countries are exposed to a higher risk of violence, abuse and neglect.

Your role as a guardian

As a key safeguard for unaccompanied children (or of a presumed child if the age is in doubt) an independent and qualified guardian must be appointed as soon as possible and no later than fifteen working days from the date on which the application is made. In order to respond to a disproportionate number of applications made by unaccompanied children, or in other exceptional situations, the appointment of representatives may be delayed for ten working days⁽¹³⁾.

Where, for practical reasons, a permanent guardian cannot be assigned swiftly to a child, provisions may be made for the appointment of a person who temporarily carries out the guardian's tasks⁽¹⁴⁾. In such cases, temporary guardians must have the same qualifications and characteristics (e.g. independence) as non-temporary guardians. The guardian should be informed and consulted about all the aspects of the administrative process and should be able to accompany the child during the whole procedure.



Related publications

FRA, e-learning course for guardians, 2022, <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>.

FRA–European Commission, *Guardianship for Children Deprived of Parental Care – A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking*, 26 June 2014 (second edition forthcoming in 2026),

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care>.

Once appointed as a guardian, your task is to support and protect an unaccompanied child and make sure the child's rights and best interests are always the priority⁽¹⁵⁾.

Pay attention to several important aspects for the protection of the child throughout the whole asylum procedure: promoting the best interests of the child, providing child-appropriate information, listening to the child's views, ensuring the child's safety and respecting family unity. The guardian should ensure provision of child-friendly information and access to free legal counselling and legal assistance.

⁽¹³⁾ Article 27(b) RCD (2024).

⁽¹⁴⁾ Article 23(2)(a) and recital 35 APR.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Article 2(13) RCD (2024) and Article 23 (7) and 23(2)(a) APR.

The best interests of the child

The best interests of the child is a right, a principle and a rule of procedure recognised in international and European law. It is the basis for all decisions regarding children in the context of migration. It aims to ensure the child's development and full enjoyment of all the rights laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ⁽¹⁶⁾.

In practice, this means you as the guardian and all other actors must assess the child's individual and specific circumstances and needs. This assessment needs to be considered in all actions and decisions affecting the child, whether for the short-, medium- or long-term. These aspects should be covered in the assessment as a minimum: the child's views; the child identity; family environment and relations; care, protection and safety needs; possible additional vulnerabilities; health and education aspects.

Best interests assessments should be done on a regular basis, so that authorities take into account the evolution and development of the child and any changes in the child's circumstances or views. Important decisions regarding the child, should also explain how the best interests of the child were considered and informed the decision.

As the guardian, you should make sure relevant authorities assess and consider the best interests of the child, in consultation with you and with the child, on a regular basis. Keep in close contact with the child and inform the authorities on any development that would require a new decision or a change of approach.



Related publication

EUAA, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in the framework of international protection*, March 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-best-interests-child-international-protection>.

Provision of information

At all times, the child has a right to seek, receive and share information guaranteed in the APR ⁽¹⁷⁾, and in the RCD 2024 ⁽¹⁸⁾. Information must be provided in a language and a manner that the child understands. Providing information to the child is the responsibility of all actors who are in contact with the child. The child might not receive adequate information, or might have misunderstood, or might have forgotten. As the guardian, you are responsible for providing information as well as for making sure that the appropriate information from other actors reaches the child.

⁽¹⁶⁾ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Article 23(6)(a) and Article 23(8)(a) APR.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Article 5 RCD(2024).

Children must be informed in a manner that ensures they understand the nature and purpose of the processes in which they are participating, how these are relevant to their situation, their options, the potential outcomes and what they would mean for them. This information should be imparted using child-friendly, gender-sensitive and age- and context-appropriate explanations in a language that the child can understand. This allows the child to participate in a fully informed manner.

The child should be provided with interpretation whenever needed. Where possible, the interpreter should be experienced in interpreting for children.

The individual circumstances such as the age, maturity, potential intersectional vulnerabilities or cultural background of a child affect their ability to access information. A child may not be able to read or have the patience to focus on written text. Give information in manageable amounts, use simple vocabulary, animations and pictograms, and minimise the length of text.



Related publication

For more on information provision, see the EUAA, *Practical Guide on Information Provision – Access to the asylum procedure*, 2026,

<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/information-provision-asylum-procedure-practical-guide>.

For more information on legal counselling, see the EUAA, *Practical Guide on Free Legal Counselling*, October 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-free-legal-counselling>.

Hearing the child's views and child participation

The child has a right to express their views and opinions, either personally or via you as their guardian. Any interviews with the child should always be conducted in a safe, confidential, comfortable and child-friendly environment at appropriate location(s) that help to build trust with the child. The child's views and wishes should be taken into account according to age and maturity.

Your role as a guardian is also to uphold the views of the child and guarantee that the authorities are considering these views. The child's right to be heard should not be restricted to the context of the personal interview only. Authorities should be attentive to the child's views, needs and opinions also outside of the context of the more formal interviews.

Ensuring the child's safety

Throughout the asylum procedure, children must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Asylum and reception officials must consider and be alert to possible indicators of vulnerabilities and risks to ensure the safety of the child. As a guardian, you should collect information on the well-being of the child, and any protection or safety

concerns. In practice, collecting such information means being available and in regular communication with the child, and communicating with authorities and other professionals involved, such as social workers, reception officers, teachers, doctors, and giving due weight to the information received.

Be mindful of potential risks to the child, such as the possibility of the child encountering individuals who may have already or could potentially subject them to abuse, harm, or trafficking. If you become aware of a credible threat such as this, it is imperative to promptly notify the designated officer within the relevant authorities. Nonetheless, it is vital for authorities to exercise prudence when evaluating the situation to prevent any harm to the child.



Practical tip

Possible actions by the guardian in relation to the child's safety.

- Inform the child about existing protection measures that could be taken.
- Ensure that authorities are continuously assessing risks for the child. Be proactive in supporting the child in their interactions with the relevant authorities and law enforcement officials.
- Immediately inform the relevant authorities if you have new information related to the child's safety, especially if you consider the child could be in danger.
- In the event of disappearance, ensure that the relevant authorities are immediately notified, that they enter information on the missing child in the Schengen Information System and that efforts are made to find the child.
- Regularly remind all authorities involved not to share information on the child's status as an applicant for international protection.

Respecting family unity and carrying out family tracing

According to the EU asylum *acquis*, one of the main responsibilities of the Member States is to trace the family members of the child and reunite the child with their family members when it is found to be in their best interests ⁽¹⁹⁾. Family reunification criteria from the AMMR can be applied and Member States must promptly identify family members of unaccompanied children, ensuring the child's best interests are prioritised ⁽²⁰⁾. It is important to note that finding the family does not automatically lead to family reunification.

Family tracing has three main objectives:

1. to find information on and the whereabouts of the child's family members or former caregivers;
2. to assist the child in reestablishing family relations, provided it is in their best interests;

⁽¹⁹⁾ Recital 53 AMMR and Article 27(10) RCD (2024).

⁽²⁰⁾ Article 27(10) RCD (2024) and Article 23 AMMR.

3. to facilitate the reunification of the child with family members in the host country, in another EU Member State or Schengen associated country (EU+ country) ⁽²¹⁾, in a third country or in the country of origin, provided that this is in the child's best interests ⁽²²⁾.

In the case of children traveling with related family members other than their parents or legal guardians (known as separated children), family links with those accompanying adults must also be verified and assessed. Family tracing should also be carried out for separated children to understand the whereabouts of the parents/legal guardians.

As a guardian, you should support the authorities and the child in this process. This includes informing the child about the purpose of the family tracing as well as seeking and listening to the child's views. You should facilitate the exchange of information with the authorities to establish contacts with the family. You can also support the child when establishing contact with the family and if needed, accompany them in difficult decisions or conversations in relation to the family.



Practical tip

As a guardian, you play an important role in family tracing. Consider the following:

- unaccompanied children may not wish to return to their country of origin, and they could interpret the initiation of a family tracing procedure as a step towards their return to their country of origin; sometimes they may be under pressure from families to remain.
- children may have genuine, well-founded fears in relation to family tracing and may believe that family tracing may place them or their family at risk.
- guardians should support the child in ensuring the family tracing, and eventually family reunification, takes place in the best interests of the child, taking into account the views of the child, and facilitating the information exchange with the authorities.

⁽²¹⁾ The 27 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

⁽²²⁾ In accordance with Article 22 CRC: 'the right to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family' and with Article 10(3), point (a) of Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification (OJ L 251, 3.10.2003), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/86/oj>, which provides that Member States must authorise the entry and residence of their first-degree relatives in the direct ascending line without applying conditions, and of their legal guardian or any other member of the family, where the refugee minor has no relatives in the direct ascending line or such relatives cannot be traced.



Related publication

EUAA, *Practical Guide on Family Tracing Part I – Principles and practices on family tracing in the EU+ and third countries*, April 2025,

<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-family-tracing-part-i-principles-practices>.

EUAA, *Practical Guide on Family Tracing Part II – Tracing and identifying family members under the asylum and migration management regulation*, April 2025,

<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-family-tracing-part-ii-tracing-AMMR>.

2. Screening

2.1. What is screening?

The Pact on Migration and Asylum introduces mandatory screening at the external borders. It applies to persons who have crossed the external border in an unauthorised manner, those who have applied for international protection during border checks, and those who were disembarked after a search and rescue operation. Screening also applies within the territory to persons illegally staying in a Member State who have crossed an external border in an unauthorised manner to enter that Member State and who have not previously been screened by another Member State. This phase is regulated by the Screening Regulation.

Screening is not yet the examination of the asylum claim. Screening aims to quickly establish the person's identity, carry out security checks, conduct preliminary health and vulnerability assessments, collect biometric data, fill out a screening form and refer to the authorities responsible for the ensuing procedures (asylum/relocation/return). Screening must be completed within seven days (three days if the child is apprehended within the territory) ⁽²³⁾.

For children, screening is a particularly sensitive moment. It is often the first structured contact with the authorities and may take place shortly after arrival, when the child is tired, disoriented or distressed.

2.2. Screening and unaccompanied children

When a child is identified as unaccompanied, specific safeguards apply immediately. The authorities must involve child protection services and ensure that a guardian is appointed without delay. If a permanent guardian has not yet been designated, a suitably trained person must be appointed to act temporarily as a guardian during the screening phase ⁽²⁴⁾.

In situations of high numbers of arrivals or logistical constraints, a permanent guardian may not be appointed immediately. In such cases, a suitable person must be designated to act temporarily as a guardian. This person must be independent, qualified and capable of safeguarding the child's best interests during the screening.

The temporary appointment does not reduce the level of protection owed to the child. The suitably trained person to act temporarily as a guardian during the screening phase has the same core responsibility to assist, represent and act in the child's best interests until a guardian is formally appointed, which must occur as soon as possible and no later than fifteen working days from the making of the application under the RCD (2024).

⁽²³⁾ Article 8 Screening Regulation.

⁽²⁴⁾ Article 13(3) Screening Regulation.

This suitably trained person to act temporarily as a guardian is responsible for safeguarding the child's best interests, assisting and supporting the child during interactions with the authorities and ensuring the child understands what is happening. The appointment of such a person is an essential procedural guarantee and aims to ensure that the child is not left alone during this initial and often confusing phase. If you are appointed first as suitably trained person to act temporarily as a guardian and later replaced by an actual guardian, proper documentation and handover are essential to ensure continuity of protection and support for the child.

If you are appointed only after screening, you should still request access to the screening form and, where necessary, submit clarifications or additional information to ensure continuity of protection.

Your role as a guardian

You may become involved either during or shortly after the screening. In both situations, your role is essential. You may not yet be the officially appointed guardian, but you are a person trained to safeguard the best interests and general well-being of the child, acting in that role until a guardian is formally appointed.

If you are appointed during the screening phase, you must ensure that the child receives information in a language and manner they understand. The child should be clearly informed that screening is not yet the asylum decision, but a preliminary phase that determines what will happen next. It is important to verify that the child feels safe, that their vulnerabilities are properly identified and that any signs of distress, trauma or risk are communicated to the relevant authorities. It is important, where possible, to ensure continuity between the temporary guardian or suitably trained person and the formally appointed guardian, so that the child is not required to retell their experiences repeatedly and can maintain trust in the support being provided.

As a guardian, you should treat the screening as a key protection moment, because it is often the first time the authorities formally assess the child's situation and record it in writing. Even if the child is not yet ready to speak openly, screening should still identify signs of vulnerability—for example indicators of trafficking in human beings or exploitation, exposure to violence, trauma symptoms, urgent health needs, disability, pregnancy, or any other factor that could affect the child's safety and their ability to participate meaningfully in procedures. Your role is to help make sure these elements are not missed, minimised or misunderstood. This means staying close to the child, observing their condition and behaviour, asking simple and sensitive questions, and—when there are concerns—promptly signalling them to the competent authorities and requesting referrals to specialised services.

You should also pay particular attention to what is written in the screening form, because this document will follow the child during the next procedural steps (reception and asylum). If information is incomplete or inaccurately recorded, it can later create problems, for example by leading to an inappropriate procedural track, inadequate reception conditions, or an underestimation of protection risks. You are entitled to see the information contained in the

screening form ⁽²⁵⁾. You should ask for corrections where needed and ensure that important safeguarding elements are clearly reflected. If you are a trained individual temporarily acting as a guardian to support the child, ensure that, once a guardian is appointed, you transfer all relevant information and properly hand over the case.

The asylum border procedure

The asylum border procedure is regulated by the APR. It is a procedure carried out at or near the external border, designed to examine certain applications for international protection within a shorter time limit (within 12 weeks or 16 weeks in cases of relocation). Applicants subject to the border procedure are not authorised to enter the territory of a Member State. During the examination, the applicant is required to reside at a particular place, at or in proximity to the external border or transit zones, or in other designated locations within the territory. If there is no decision within the 12 weeks' timeframe, applicants will be allowed entry to the territory of the Member State.

The border procedure follows the same core steps as the regular asylum procedure — registration, personal interview, examination and decision — but within a compressed timeframe. If an application is rejected in the border procedure, it may be followed immediately by a return procedure.

Due to the short timeframe and its location at or near the border, this procedure requires heightened attention to procedural safeguards, especially where children are concerned.

As a general rule, unaccompanied children are exempted from the border procedure. Only in limited and exceptional circumstances is it mandatorily applied to unaccompanied children: where the child constitutes a danger to the national security or to the public order of the Member State.



What happens if the child age is disputed?

If there are doubts about the child's age, the presumption of minority must apply until an age assessment is concluded ⁽²⁶⁾. Any age assessment must respect the child's dignity, be carried out using the least invasive methods possible and take into account the child's physical and psychological development. Inconsistencies in a child's statements regarding their age should not be treated as determinative, they may arise from trauma, cultural differences or a limited understanding of chronological age.

Where the child's age is disputed and the child falls within categories that would normally trigger the mandatory border procedure, a provisional placement in the border procedure may occur while the age assessment is carried out. However, during this period, the child must benefit from all safeguards applicable to children, including appropriate accommodation, access to care and the appointment of a guardian. If adequate safeguards

⁽²⁵⁾ Recital 33 and Article 17(3) Screening Regulation.

⁽²⁶⁾ Article 25 APR.

cannot be granted in the border procedure the child should immediately be re-channelled to the regular procedure.



Related publications

EUAA, *Practical Guide on the Asylum Border Procedure*, March 2026,
<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-asylum-border-procedure>.

EUAA, *Practical Guide on Age Assessment*, November 2025,
<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-age-assessment-0>.

Your role as a guardian in the border procedure

If a child is placed in the border procedure, your role becomes particularly important due to the short deadlines. Accelerated timelines in border procedures may make it harder for a child to build trust, disclose sensitive experiences and participate meaningfully in the procedure. Additional care is therefore needed to create a safe and supportive space from the outset.

You should first verify whether the placement in the border procedure is legally justified and whether the exemption for unaccompanied children should apply. If you consider that the child has been wrongly channelled into the border procedure, this should be raised immediately with the competent authority.

Given the accelerated timeframe, preparation for the personal interview must take place without delay. The child should understand the purpose of the interview, who will be present and what kind of questions may be asked. It is essential to ensure that interpretation is adequate and that the interviewer has the necessary skills to engage with children in a child-sensitive and trauma-informed manner.

Throughout the procedure, you should continuously assess whether the accelerated pace is affecting the child's ability to meaningfully participate. Signs of distress, confusion or re-traumatisation should be taken seriously. If necessary, you may request adjustments, referrals to specialised services or reconsideration of the procedural track if it appears incompatible with the child's best interests.

In the case of a negative decision, ensure the child has effective access to free legal assistance and that any appeal is lodged within the applicable deadline, if this is in the child's best interests. The consequences of the decision and the appeal process must be clearly explained to the child in a manner they can understand.

3. Access to the asylum procedure

Applying for international protection is a fundamental right of every child. The child should be assisted with making an informed decision to apply for international protection ⁽²⁷⁾. In this context, age, gender and culturally appropriate information should be provided in advance. The child's views on applying for international protection should be taken into consideration according to their age and maturity.

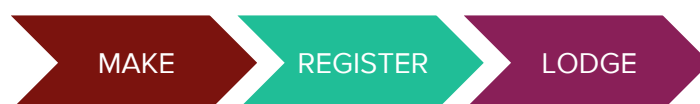
In your role as a guardian, you should support the children in the asylum process from the first phase. A guardian should be appointed as soon as possible to guarantee that the best interests of the child are taken into account from the outset.

However, it is possible that you will start taking part in this process partway through. This is especially the case when the child has expressed their will to apply for international protection at the moment of crossing the border or when disembarking and therefore before the competent authorities have had the chance to appoint you as a guardian.

The child should be provided with access to legal advice and counselling. This can help the child and you as a guardian in understanding all the procedural steps of the asylum procedure, which can be quite complex. It is good practice to ensure that the child has access to legal aid services free of charge at all stages of the asylum procedure. The child's legal adviser should also be given the opportunity to attend any interviews with the child.

The phase of 'access to the procedure' consists of three steps as shown in figure 2. These are the making, registering and lodging of an application ⁽²⁸⁾. These three stages trigger certain rights and obligations for the child.

Figure 2. Phases of the access to the asylum procedure



⁽²⁷⁾ EUAA, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in the framework of international protection*, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-best-interests-child-international-protection>.

⁽²⁸⁾ Articles 26, 27 and 28 APR.

**Practical tip**

Depending on the legislation and practices of each Member State, the terminology used to refer to these steps of the access to the procedure might differ. It may be useful to consult the translation of the three steps in your language ⁽²⁹⁾. The registration and the lodging of an application may be conducted concurrently. In other cases, all three steps could be completed on the same day in the same administrative setting ⁽³⁰⁾. When these steps are conducted separately, basic background data will normally be collected at the registration stage, which allows, at a minimum, for the practical organisation of the initial reception. Additional detailed data will be gathered during the lodging.

3.1. Making an application for international protection

Making an application for international protection is the act of expressing, in any form and to any national authority, one's wish to obtain international protection.

Making an application is the first step to access the asylum procedure.

From the moment a child expresses their wish to obtain international protection, they are considered an applicant for international protection.

Making an application can be done in any form. It does not require the child to fill in a form. A child can even make an application by vocally expressing a fear of return, without explicitly using the words 'asylum' or 'international protection'. Many children who may be in need of international protection may not clearly state, or not even form an understanding, that they are in need of asylum upon arrival in the country. Many may not know their rights and obligations or may not ask for protection because they may have heard incorrect information or because they have been misinformed, including by smugglers, about their rights and options.

Several rights and obligations are triggered with the making of an application, including:

- the right to remain in the territory of the Member State ⁽³¹⁾;
- the right to child-friendly information, in a language that the child understands, on how to lodge an application for international protection and on the child's rights and obligations during the asylum procedure ⁽³²⁾;
- the right to communicate with UNHCR and/or any other organisation providing legal counselling ⁽³³⁾;

⁽²⁹⁾ The translation of the APR in all EU languages is available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1348/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁰⁾ Article 28 (7) APR

⁽³¹⁾ Article 10 APR.

⁽³²⁾ Article 8(2) APR.

⁽³³⁾ Article 8(4) and Article 6 APR.

- the obligation of Member States to identify/assess whether the child is in need of special procedural guarantees ⁽³⁴⁾ or special reception needs ⁽³⁵⁾;
- the obligation of Member States to provide material reception conditions as laid down in the RCD (2024) ⁽³⁶⁾;
- the obligation of the child to cooperate with the authorities ⁽³⁷⁾.

Your role as a guardian

You should be able to build a certain level of trust to identify when the child is expressing the intention to apply for protection and to proactively inform authorities that the child may wish to apply for protection. This means that you should talk with the child, listen and consider their views and ensure that the child fully understands the meaning of international protection, what it entails, the rights it triggers and the consequences.

If you have already been appointed as a guardian when the child expresses their will to apply for international protection, your main role is to verify that it is indeed in the best interests of the child to apply for international protection.

In some situations, other procedural pathways and legal statuses, other than applying for international protection, may be in the child's best interests. Such solutions may include referral of the child to procedures specific to victims of trafficking or stateless persons, other residence permits, permit to stay based on the child's minor age, for example, or pursuing more than one legal pathway at the same time.

You should collect all relevant information and inform the child on their rights concerning the possible legal pathways available and consequences related to each decision. Suggesting appropriate solutions should be done in coordination with the relevant child protection and migration authorities. In your role as a guardian, you could promote that the asylum authorities communicate with and are linked to the national child protection systems / referral mechanisms.



Practical tip

- Always consider the best interests of the child.
- Build a good level of trust.
- Inform the child about their rights and the legal pathways available.
- Ensure access to free legal counselling.
- Assist the child in deciding whether to apply for international protection.
- Collect relevant information to support the application.
- Coordinate with other relevant actors in your Member State and make decisions in collaboration with child protection authorities.

⁽³⁴⁾ Article 20 APR.

⁽³⁵⁾ Article 24 RCD (2024).

⁽³⁶⁾ Article 19 RCD (2024).

⁽³⁷⁾ Article 9 APR.

**Related publication**

EUAA, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in the framework of international protection*, March 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-best-interests-child-international-protection>.

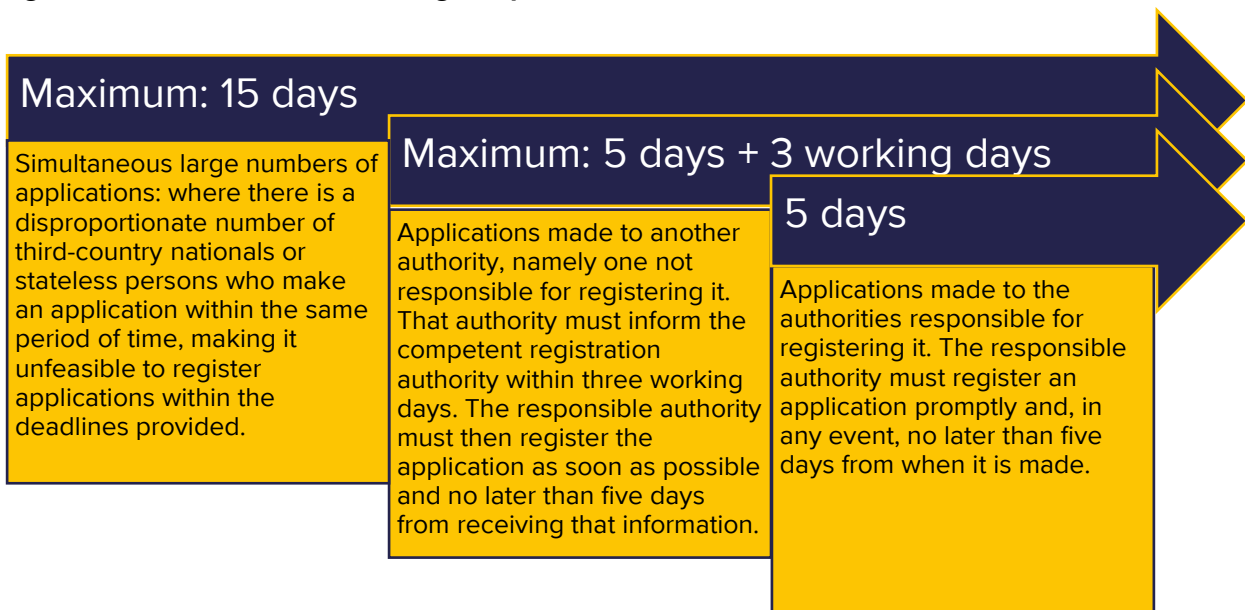
3.2. Registering an application for international protection

Registration means making a record of the applicant's intention to seek protection.

The objective of registration of the asylum claim is to generate an official record so that the child can effectively benefit from their rights and comply with their obligations. The registration should be completed as soon as possible within the time limits laid down in Article 27 APR, as shown in figure 3.

At this stage, authorities collect basic personal details about the child such as their name, surname, date and place of birth, and their nationality, if they have one.

Figure 3. Time limits for accessing the procedure as laid down in Article 27 APR



The biometric data of children from the age of six must be taken by officials trained specifically to take a child's biometric data in a child-friendly and child-sensitive manner and in full respect of the best interests of the child and the safeguards laid down in the CRC, as stipulated in the Eurodac III Regulation ⁽³⁸⁾. Authorities must inform the child of why they are taking their

⁽³⁸⁾ Article 14 Eurodac III Regulation.

fingerprints and how the data will be used. Fingerprints must be taken fully respecting human dignity.



Related publications

EUAA, *Practical guide on the registration and lodging of applications for international protection*, December 2025, Chapter VIII, Section A 'Eurodac', <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-registration-lodging>.

FRA, Right to information – Guide for authorities when taking fingerprints for EURODAC, December 2019, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/right-information-authorities-taking-fingerprints-eurodac>.

During the registration phase, authorities will collect the passport of the child, if available, and or any other identification documents such as birth certificates, school and vaccination records. Children need to inform the authorities on the whereabouts of parents and family members. At this point it is particularly important to indicate if any family member is living in another EU+ country for the purpose of the AMMR procedure ⁽³⁹⁾.



Related publication

The procedure to establish which Member States should examine an application is detailed in the EUAA-FRA, *Practical Tool for Guardians – Transnational procedures*, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-transnational-procedures-framework-international-protection>.

Your role as a guardian

As the guardian, you could start by assessing the information on the child that is already available. You should pay attention to the statements given by the child on their personal story and ask if there is any more documentation that the child may have or could collect without putting themselves at risk. Useful documentation could include school records, their birth certificate, vaccination records, any public articles or documents linked to potential reasons for fleeing their country of origin and documents or information related to family members. It is also important that you pay attention to child-specific types of claims (e.g. documentation related to forced/early marriage, forced recruitment, female genital mutilation/cutting, child trafficking, family and domestic violence, forced labour, sexual abuse).

The authorities need to also assess any possible special needs the child may have. The process of identifying the special needs of children requires the active role of the authorities and non-governmental actors involved in the asylum procedure. The preliminary identification of specific needs is conducted by the authorities at the moment of the screening. However, special needs may also be identified later, including during the registration or lodging of the application, or at a subsequent stage, since vulnerabilities may emerge over time. In all cases,

⁽³⁹⁾ Article 23 AMMR

the authorities must ensure that a full assessment of the child's special reception needs is completed within thirty days ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

These specific needs may relate either to the asylum procedure or to reception conditions. If a child has special needs, you should make sure that all procedural guarantees are in place for the next step, i.e. the lodging, to take place. For example, and depending on the circumstances, this could include the presence of a psychologist, a male or female interpreter depending on the child's preferences or the possibility to be supported by a counsellor or a legal adviser.



Practical tip

- Make sure an interpreter is available.
- Make sure the child is informed about their rights and duties during the registration process. Make sure the child receives the information brochure developed by the EUAA and customised by the national authorities as soon as possible, and at the latest when the application for international protection is registered. Explain the content to the child in a way they can understand, so they are aware of their rights and obligations.
- Make sure the child is given the opportunity to confirm that they have received the information. As a guardian, you must sign the confirmation on behalf of the child. Ensure this is documented in the child's file. If the child (or you on their behalf) refuses to confirm receipt, this must be noted in the file ⁽⁴¹⁾.
- Ensure access to free legal counselling and legal assistance as applicable.
- Inform the authorities if the whereabouts of the parents or other family members are known.
- If you are aware that the child has special needs, make sure that they are known and addressed by authorities.
- Collect the relevant documentation supporting the child's claim and share it with the appropriate authorities.

3.3. Lodging an application for international protection

Lodging means completing the process of applying for international protection.

The lodging completes the phase of access to the procedure. The examination of the application starts at this moment.

The lodging stage is of paramount importance as information is collected during this stage and shared with the determining authority. This forms the basis of the personal interview.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Article 20 APR and Article 25 RCD (2024).

⁽⁴¹⁾ Article 8 APR

Member States are obliged to ensure that a person who makes an application for international protection has the opportunity to lodge it as soon as possible and no later than 21 days from when the application is registered ⁽⁴²⁾. If, however, a person refrains from lodging their application, in the absence of good reasons, the determining authority may decide to discontinue the procedure ⁽⁴³⁾. The lodging is generally made in person. A written registration may only be done in special cases, for instance if the child is physically impaired or in hospital ⁽⁴⁴⁾. Check your national practices for these exceptional cases.

The time for the preparation varies depending on the individual casefile at hand, the personal circumstances of the child (e.g. consider the intersectional vulnerabilities, health-related issues, etc.) and on the availability of information on the child before the registration takes place.

Member States may set additional rules for the lodging, for example national legislation may provide that lodging is to take place in person and/or at a designated place ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

The lodging triggers further specific rights and obligations, including:

- the start of the time frame for the examination procedure ⁽⁴⁶⁾;
- the start of the time frame for the process of determining the EU+ country responsible for examining the application (AMMR procedure).

The asylum procedures for children should be treated with high priority. It is important, however, to individualise the duration of the procedure by either prioritising the child's application or by extending a rest and recovery period before setting the date of the interview, if in the child's best interests.

In the border and accelerated procedures, different standards apply compared to the regular asylum procedure. Accelerated procedures introduce shorter procedural steps. When applications for international protection are made at the border or in a transit zone, Member States can provide for admissibility and/or substantive examination procedures at these locations and, in that context, applicants may be detained or their freedom of movement may be restricted.

Unaccompanied children must not be subject to **the border procedure**. An exception is made where the child constitutes a danger to the national security or public order of the Member State ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

The **accelerated procedure** may be applied to unaccompanied children **only in specific cases** ⁽⁴⁸⁾, in particular where one of the following grounds applies:

⁽⁴²⁾ Article 28 (1) APR.

⁽⁴³⁾ Article 41 APR.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Article 38(4) APR.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Article 28(3) APR.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Article 35 APR.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Article 53(1) APR.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Article 42(3) APR.

- the child comes from a country considered to be a **safe country of origin**;
- there are reasonable grounds to consider the child a **danger to national security or public order**, or they have previously been expelled for serious reasons;
- the application is a **subsequent application** that is not inadmissible;
- the child has **misled the authorities** (e.g. by providing false information or withholding important information, including about identity or nationality);
- the child comes from a country with a **low recognition rate (20 % or lower)**, unless their individual situation indicates otherwise.

In any case, proper reception conditions for children and all relevant safeguards must be upheld. When an applicant has been identified as requiring special procedural guarantees, the determining authority should ensure that appropriate support is provided throughout the international protection procedure. This support should enable the child to effectively understand, exercise their rights and comply with their obligations under the procedure.

Where the required support cannot be provided within the framework of the accelerated examination procedure, the border procedure, or both, these procedures should not be applied or should no longer be applied ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Your role as a guardian

This lodging phase is particularly important and you as a guardian should be present for it. Remember that registration/lodging may not be two separate stages in the procedure but only one depending on the Member State.

The child should receive all the important information in writing in their native language or a language that the child understands or is reasonably supposed to understand. The personal data is recorded and the children should have the possibility to confirm their personal data and double check if it is being registered properly. If the personal data of the child has already been collected in the making or the registering phase, the child should have the possibility to check if it has been registered properly.

Many children, especially if they have just arrived, will be unfamiliar with being questioned formally by the authorities. This may lead the child to be confused about what information they need to disclose in this particular setting or they may feel distrustful if they have had prior negative interactions with professionals.

In your role as guardian, you should reassure the child about the role of the authority, considering the fact that a child might have experienced difficult relations with their parents or other adults or they might have been subject to trauma or discrimination. Take extra care to put the child at ease and explain in a child-friendly manner each step of the procedure and the role of the authorities in this context.

You should explain that everything discussed is confidential and that the information given to the authorities involved in the procedure for the examination of the international protection application cannot be shared or transmitted to the authorities of the child's country of origin. It is important for the child to know this to feel at ease when sharing their story. As a guardian,

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Articles 21(2) and 53(2) APR.

you should also emphasise to the child the importance of telling the truth and providing as much information as possible to the authorities.

If the child has difficulties explaining, if the child does not remember, if you see that the child feels tired or in distress when remembering and explaining, it is always appropriate to give them more time and ask for breaks. During the lodging, the child will not be requested to explain and/or write all the reasons they left/escaped their country but only the most important reasons.



Practical tip

You should inform the child on what to expect at this phase. For example, regarding:

- the aim of the lodging;
- the child's rights at this stage of the procedure;
- the content and steps during the lodging of the application;
- the child's obligation to say the truth and potential consequences of false statements;
- the role of the interpreter;
- the role of accompanying people, if any;
- the role of the legal counsellor, legal adviser or lawyer;
- the duty of confidentiality of the authority;
- the possibility to ask for breaks;
- the purpose of the audio recording (if relevant).

Before closing the lodging phase, the authorities should make sure that they have correctly registered all the information. For various reasons, misunderstandings or confusion may occur during the registration. Reassure the child that it is normal to feel insecure and/or to have doubts about what was said during the meeting. Explain to them that they can ask questions and reformulate answers if they have not been well understood.

The authorities may have different practices related to official signatures of the lodging report. The signature may be required of either the guardian or the child, or both. It is good practice for the authorities to collect the signature of both the child and the guardian. When you have approved and signed this report, a copy will be issued to you, together with copies of any additional documentation.

Where a child is channelled to the border procedure or an accelerated procedure, you should actively engage with the competent authorities to ensure that such channelling is appropriate and that reception conditions are adequate for the child's age, needs and vulnerability, in line with the Asylum Procedure Regulation. If adequate reception conditions for children are not available, you should argue that the child must be channelled to the regular procedure. This means that you should prevent the use of both the border or accelerated procedures where

conditions are unsuitable and request a transfer to the regular procedure if they have already been applied.

3.4. What happens if the child's age is disputed?

Age is an essential element of a child's identity and it also determines the relationship between the state and the person. As such, changes in age may trigger specific rights and obligations.

If an unaccompanied child cannot provide any type of documents, and substantial doubts exists regarding the applicant's age, the authorities might decide to carry out an age assessment. The age assessment is the process by which the authorities seek to estimate the chronological age or range of age of a person in order to establish whether an individual is a child or an adult.

Chronological age does not play an important role in the acquisition of adult status in all cultures. In some cultures, children are treated as adults as soon as they go through certain physical changes or if they marry. For these reasons, it is possible that some children may not know their chronological age and find it difficult to understand its importance in European cultures. This cultural difference may result in somewhat vague statements regarding dates of birth or age.

It may also happen that children pretend to be adults to continue on their journey or to avoid supervised accommodation. In other situations, an adult applicant may claim to be a child to take some advantage of the system for children.

Age assessment methods should be multidisciplinary and the medical methods should be used as a last resort.

These methods should be applied using a cascade approach, starting with document examination, followed by a psychosocial assessment and only as a last resort resorting to medical examinations. Where medical methods are used, they must be the least invasive possible, as some techniques may be intrusive, potentially traumatic and therefore require careful consideration.

The use of medical examinations is subject to the informed consent of the applicant and/or their guardian. If the applicant refuses to undergo such examination, this should not automatically lead to a negative conclusion; however, it may be taken into account by the determining authority and could result in a rebuttable presumption of adulthood, depending on the circumstances of the case. In all instances, assessments based solely on physical appearance cannot be considered reliable, as factors such as ethnicity and life experiences may significantly affect a person's appearance.

A trained person should be designated to temporarily act as a guardian until a guardian is appointed, including, where applicable, in relation to the age assessment procedure⁽⁵⁰⁾ and the applicant must be treated as a child.

Your role as a guardian

Before initiating age assessment procedures, the authorities, with the involvement of the guardian, conduct a best interests assessment to understand the situation of the child and any possible negative impact(s) of the age assessment or the methods to be used.

The authorities should provide information to the child concerning the scope and the methods used for the age assessment to ensure the child can fully understand and participate in the process. You should support the information provision process.

The child and/or you, as the guardian, should provide your informed consent for the conduct of the medical examination. No automatic consequences should result in the event of refusal to consent.

Your role as a guardian is to support the child in understanding the age assessment procedure and to understand if the child can provide any useful documentation to the authority to help in the age determination. You should inform the child about the reasoning for the age assessment, help the child to collect further documentation, prepare the child for the psychosocial assessment or medical test, provide or refuse the consent for the medical test and accompany the child during the process, etc.

Some children might find the assessment quite intrusive or dislike the fact that authorities did not believe their declared age. The child might need some support or information to overcome any open issues.



Related publication

EUAA, *Practical Guide on Age Assessment*, November 2025,

<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-age-assessment-0>.

EUAA, *All You Need to Know about Age Assessment*, January 2022,

<https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/all-you-need-know-about-age-assessment>.

FRA, *Age assessment and fingerprinting of children in asylum procedures – Minimum age requirements concerning children’s rights in the EU*, April 2018,

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-minimum-age-asylum-procedures_en.pdf.

EASO animations:

- *Age assessment for children*, 2021, <https://youtu.be/gXq1bMRDVwc>.
- *Age assessment for practitioners*, 2020, <https://youtu.be/wLe8DdsPZvw>.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Recital 35 APR.

4. Right to dignified living during the asylum procedure

4.1. Reception conditions

The RCD (2024) aims to ensure an adequate standard of living and comparable living conditions for applicants for international protection in all EU Member States. In particular, the directive mandates that Member States must ensure a standard of living adequate for children's 'physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development' ⁽⁵¹⁾.

Member States have to provide unaccompanied children with information on their rights and obligations relating to their reception conditions, in order to effectively enable them to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations applicable to them. The child must be informed of such information within a reasonable time not exceeding three days after the making of their application for international protection ⁽⁵²⁾.

The RCD (2024) also defines categories of applicants for international protection with special reception needs ⁽⁵³⁾, which include unaccompanied children ⁽⁵⁴⁾, and obliges states to consider their specific situation.



Related publications

EUAA, *Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects*, April 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/operational-standards-indicators-reception-including-vulnerability-aspects>.

FRA–European Commission, *Guardianship for Children Deprived of Parental Care – A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking*, 26 June 2014 (second edition forthcoming in 2026), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care>.

In addition to providing information in an age-appropriate manner, suitable housing, food, clothing, hygiene products and other basic items, Member States must provide children with full access to healthcare and education.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Article 26(1) RCD (2024).

⁽⁵²⁾ Article 5 RCD (2024).

⁽⁵³⁾ Article 24 RCD (2024).

⁽⁵⁴⁾ An 'unaccompanied minor' is defined under Article 2(5) RCD (2024).

Access to accommodation

The directive states that the best interests of the unaccompanied child are to be taken into consideration during the placement of the child ⁽⁵⁵⁾. An unaccompanied child could be accommodated with an adult relative, with a foster family, in accommodation centres specialised in child's provision or in other accommodations tailored to the child's needs ⁽⁵⁶⁾.

EU+ countries usually accommodate unaccompanied children in separate reception facilities; designated areas for unaccompanied children within mainstream reception facilities; mainstream care facilities; or foster families. When unaccompanied children are provided with accommodation in institutions, such facilities must be adapted to the specific needs of the children that allow for their physical and emotional care and support their development. They must be staffed with personnel qualified to take into account the needs of unaccompanied children.

Foster care is an adequate and often preferable and cost-effective setting for accommodating unaccompanied children.

The allocation of children to reception facilities must be implemented giving primary consideration to the best interests of the child and in line with the principle of family unity while also respecting the special reception needs unaccompanied children might have. Member States are allowed, however, to set up a system for the balanced distribution of applicants for international protection across their territories.

Always update the authorities on where the child is accommodated and inform the asylum authorities if and when the child changes address. This should guarantee that none of the communications concerning the procedure gets lost.

Access to healthcare

Children arriving in your country might be suffering from physical or emotional problems due to the accumulation of trauma and a situation of ongoing distress. They therefore require special care. Children seeking asylum have the right to access healthcare, including preventive care, mental healthcare and psychosocial support as well as sexual and reproductive healthcare.

Access to education

Education should be guaranteed to all children seeking asylum under the same conditions as to national children as soon as possible and not more than two months from the date on which

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Recital 35 RCD (2024).

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Article 27(9) RCD (2024).

the application for international protection was lodged. Member States must provide preparatory classes, including language classes, to ensure effective access to and participation in the general education system. In addition, they must ensure that children reaching the age of majority while attending secondary school have the possibility to finish secondary school. Member States can also consider providing access to education beyond the mandatory schooling age and beyond the provisions of compulsory education (e.g. by offering intensive courses or providing access to higher education after the age of majority).

Food, clothing, personal hygiene products and other non-food items and allowances

Explanatory note on terminology

The term 'food' includes food as well as non-alcoholic beverages. The term 'clothing' refers to both clothes and shoes. The term 'non-food items' refers to essential household items other than food, including, for example, cleaning and laundry products, bed linen and towels. 'Non-food items' also include school utensils.

Food, clothing, personal hygiene products and other non-food items as well as daily expenses allowances form an essential part of the material reception conditions.

Children can be provided with food, clothing, personal hygiene products and other non-food items in kind or in the form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that where EU+ countries choose to provide unaccompanied children with a financial allowance to cover these costs, this allowance should fully cover the costs of these items. The provision of non-food items as well as the quantity provided should always take place while considering the personal situation of the individual child. For example, a child may already possess sufficient clothing or other non-food items and thus might not need to receive additional items.

Your role as a guardian

As a guardian, your role is crucial in guaranteeing the access of unaccompanied children to their rights under the RCD (2024) and in safeguarding their best interests.

In particular, the directive explicitly lays down that the guardian (or the person acting temporarily as the guardian) is required to:

- be present when the child is provided with information regarding reception conditions, on organisations/groups that provide legal assistance and representation, on organisations that might be able to help or inform them about available reception conditions, including healthcare ⁽⁵⁷⁾, so as to be able to explain the information provided to the unaccompanied child ⁽⁵⁸⁾;

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Article 5(2) RCD (2024).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Recital 43 RCD (2024).

- liaise with the competent authorities to ensure immediate access for the unaccompanied child to suitable material reception conditions and healthcare ⁽⁵⁹⁾;
- contribute to the identification of any special reception needs of the child during the individual assessment of the special needs performed by the Member State ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

To avoid overwhelming the child with too much information at the initial reception, information should be given at different times and on a regular basis, considering the child's needs and their maturity. Unaccompanied children should receive information on reception (e.g. house rules, who does what, key staff, complaint mechanisms) as well as on the available support measures. These measures include psychosocial counselling and different types of assistance such as supporting unaccompanied children on how to access school, medical care, cultural mediation, conflict solving and guidance on the next steps. As a guardian, you should make sure that the child receives all the relevant information and understands it.

An initial assessment should take place on arrival in order to find the best possible housing solution for an unaccompanied child. Comprehensive assessments should be ongoing and multidisciplinary. As a guardian, you should be duly informed by the authorities and also be involved in this assessment. Your role is also to guarantee that the view of the child is taken into consideration. Changing accommodation should be kept to a minimum and should only occur if it is in the child's best interests ⁽⁶¹⁾.

Furthermore, as a guardian, you should verify that reception standards are respected by your Member State, and if not, address the relevant authorities with your concerns. When unaccompanied children are provided with accommodation, these facilities must be adapted to the specific needs of the children and be staffed with personnel qualified to consider children's needs. Reception spaces for children should be age-, gender- and diversity-sensitive, with appropriate recreational and learning opportunities.

Keep in mind that there could be safety risks for children in the context of reception. This means that you should make sure the unaccompanied children are staying at a safe place. A place with physical safety does not automatically qualify as a safe place; it has to offer enough social and emotional safety to allow for the adequate development of the child.

The communication from the European Commission on protection of children in migration ⁽⁶²⁾ calls for the establishment of internal child safeguarding policies in all organisations and bodies interacting with children, including reception facilities. An internal safeguarding or child protection policy is a set of internal rules that make it clear what an organisation or group will do to keep children safe.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Recital 43 RCD (2024).

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Article 25(1) RCD (2024).

⁽⁶¹⁾ Article 27(9) RCD (2024).

⁽⁶²⁾ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The protection of children in migration, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0211>.

As a guardian, alongside a health professional, you should stay informed of matters regarding the child's health when needed. You should be in regular contact with reception staff in order to understand if specific needs arise for the child and cooperate to address them.

Moreover, you should support the child in finding the right school, vocational training or educational pathway. If needed, you might need to communicate with school authorities and teachers.

You may also have to support the child in managing their allowances, depending on their age and maturity.



Related publications and tools

Consult the EUAA's Tool for the Assessment of Reception Conditions at <https://arc.euaa.europa.eu/> to assess the adequate standards of living for unaccompanied children. In addition, consult the related EUAA, *Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects*, April 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/operational-standards-indicators-reception-including-vulnerability-aspects>.

The EUAA's Let's Speak Asylum portal available at <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/> compiles resources for information providers and professionals designing communication and information provision activities in the field of asylum and reception.

For facilities at or near borders, see also FRA, *Initial-Reception Facilities at External Borders: Fundamental rights issues to consider*, March 2021, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/initial-reception-facilities-external-borders>.

4.2. Immigration detention

Children, including unaccompanied children, as a rule, must not be detained for immigration-related purposes, irrespective of their legal/migratory status or that of their parents. United Nations and Council of Europe initiatives work towards ending the immigration detention of children ⁽⁶³⁾.

There is strong evidence that detention has a profound and negative impact on children's health and development and can undermine their psychological and physical well-being and compromise their cognitive development. Children held in detention are at risk of suffering depression and anxiety and frequently exhibit symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder such as insomnia, nightmares and bedwetting ⁽⁶⁴⁾.

⁽⁶³⁾ FRA, *European legal and policy framework on immigration detention of children*, June 2017, Chapter 2. 'The right to liberty and security', https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-immigration-detention-children_en.pdf; UNHCR, *UNHCR's position regarding the detention of refugee and migrant children in the migration context*, January 2017, <https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2017/115250>.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ For more information on the negative effects of detention on children, see the Inter-Agency Working Group to End Child Immigration Detention, *Ending Child Immigration Detention*, 2016, <https://endchilddetention.org/wp->

With this background, the RCD (2024) states that ‘given the negative impact of detention on minors, such detention should only be used, in accordance with Union law, exclusively in exceptional circumstances, where strictly necessary, as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time, after it has been established that other less coercive alternative measures cannot be applied effectively, and after detention is assessed to be in their best interests’⁽⁶⁵⁾. It lays down that ‘All efforts shall be made to release minors from detention’ as soon as possible⁽⁶⁶⁾.

The RCD (2024) also states that ‘the health, including the mental health, of applicants in detention who have special reception needs shall be of primary concern to national authorities. Where the detention of applicants with special reception needs would put their physical and mental health at serious risk, those applicants shall not be detained.’⁽⁶⁷⁾

In the exceptional circumstances where a decision to detain children is considered, alternatives to detention must always be explored⁽⁶⁸⁾, giving priority to family-based alternative care options or other suitable alternative care arrangements, as determined by the competent authorities. The RCD (2024) enumerates the most common non-custodial alternatives to detention, such as regular reporting to the authorities, the deposit of a financial guarantee or the obligation to stay at an assigned place. The rules concerning alternatives to detention should be laid down in national law⁽⁶⁹⁾. The list is not exhaustive and other alternatives and more tailored measures may be applied considering the specific situation of children⁽⁷⁰⁾.

If, in exceptional cases, a child, being accompanied or unaccompanied, is deprived of liberty, the following guarantees must be respected⁽⁷¹⁾:

- detention is for the ‘shortest possible period of time’⁽⁷²⁾;
- a detention order is issued in writing stating the reasons in fact and in law on which it is based and why less coercive alternative measures cannot be applied effectively⁽⁷³⁾;
- all efforts are made to release the detained child and place them in a suitable accommodation⁽⁷⁴⁾;
- the right to education⁽⁷⁵⁾;

[content/uploads/2016/09/IAWG_Advocacy-Brochure_Aug-2016_FINAL-web.pdf](https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/detention/farmer.pdf); Alice Farmer, ‘The impact of immigration detention on children’ in *Forced Migration Review*, 44, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford, September 2013, <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/detention/farmer.pdf>.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Recital 40 RCD (2024) and Article 13(2) RCD (2024).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Article 13(2), third subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Article 13(1), first and second subparagraphs RCD (2024).

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Recital 40 RCD (2024).

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Article 10(5) RCD (2024).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ For examples and best practices of alternatives to detention, see the International Detention Coalition’s Alternatives to Detention Database available at: <https://database.idcoalition.org/>.

⁽⁷¹⁾ Articles 11-13 RCD (2024).

⁽⁷²⁾ Article 13(2), third subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁷³⁾ Article 11(2) RCD (2024).

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Article 13(2), third subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Article 13(2), fifth subparagraph RCD (2024).

- the right to healthcare ⁽⁷⁶⁾;
- detained children have the possibility to engage in leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to their age ⁽⁷⁷⁾;
- detained children are never detained in prison accommodation ⁽⁷⁸⁾, and they are accommodated separately from adults ⁽⁷⁹⁾;
- standards of living are adequate for the child's 'physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development' ⁽⁸⁰⁾;
- the right to information and participation ⁽⁸¹⁾
- the detained children have access to effective remedies and free legal representation ⁽⁸²⁾.

In addition, specific provisions are dedicated to unaccompanied children:

- all efforts are made to release the detained unaccompanied child as soon as possible ⁽⁸³⁾;
- children must be accommodated in facilities adapted to the housing of children staffed with personnel qualified to safeguard their rights and attend to their needs ⁽⁸⁴⁾;

Your role as a guardian

The guardian should be involved in the individualised assessment defining the best interests of the child prior to the imposition of detention measures, making sure that this measure is a measure of last resort, and no other alternative, non-coercive measures are available.

In the case of detained children, as the guardian you may be proactive in supporting the child in accessing legal assistance so that a lawyer can support and legally represent the child. Together with the lawyer or legal representative, you should carefully evaluate any decisions to detain the unaccompanied child, the length of the detention, review the conditions of their detention or seek a review/appeal the decision. You should monitor the child's well-being throughout and make sure that their rights are respected, including their access to healthcare and education.



Related publication

EUAA, *Guidelines on Alternatives to Detention*, December 2024,
<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidelines-alternatives-detention>.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Article 22 RCD (2024)

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Article 13(2), fifth subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Article 13(2), third subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Article 13(3), second subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Article 26(1) RCD (2024).

⁽⁸¹⁾ Article 24 of the European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 26 October 2012, 2012/C 326/02, http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2012/oj.

⁽⁸²⁾ Article 29 RCD (2024) and Article 47 of the Charter.

⁽⁸³⁾ Articles 11(1) and 13(2), third subparagraph RCD (2024).

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Article 13(3) RCD (2024).

5. The examination phase

Once the lodging of the application for international protection is finalised, the authorities will examine the application. The aim of the examination phase is to determine whether the child qualifies for international protection, i.e. refugee status or subsidiary protection.

The examination must be concluded as soon as possible and **no later than six months** from the lodging of the application. In certain situations, such as when a disproportionate number of applications are made at the same time, where complex issues of fact or law arise, or where delays are attributable to the applicant, the time limit may be extended **by up to six additional months**. In exceptional circumstances, for example when there is **a temporary uncertain situation in the applicant's country of origin**, the authorities may postpone the conclusion of the examination. In any event, the examination procedure must normally be completed within a maximum of twenty-one months from the lodging of the application ⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The examination process includes the following steps:

- admissibility stage (compulsory for subsequent applications) ⁽⁸⁶⁾
- personal interview;
- decision making on the application;
- notification of the decision.

5.1. Admissibility stage

The admissibility stage aims to determine whether an application will be examined on its substance, namely the reasons the person left their country and applied for international protection. It is therefore a preliminary examination used to decide whether the application can proceed to a substantive assessment or should be rejected as inadmissible.

Under the APR, an application is not examined on the merits where another Member State is responsible, where it is rejected as inadmissible or where it is explicitly or implicitly withdrawn (unless the examination on merits was done before the application was explicitly or implicitly withdrawn). The introduction of an admissibility stage is compulsory if the child makes a subsequent application ⁽⁸⁷⁾. An application will be rejected as inadmissible where it is a subsequent application and no new relevant elements have arisen or have been presented by the applicant ⁽⁸⁸⁾.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Article 35 APR.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Article 38 APR

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Article 55 APR

⁽⁸⁸⁾ Article 38(2) APR.

Moreover, an application may be rejected as inadmissible if one of the following grounds apply ⁽⁸⁹⁾.

- International protection has already been granted in another Member State.
- The first country of asylum ⁽⁹⁰⁾ concept is applicable. A third country may be considered a first country of asylum only where the applicant previously enjoyed effective protection there and can still avail themselves of that protection; where their life and liberty would not be threatened there; where they would face no real risk of serious harm; and where they are protected against *refoulement* and against removal contrary to international law.

The concept may be applied only after an individual assessment and only if the applicant cannot provide elements showing that it is not applicable in their case. For an unaccompanied child, it may be applied only where this is not contrary to the child's best interests and where the authorities of the third country have assured the Member State that the child will be taken in charge and will immediately benefit from effective protection ⁽⁹¹⁾. If that third country does not readmit the applicant, or does not reply within the set time limit, the applicant must be given access again to the asylum procedure ⁽⁹²⁾.

- The safe third country concept ⁽⁹³⁾ is applicable. A safe third country is a country where non-nationals are not threatened by persecution, face no real risk of serious harm, are protected against *refoulement* and against removal contrary to international law, and can request and, where eligible, receive effective protection. The concept may be applied only after an individual assessment and only if the applicant cannot show why, it should not apply to them. In addition, for unaccompanied children one of the following conditions must be met:
 - a. there is a connection between the applicant and the third country, making it reasonable for them to go there; or
 - b. the applicant transited through that third country on the way to the EU ⁽⁹⁴⁾.

For an unaccompanied child, the concept may be applied only where this **is not contrary to the child's best interests** and where the authorities of the third country have assured the Member State that the child will immediately have access to effective protection and care.

If the third country does not admit or readmit the applicant, the person must be given access again to the asylum procedure ⁽⁹⁵⁾.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ Article 38 APR.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Article 38(1)(a) and Article 58 APR.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Articles 58(1)–(3) APR.

⁽⁹²⁾ Article 58(5) APR.

⁽⁹³⁾ Article 38(1)(b) and Article 59 APR.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ For applicants who are not unaccompanied children, the safe third country concept may also be applied on the basis of an agreement with a third country that meets certain safeguards.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Article 59(5) APR.

- The applicant was issued with a return decision and made the application only after seven working days from receiving that decision, despite having been informed of the consequences, and where no new relevant elements have arisen since then ⁽⁹⁶⁾.
- An international criminal court or tribunal has provided safe relocation for the applicant to a Member State or third country or is in the process of doing so.

Except for the ground described regarding the issuance of a return decision, the admissibility examination is concluded as soon as possible and no later than two months from the date of the lodging ⁽⁹⁷⁾.

The time limit may be extended by a maximum of two months where ⁽⁹⁸⁾:

- there are a large number of applications made in a Member State in the same period making it unfeasible to conclude the procedure within the two months;
- complex issues of fact and/or law are involved;
- the delay can be clearly and solely attributed to the applicant's failure to comply with their obligations.

For the ground described regarding the issuance of the return decision, the admissibility examination must be completed within **ten working days** ⁽⁹⁹⁾.

Where the authorities intend to reject an application as inadmissible, the child must be informed accordingly and must receive a written decision stating the reasons in fact and in law, together with information on how to challenge that decision ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

Where inadmissibility is based on the safe third country concept, the child must also be given a document for the authorities of the third country stating, in the language of that country, that the application has not been examined in substance due to the application of the safe third country concept. However, this does not apply if there are already different procedures agreed between the EU (or the Member State) and that third country for informing its authorities ⁽¹⁰¹⁾.

The child has the right to access free legal assistance and to seek an effective remedy against an admissibility decision. For further details, refer to your national legislation.

Your role as a guardian

As a guardian, you should familiarise yourself with the national legislation and whether admissibility grounds are laid down in the legislation and potentially applicable to the child you are representing. Particular attention should be paid to cases involving a possible first

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Article 38(1)(e) APR.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Article 35(1) APR

⁽⁹⁸⁾ Article 35(2) APR

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Article 35(1), first subparagraph APR.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Articles 36 and 38 APR.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Articles 58(4) and 59(8) APR; Article 1(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2026/463 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 February 2026 amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 as regards the application of the concept of safe third country (OJ L, 2026/463, 26.2.2026), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/req/2026/463/oj>.

country of asylum or safe third country, as these concepts are subject to strict conditions and require an individual assessment.

If an admissibility procedure is carried out, you should support the authorities and the child in order to facilitate the process. As a guardian, you should make sure the admissibility procedure considers the special circumstances of the unaccompanied child you are representing and any special needs the child might need, such as a particular date and time for the interview, interpretation services or others. A first country of asylum or safe third country concept may be applied only if this is not contrary to the child's best interests and only if the authorities have received assurances from the third country that the child will be taken in charge there and will immediately benefit from effective protection.

If an admissibility interview takes place, you will prepare the child for the interview and provide sufficient information so that the child understands the purpose of the procedure and can feel at ease. You should accompany the child to the interview.

In addition, you should liaise with the legal adviser, if one has been already appointed, including for a possible appeal in the case of a negative admissibility decision.

5.2. The personal interview

The right to a personal interview

To ensure a fair procedure, it is essential that the child is given the opportunity to explain ⁽¹⁰²⁾, face-to-face and without interference, the reason(s) they had to leave their country and why they are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or country of habitual residence.

As a general rule, the child must be given the opportunity to participate in a personal interview assessing the **admissibility or the merits of the application**, unless limited exceptions apply.

The APR lays down that the child must be given the opportunity to participate in a personal interview on the substance of their application before the authorities make a decision on their application ⁽¹⁰³⁾.

In the exceptional circumstances listed below, national authorities can decide not to conduct a personal interview ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

- The available information is considered enough for the authority to grant international protection.
- The determining authority considers the application as non-admissible based on the available evidence.
- The authority deems that the child is unable or unfit to attend the interview (e.g. due to sustained medical reasons). If in doubt, a doctor is to be consulted to establish

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Article 12 CRC.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Article 13(2) APR.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Article 13(11) APR.

whether the child is expected to recover or whether that medical condition is of an enduring nature.

- In the case of a subsequent application, where the preliminary examination is examined on the basis of the written statements.
- Another Member State has already granted international protection to the child.
- The child is unfit or unable to be interviewed due to circumstances beyond their control ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

The interview must be conducted by qualified and trained personnel, with the assistance of an interpreter (if necessary) and sensitivity around gender should be considered during the interview. An example of this includes the guardian requesting, on behalf of the child, that the interviewer and the interpreter are the same or a different sex to the child.

During the personal interview, the child has the right to be assisted by a legal adviser, including when it is conducted by video conference ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. The personal interview must be conducted in accordance with the principle of confidentiality ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ and the interview is audio recorded ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

Interviews with children should be conducted in a child-appropriate manner ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ as children may not be able to articulate their claim in the same way as adults. It is possible that the child might not have made the decision themselves to leave the country of origin and might not even understand the circumstances of why they had to leave. Depending on their age, background and experiences, including trauma, children may have difficulties recounting what they have experienced. They also may feel lack of trust or fear towards the authorities due to their experiences in flight or in the countries of transit. Due to all this, children might not even know whether they could face persecution or serious harm if they were to return to their country.

It is possible that the authorities may decide to suspend or postpone the personal interview under various circumstances. Such situations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- more time is needed due to an uncertain situation in the country of origin, which is expected to be temporary or further documentation is needed to assess the claim;
- the child is unable to attend the personal interview due to health-related issues;
- there are communication problems with the interpreter.

Should any of these situations or other justifiable circumstances arise, the interview will be rescheduled according to the established practices of your national authorities. You will receive notification of the new date of the personal interview accordingly.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Article 13(11) APR.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Article 13(13) APR.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Article 7 APR.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Article 14(2) APR.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Article 22(3), first subparagraph APR.

Your role as a guardian

Before the interview

The law provides that the invitation for the interview (or hearing) is usually communicated in written form to the child and the guardian. Where the child appears to be deeply traumatised or unable to express themselves, the interview may be harmful for the child or hinder their recovery. In these cases, the interview should not take place or should be postponed until the child is fit to be interviewed.

As a guardian, you could suggest to the asylum authorities to either speed up the procedure or postpone the personal interview. This will allow the child more time to rest and recuperate as well as prepare for the interview and adjust to their environment before continuing with the procedure.

It is important that you guide the child in preparing for the interview and understanding what can be useful in relation to their reasons for fleeing, their travel and their personal story. You should tell the child about the type of information the authorities will be asking. This can include information on the child's journey, reasons for claiming asylum, who is putting them in danger in their country of origin, information about their family as well as things that are difficult to talk about, such as experiencing or witnessing traumatic situations and medical or psychological problems.

Once the child has understood what the interview is about, it is important to explore if the child has the possibility to safely collect missing information or potential documentation to support their claim, without putting themselves at risk. You need to evaluate if it is safe and in the best interests of the child to contact family members in the country of origin. They might have the possibility to send documents via the post or simply to support the child to collect/confirm information on dates regarding certain events or facts that could be important to share with the authorities.

In addition, you should explain to the child how the interview takes place, where and how to reach the location, the setup of the rooms, who will be present during the interview, how long it will take, what is expected of the child, the dress code and any other aspects. You should answer any questions the child might have.

During the interview

As a guardian, you should consider the following points during the interview.

- The interviews are not public. Of course, you as a guardian should be present during the interview with the child. There will be an interpreter at the hearing who speaks the language indicated in the lodging phase and interprets what is being said.

- You have a key role to play in ensuring the interviewer considers the best interests of the child. The child should feel at ease. The competent case officer and interpreter should have a particularly proactive and empathetic attitude.
- Information and questions should be phrased in a simple, straightforward and clear manner. The child's understanding needs to be confirmed, as some children might fear figures of authority, not dare to ask questions or may not admit they do not understand due to their age, cultural background or psychological state.
- Explain and remind the child (in a manner that the child can understand) that the interviews are governed by the principle of confidentiality and carefully explain any limitations to confidentiality and exceptions.
- In cases where the child has experienced trauma, they may not be willing or able to express any feelings or to share their story. Expert interviewers should be sought to use alternative methods and to provide counselling or to refer the child to the adequate support. You can ask for a postponement of the hearing if there are health concerns, which must be certified, or for any other serious reasons.
- Child-appropriate interviewing techniques should be used that are adapted to the child's age and level of maturity.
- Give children the right to ask questions and seek consent prior to sharing information with other actors such as to refer their case to other services.
- In cases where the child can be accompanied to the interview by a trusted adult in addition to you as the guardian, the child needs to choose the person and consent to their presence.
- If the child wishes, the interviews with the child should be conducted whenever possible by a case officer and interpreter of the same or different sex to that of the child. To do this, the child should be informed about and offered this possibility.
- If, due to the specific circumstances or needs of the child (health related issues, period of school or vocational education examinations or a particularly stressful time for the child), the interview cannot be conducted or needs to be rescheduled/adjusted. All efforts should be made to adapt the interview to the needs of the child.
- Help the interviewers and interpreters identify and use the most appropriate methods to communicate with children with disabilities, prioritising inclusion and accessibility.

When recording the interview

A record for each personal interview is taken ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ to allow the Member State to have access to the child's statements for further examination but also as a guarantee to ensure fairness, effectiveness and objectivity. The interview is audio recorded ⁽¹¹¹⁾.

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Article 14 APR.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ Article 14(2) APR.

In addition, the authorities will make ⁽¹¹²⁾:

- a factual report containing all the main elements of the personal interview;
- a transcript of the interview; or
- a transcript of the recording.

The child should be duly informed of the modalities of the personal interview, including that the interview is recorded by audio means and the purpose of such recording. As a guardian, make sure the child understands this in an age-appropriate way and that their procedural rights are respected. In particular, the guardian should support the child in reviewing the content of the interview report or transcript, including with the assistance of an interpreter where necessary, and in making comments or clarifications regarding any incorrect translations, misunderstandings or factual errors ⁽¹¹³⁾.

The guardian should also assist the child in deciding whether to confirm the accuracy of the record and ensure that any refusal and its reasons are properly noted.

Be aware that the asylum authority may not be required to ask the child to review or confirm the accuracy of the report or transcript where:

- the recording of the interview, or a transcript of it, may be used as evidence in the appeal procedure; or
- it is clear to the determining authority that the child will be granted refugee status or subsidiary protection (where subsidiary protection provides the same rights and benefits as refugee status) ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Guardians, together with legal advisers where applicable, will have access to the interview report or transcript, as soon as possible after the interview and in any case in due time before the determining authority makes a decision, in order to safeguard the child's rights and best interests throughout the procedure. Access to the recording will be provided in the appeal procedure.

As a guardian, you should be allowed to actively support the child during the personal interview, in line with your role to safeguard the child's best interests. This may include helping the child understand questions, ensuring their views are properly expressed, and intervening where necessary. Depending on the national legislation, there may be specific rules on when and how you can make comments or remarks (e.g. during the interview or at the end). Check the applicable national procedures and make use of any opportunity to intervene if this is in the child's best interests.

⁽¹¹²⁾ Article 14(1) APR.

⁽¹¹³⁾ Article 14(3) APR.

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Article 14(5) APR.

After the interview

As a guardian, you should meet with the child after the interview to discuss how the child felt about the interview, whether they felt able to share all the relevant information, or whether there are additional aspects that the child felt they could not share. As a guardian, you can ask for the child's consent to update the authorities on any new information you might receive.

Inform the child about the expected waiting time for a decision to be issued. You should also explain the potential outcomes of the decision. This will help the child to manage their expectations and be prepared once the decision is notified. The child should be aware that in the case of a rejection, an appeal should be submitted within the timeframe laid down in the APR.

In certain circumstances, the authorities may examine the application in an **accelerated examination procedure**, which must normally be concluded within **three months of the lodging of the application**. Accelerated procedures may only apply to unaccompanied children in exceptional cases (see Section [3.3 Lodging an application for international protection](#)).

5.3. Decision-making process and notification

Following an appropriate examination of the application, the determining authority is obliged to issue a decision on the substance of the application, which can lead to granting international protection (either refugee status or subsidiary protection status) or to a negative decision (inadmissible, rejection or exclusion).

Assessment of the application

The examination must be carried out and taken objectively, impartially and individually ⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

The assessment is conducted based on the child's statements (oral and written) and the available documents, as well as on country-of-origin information ⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and potentially other pieces of evidence (e.g. expert reports, medical and psychological reports). Country of origin information refers to information about countries of origin or habitual residence for stateless applicants, as well as countries of transit or return and the socio-economic, legal, political, human rights, conflict and humanitarian situation(s) in that country or those countries at a given time. Authorities can use it to corroborate or refute the statements of the child.

Types of decision

After examining the application, the determining authority will adopt a decision. The decision may:

- grant refugee status;

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Article 34(2) APR.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ The EUAA country of origin information reports are available at <https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/>.

- grant subsidiary protection;
- reject the application as inadmissible, unfounded or manifestly unfounded; or
- declare the application implicitly or explicitly withdrawn ⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

The determining authority will always first examine whether the child qualifies for refugee status and, if not, whether the child is eligible for subsidiary protection ⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

Depending on national legislation, the determining authority may recognise another form of national protection based on humanitarian grounds.

Notification of the decision

The decision must be made in writing and notified as soon as possible. The child must also receive information on how to challenge the decision ⁽¹¹⁹⁾. Authorities should ensure that the guardian is duly involved in the notification and explanation of the decision on the application for international protection.

Form of the decision

Decisions are always given in writing ⁽¹²⁰⁾.

If the decision is negative or grants subsidiary protection (and hence has rejected the application for refugee status), it must include the following:

- factual and legal grounds for the decision;
- written information how to appeal this decision ⁽¹²¹⁾.

The steps following the first instance decision

If the decision grants refugee status or subsidiary protection, the child has access to a number of rights and this might have an impact on the child's accommodation and other entitlements ⁽¹²²⁾.

If the decision is negative, the child has the right to appeal against that decision ⁽¹²³⁾. The child may also appeal against a decision granting subsidiary protection if they consider they should have been granted refugee status.

When an application is rejected as inadmissible, unfounded or manifestly unfounded, Member States must normally issue a **return decision** in accordance with EU return legislation and respecting the principle of *non-refoulement*. The return decision may be included in the same

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Articles 36(2) and 39(2)–(4) APR

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Article 39(2) APR.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Articles 36(1) and (3) APR

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Article 36(1) APR.

⁽¹²¹⁾ Article 36(3)(4) APR.

⁽¹²²⁾ EUAA-FRA, *Practical Tool for Guardians – Introduction to international protection*, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-introduction-international-protection>.

⁽¹²³⁾ Article 67 APR.

act as the decision on international protection or issued at the same time or shortly afterwards ⁽¹²⁴⁾.

Your role as a guardian

You should ensure that the child is informed, in an age-appropriate manner, of the outcome of the decision, its reasons in fact and in law and the available remedies.

Once the decision is communicated to you and the child, you should accompany the child to make the notification of the decision as smooth as possible. First of all, you should meet the child to read the decision together and explain all consequences.

If the decision is notified to a legal adviser or representative/lawyer, you should coordinate with them to ensure that the child effectively understands the implications of the decision. If the decision is positive and grants refugee status or subsidiary protection, you will discuss what implications this might have for the child, for example whether their accommodation will have to change.

Depending on the national context, a different guardian might be appointed for the follow-up and you will no longer represent the child. In this case, you should make sure to hand over all the information to the new guardian, in agreement with the child.

A long-term plan for a 'durable solution' in the best interests of the child is necessary for every child. Such a solution should consider the immediate and the long-term needs of the child but should also address the whole spectrum of considerations relevant for the particular situation of that individual child. For example, once the child is granted refugee status, it might be in their best interests to apply for family reunification. Through family reunification, the child could apply to reunite and bring their parents to where the child is residing. You should make sure a lawyer provides assistance in the family reunification application.

As the guardian, you should be involved in all decisions made by the authorities about the life of the children you represent. You should make sure that the children are consulted and participate in deciding about their future.

If the decision is negative, you will have to support the child in going through this difficult process. The negative decision will be a moment of disappointment and loss of hope for the child. Be patient and empathic and show understanding. You should ensure the child is safe and prevent any risks for the child, such as the use of drugs or getting involved in criminal activities as a consequence of the frustration. The child might need psychological support and you should help them in accessing mental health services.

With a negative decision, the child might also consider going missing and trying to reach another country. You should explain all the risks of such a decision as well as the legal consequences.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Article 37 APR

If the decision is negative or grants subsidiary protection, but not refugee status, you and the child, with the support of the lawyer, might opt to appeal the decision. See Chapter [6. Appeal against a negative decision](#) for effective remedies.

6. Appeal against a negative decision

The child has the right to an effective remedy before a court or tribunal ⁽¹²⁵⁾. The child also has the right to appeal a decision granting subsidiary protection ⁽¹²⁶⁾ (since such a decision means a rejection of granting refugee status) and against any negative decision at first instance. In particular, the child has the right to appeal the following decisions.

- A decision granting subsidiary protection, insofar as it entails the rejection of refugee status.
- A negative decision at first instance, including where:
 - the application is rejected as unfounded or manifestly unfounded;
 - the determining authority concludes that exclusion grounds apply, including where there are serious reasons for considering that a child who had reached the minimum age of criminal responsibility under national law at the time of the relevant conduct has committed, for example, a war crime or a serious non-political crime outside the country concerned; or
 - in the case of subsidiary protection, the child is considered to constitute a danger to the community or the security of the Member State examining the application⁽¹²⁷⁾.
- A decision considering an application inadmissible Section [5.1. Admissibility stage](#);
- A decision rejecting an application as implicitly withdrawn.
- A decision withdrawing international protection.
- A return decision, including where it is issued together with a negative asylum decision.
- An age assessment decision, where national law does not provide for a separate appeal against that decision. In such cases, the age assessment is subject to judicial review in the context of an appeal against the decision on international protection.

The appeal must be lodged within the time limits prescribed by national law. The decision must include all the necessary information to enable the effective exercise of the right to a remedy.

The remedy provides for a full examination of both facts and points of law, including, where applicable, an examination of the international protection needs. Key guarantees for the child are the right to an effective remedy and the right to free legal assistance and representation ⁽¹²⁸⁾.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Article 67(1) APR.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Article 67(2) APR.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Article 17 APR and Article 68(5)(c) APR.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ As laid down in both Article 47 of the Charter and Article 13 of the Council of Europe, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14, 4 November 1950, ETS 5, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=005>. See also Article 67 APR.

These time limits range from a minimum of five days to a maximum of ten days in certain cases, such as where the application is rejected as inadmissible, implicitly withdrawn or as unfounded or manifestly unfounded in accelerated or border procedures, and from two weeks to one month in all other cases.

The time limit starts to run from the date on which the decision is notified to the child or to their guardian or legal adviser. Where a return decision is issued together with a negative decision on the application, it must be appealed within the same time limits and in the same proceedings. Member States are obliged to ensure that free legal assistance and representation is granted on request in the appeals stage ⁽¹²⁹⁾.

Children subject to any negative decision or withdrawal of international protection status have the automatic right to remain on the territory until the time limit for lodging an appeal has expired and, where an appeal is lodged within that time limit, pending the outcome of the appeal. However, this right to remain does not apply in certain cases, such as decisions made in accelerated or border procedures, decisions rejecting an application as inadmissible or implicitly withdrawn or decisions concerning subsequent applications. In such cases, a **court or tribunal must have the power to decide**, upon request or *ex officio*, whether the child should be allowed to remain on the territory pending the outcome of the appeal. The child must be given the opportunity to request this within a set time limit and must not be removed from the territory until a decision on that request has been taken. The **execution of a return decision is automatically suspended** for as long as the child has, or is granted, the right to remain.

Your role as a guardian

In your role as a guardian, and in the event of a negative decision regarding the child's application to international protection, you should ensure that the child receives appropriate support including free legal counselling and legal assistance.

The appeal must be lodged within a defined **time limit and you should pay attention to these deadlines**.

Your responsibility during the appeal stage includes the following elements.

- Ensure a lawyer is appointed (if not done so before) and discuss with the child and the lawyer any additional information that could be added to the appeal. It is a good practice for the guardian to be present during the first meetings between the child and the lawyer.
- Discuss with the child and the lawyer any additional information that could be added to the appeal; supporting the child in finding the documentation or contacting the family, if safe and in the best interests of the child.
- Ensure the lawyer is adequately following the case and respecting all timelines.
- Follow up with the child to make sure you answer any pending questions or address any issues the child might be experiencing.

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Article 17 APR and Article 68(5)(c) APR.

7. What can you do when something is not going as expected?

There might be situations where the situation is not going as expected. The child may be displaying challenging behaviour and your communication with the child might be difficult. The personal interview might be delayed or the child has other immediate needs related to health, protection or safety that might affect the timing of the interview or your work with the child.



Reminder

Children are overall very resourceful and resilient. With empathy and support, children can overcome many challenges. Providing them with daily routines and meaningful activities including education, vocational skill training or work (depending on the age) while they wait for the decision on their application can greatly benefit their sense of well-being, which is needed to ensure their meaningful cooperation in the procedures.



Related resources

FRA e-learning courses, 2022, available at: <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>

Below you can find some common situations and what you as the guardian can do to handle them.

Mistrust from the child towards the authorities and their guardian

Some children may be more vulnerable because of their relative immaturity, dependency and developmental needs. Other children may have matured rapidly due to their life experiences and be resilient in many aspects. Children may not trust people and this will depend heavily on their background and personal experiences, particularly those they might have suffered during the flight, including traumas.

Children moving from one country to another might become more distrustful of adults due to their life experiences. The fact that the child had to go through the experience of escaping the country of origin and the migratory process alone can have a strong negative impact on the well-being of the child. The absence of parental support or caregivers during this emotionally and physically stressful period makes children especially vulnerable.

The children arriving in Europe have often experienced trauma and violence not only in their country of origin but also during flight and upon arrival. Some may have also had difficult experiences with authorities, or people they perceive to be in a position of authority, in the

past. They find it hard therefore to believe that there are officials that care for them. It will be important for you not to take it personally or be offended if they have a distant or cold reaction to you. Sometimes their past experiences might make it hard for them to manage emotions such as fear, anger or sadness.

Children might show their frustration, fear and anxiety in different ways. While some might act out and appear to be aggressive others might withdraw and refuse to engage. The fact is that in most cases these are normal reactions to the abnormal events experienced.

Creating a trusting and positive relationship with a child is crucial to providing meaningful support. This will take time. It is also important that all other professionals working with the child develop positive relationships with them. Understanding and respecting a child's opinion, strengths, needs and goals is crucial to developing a positive relationship. This trust-based relationship will help you and other authorities in making decisions according to the best interests of the child. Allowing the child to feel in charge through their participation in the decision-making process will help them to be more engaged.

Substance abuse

Some children might find it hard to cope with their current reality, being separated from family or having lost some family members. They might struggle with the new way of life in Europe and the loss of their social network(s). They might struggle to cope with trauma and the fact that their dreams of going to school or working and earning money are not materialising.

If the child no longer shows up to appointments, appears withdrawn, quiet, sleepy or the opposite, agitated, easily irritated and/or more aggressive than usual, these may be indications of drug or alcohol abuse. A lack of hygiene might be another sign or a change in sleeping and eating patterns. When you see the child changing or have noticed them engaging in substance abuse, find the time to speak to the child and continue developing a trusting relationship. You can also support the child in reaching out to services working with substance abuse.

Risk of trafficking and disappearance

Children, including unaccompanied children, are at a higher risk of trafficking. As a guardian, you are in a position to initiate and promote an assessment with the competent authorities of the particular situation of the child you are representing. This assessment should include the risk of the child going missing in the days after which the child is placed in your care. This risk assessment should identify any immediate safety risks as well as threats to the child's safety and how to mitigate such risks, for example by referring the child to a protective shelter or similar.

The cooperation and involvement of child protection services as well as international organisations and civil society organisations with child protection expertise will facilitate the child's access to the appropriate services and support when needed.

In the event of a child's disappearance, it is your responsibility as a guardian to inform the law enforcement authorities as soon as possible. Additionally, national authorities can register the disappearance in the relevant international and national databases, including the Schengen Information System established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 ⁽¹³⁰⁾, the Interpol notices and the database of the EU's agency against international and organised crime (Europol). Where it is likely that the missing child has crossed borders, law enforcement officers should introduce an alert in the Schengen Information System.

The Schengen Information System allows officers to insert not only 'reactive' alerts about children who have gone missing but also 'preventive' alerts on different situations, such as:

- children at risk of abduction by a parent, a family member or a guardian;
- children at risk of being taken abroad unlawfully or who need to be prevented from travelling to protect them from the risk of falling in the hands of traffickers or from being made to participate actively in hostilities.



Related video

EUAA, Animation on safety rules for accompanied and unaccompanied children, 2023, <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/templates/animation-safety-rules-accompanied-and-unaccompanied-children>.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU, (7.12.2018, OJ L 312), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/req/2018/1862/oj>.

Annex 1. Additional resources

EUAA

Access to the asylum procedure and registration

- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Information Provision – Access to the asylum procedure*, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/information-provision-asylum-procedure-practical-guide>.
- EUAA, *Practical guide on free legal counselling*, October 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-free-legal-counselling>.
- EUAA, *Practical guide on the registration and lodging of applications for international protection*, December 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-registration-lodging>.

Information Provision

- EUAA, Let's Speak Asylum Platform, 2026, <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/>.

Examination of the application

- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Qualification for International Protection*, June 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/qualification-international-protection-practical-guide>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Membership of a Particular Social Group*, May 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-membership-particular-social-group>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Evidence and Risk Assessment*, January 2024, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-evidence-and-risk-assessment>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Political Opinion*, December 2022, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-political-opinion>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide – Interviewing applicants with religion-based asylum claims*, November 2022, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-interviewing-applicants-religion-based-asylum-claims>.
- EASO, *Practical Guide: Personal interview*, December 2014, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-personal-interview>.

Child-related resources

- EASO animations on:
 - *Age assessment for children*, 2021, <https://youtu.be/gXg1bMRDVwc>.

- *Age assessment for practitioners*, 2020, <https://youtu.be/wLe8DdsPZvw>.
- EUAA, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in the framework of international protection*, March 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-best-interests-child-international-protection>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Family Tracing Part I – Principles and practices on family tracing in the EU+ and third countries*, April 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-family-tracing-part-i-principles-practices>.
- EUAA, *Practical Guide on Family Tracing Part II – Tracing and identifying family members under the asylum and migration management regulation*, April 2025, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-family-tracing-part-ii-tracing-AMMR>.
- EUAA-FRA, practical tools for guardians series on the following topics:
 - temporary protection for unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine, November 2022, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-tool-guardians>;
 - introduction to international protection, June 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-introduction-international-protection>;
 - transnational procedures, 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/tool-guardians-transnational-procedures-framework-international-protection>.

Reception

- EUAA, *Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects*, April 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/operational-standards-indicators-reception-including-vulnerability-aspects>.
- EUAA, *Guidelines on alternatives to detention*, December 2024, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidelines-alternatives-detention>.

FRA

FRA, *Handbook on European Law Relating to Asylum, Borders and Immigration – Edition 2026*, June 2026, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2026/handbook-european-law-relating-asylum-borders-and-immigration-edition-2026>

FRA, *Guardianship for unaccompanied children – A manual for trainers of guardians*, March 2023, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/guardianship-unaccompanied-children-trainers-manual>.

FRA e-learning materials, 2022, available at: <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>

FRA, *Guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the EU: developments since 2014*, 15 February 2022, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/guardianship-systems-children-update>.

FRA, *Initial-Reception Facilities at External Borders: Fundamental rights issues to consider*, March 2021, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/initial-reception-facilities-external-borders>.

FRA, *Right to information – Guide for authorities when taking fingerprints for EURODAC*, December 2019, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/right-information-authorities-taking-fingerprints-eurodac>.

FRA, *Age assessment and fingerprinting of children in asylum procedures – Minimum age requirements concerning children’s rights in the EU*, 2018, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/age-assessment-and-fingerprinting-children-asylum-procedures-minimum-age>.

FRA–European Commission, *Guardianship for Children Deprived of Parental Care – A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking*, 26 June 2014 (second edition forthcoming in 2026), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/guardianship-children-deprived-parental-care>.

European Guardianship Network

European Guardianship Network, *7 EGN Standards for the delivery of guardianship to unaccompanied children*, 2022, <https://www.egnetwork.eu/7-standards-of-guardianship/>.

European Guardianship Network, *Children on the Move – A guide to working with unaccompanied children in Europe*, February 2021, <https://www.egnetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Children-on-the-move-A-guide-to-working-with-unaccompanied-children-in-Europe.pdf>.

European Guardianship Network, *Pilot Assessment System for Guardianship*, September 2019, <https://www.egnetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PAS-tool.pdf>.

UNHCR

UNHCR, *Technical Guidance: Child friendly procedures*, 2021, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/61b7355a4.html>.

UNHCR, *Best Interests Procedure Guidelines: Assessing and determining the best interests of the child*, May 2021, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c18d7254.html>.

UNHCR, *Guidelines on International Protection No. 8: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*, 22 December 2009, HCR/GIP/09/08, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4b2f4f6d2.html>.

International Organization for Migration

International Organization for Migration, *Caring for unaccompanied migrant children – A foster carer training manual*, 2022, <https://belgium.iom.int/u-care-training-material-english>.

International Organization for Migration, 'Trafficking in persons: Protection and assistance to victims'. A self-paced, e-learning course available in E-Campus at <https://www.ecampus.iom.int/>.

Council of Europe

Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)22 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration and its Explanatory Memorandum, adopted 14 December 2022, <https://search.coe.int/cm?i=0900001680a96350>.

Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration, adopted 11 December 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680993db7>.

Council of Europe, How to convey child friendly information to children in migration: A Handbook for frontline professionals, December 2018, <https://rm.coe.int/how-to-convey-child-friendly-information-to-children-in-migration-a-ha/1680902f91>.

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