Ireland

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration

euaa
EUROPEAN UNION
AGENCY FOR ASYLUM

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT APPLYING FOR ASYLUM

## INFORMATION FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Hello, we are children from different countries. We travelled a long way before we arrived in Ireland to seek protection. We arrived on our own, without our parents.

Hello. My name is Lisa. I'm going to explain to you what you need to know about applying for asylum (also called international protection).

# What is international protection?

If a person cannot return to their home country because they are in danger there, they can receive international protection and stay safe in the country that gave them this protection.

Your representative will explain to you further who can receive international protection and what is the procedure.

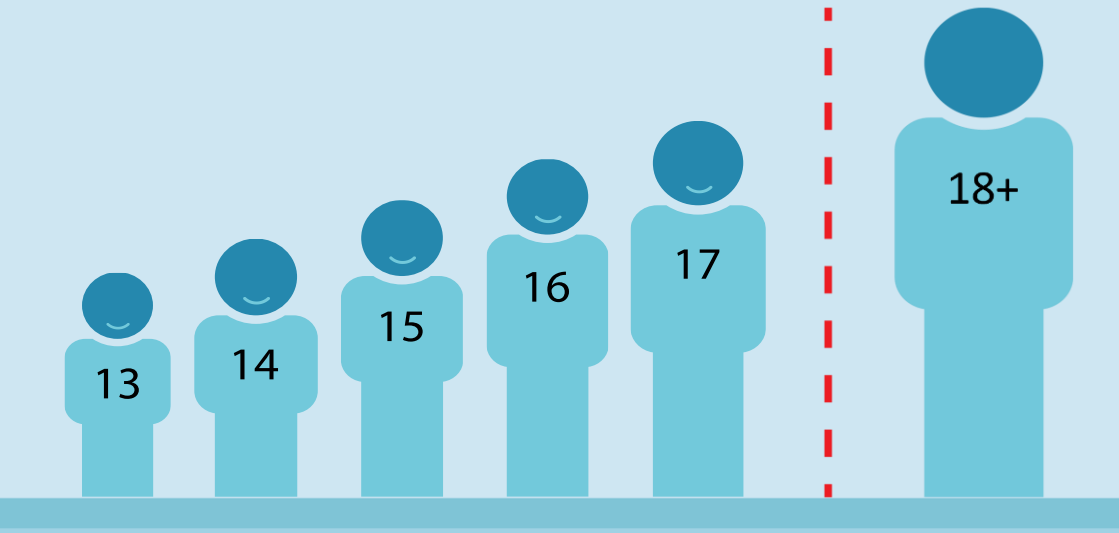
In Europe, international protection can also be called asylum, refugee status or subsidiary protection. Maybe you have already heard the word asylum. I will use the word asylum when talking about international protection as it is easier for you to remember.

## Remember, you are safe now.

Everybody is treated equally in Europe regardless of where they come from, their religion or the colour of their skin.

In Europe, everybody younger than 18 years old is considered a child.

As a child you have special rights. Your safety and well-being are very important.



You will meet different officials, such as the staff of the asylum authorities, as shown here. They will ask you questions about you and your journey to Europe.

Remember, the officials are here to protect you and to decide what is best for you.

You can always share with the officials what you think, what you need and how you feel.

# Who is a representative?

Because you came here without your parents, the authorities will assign an adult to you called a representative who will support you.

A representative is a person who assists children who arrive in Europe without their parents or another adult responsible for them.

A representative can be a man or a woman. Representatives can also be called guardians.

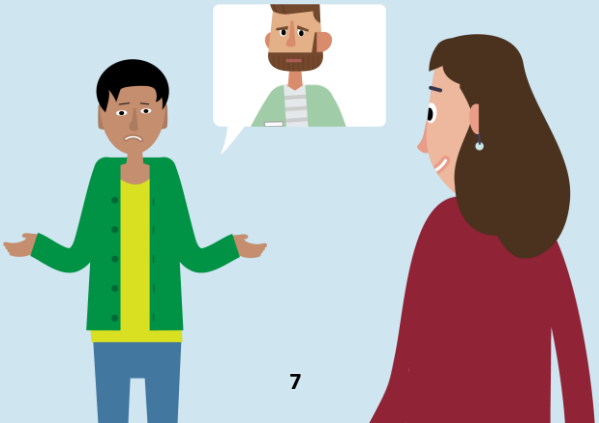
If you have not yet met your representative, you will meet them as soon as possible.

Sometimes, the authorities may first assign a temporary representative to support you until you meet your permanent representative.

A representative is there to explain everything you need to know about your stay and to help you make important decisions. For example, a representative will assist you with your asylum application, explain the procedures, explain your rights and obligations and participate with you in meetings with the authorities.

You can always tell the representative your opinion, ask them questions and tell them if you need anything. They are there to support you.

If you have a problem with your representative, tell the officials at your Accommodation Centre. It will not negatively affect your asylum application.



# What help will be given during the procedure?

a safe place to stay

clothes

other things that you may need

food

you can go to the doctor

you will go to school

You will live in a place that is good for you and get the help you need depending on your age

# I asked for asylum, what will happen now?

**Firstly, your application must be registered and lodged.**

Your application will be registered within 10 days after you asked for asylum.

You must then lodge your application within 21 days of the registration.

Your representative and the adults working at the place where you live will inform you about the days and times and your representative will accompany you to the authorities.

Your representative will be with you during the procedure.

# During registration and lodging the following will happen...

You will show the officials all the identity documents that you have with you (passport, identity card, etc.).

It is possible that you and your personal belongings will be searched. The authorities might keep your belongings for a bit, but they will return everything to you, except the belongings that are dangerous.

You will be photographed.

Your fingerprints will be taken.

you may see a doctor

- an official will ask you questions about you and about your family in Europe

an official will ask you to provide your contact details (your address and phone number).

You will be asked additional questions about:

- you and your family
- your country and places where you lived before
- why you left your country and why you do not want to return
- how you travelled to Ireland

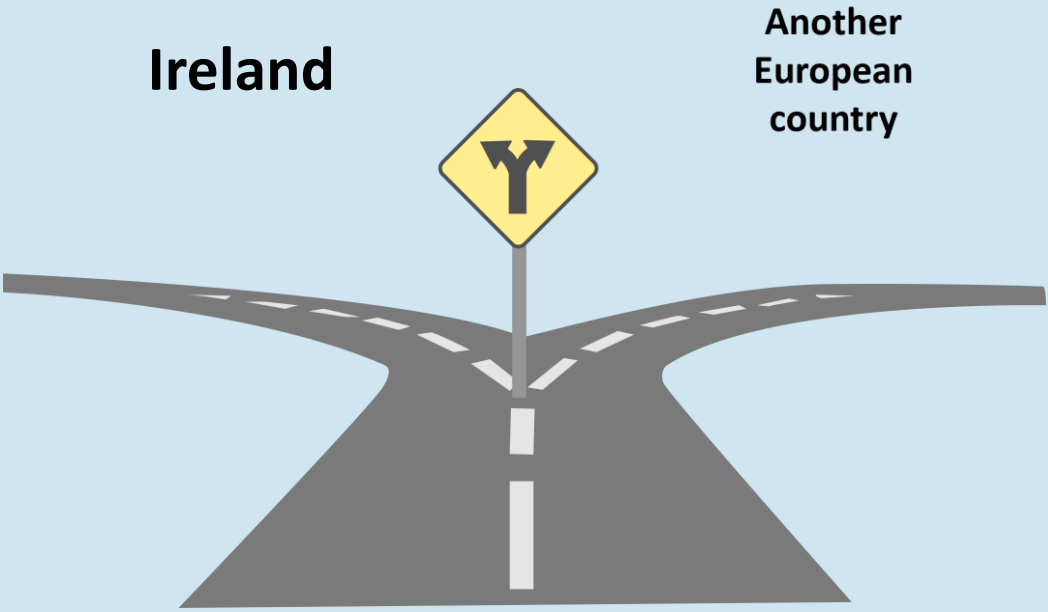
## Remember!

It is very important that you talk to your representative and work together with the asylum authorities.

What you say to your representative or to the officials will remain **confidential**. This means that the information you give to them will never be shared with the government of your home country nor with the people that you fear.

## Will I stay in Ireland during the asylum procedure?

After registration, the authorities will decide which country will examine your application. It will be either Ireland or another European country. You cannot choose the country, but your best interests will be taken into account. The authorities will explain this to you.



It is important that you tell the authorities during the registration:

- if you have family in another European country
- if you have asked for asylum in another European country before.

If you have family in Europe, it is important to tell the officials everything you know about your family. It is possible that you can stay with them either in this country or in the country where they are living.

If you do not know where your family is, or you have lost contact with them, you can ask your representative or the staff of the International Protection Office for help to find your family.

# What will happen after registration and lodging?

After registration, you will receive a (temporary) document stating that your application was made and registered.

Once you have lodged your application, you will be given a digital document called an International Protection Applicant Certificate stating that you have asked for asylum.

This document is important so take good care of it. Carry it with you whenever you leave the place where you are staying or when you have a meeting with the authorities. You can store it on your phone, if you have one.

# How will the officials know my age?

If you do not have documents to prove your age and if the authorities have doubts about your age, the staff of the asylum authorities can ask you to go through an age assessment. This is an exercise that helps estimate your age.

There are different ways to estimate your age.

For example, it may be based on documents you have submitted or interviews with officers or different specialists. If there are further doubts, you may be asked to have a medical examination. In this case, you and your representative will be asked to provide consent.

If the age assessment concludes that you are older than 18 years old, you will be considered an adult. In this case, you will receive more information.

If the authorities have the impression that somebody has hurt you, they will propose you to see a doctor.

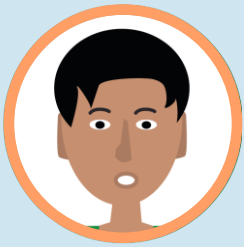
The results of the medical check will be taken into account when examining your application.

**After your application is lodged, you may have one or more personal interviews.**

This means that an officer will ask you more questions about you, why you left your country and why you do not want to return. If the authorities ask you to take part in an interview, you must attend it and tell them everything you can remember. The personal interview will be audio recorded.

Your representative will tell you when and where the interview will take place and will support you during the interview.

# What if I don't understand the language of the officials?



If you do not understand English, an interpreter who can speak your language will help you understand.

An interpreter has no other role in your case besides translating what is said. What you say to the case officer and interpreter will stay confidential.

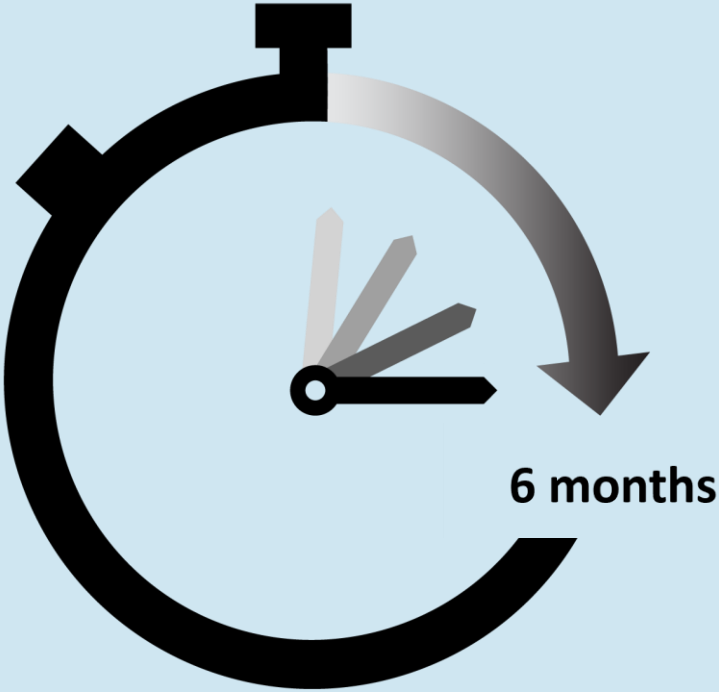
Depending on what you feel more comfortable with, you can ask for your interviewer or interpreter to be a woman or a man. They will be provided if available. Tell your representative if you prefer a woman or a man as soon as possible and before the interview.

# How long does it all take?

After the interview, everything you explained will be examined.

From the day of the lodging, you may need to wait up to **6 months** to receive your decision. Sometimes, it can take longer, but it should not take longer than **21 months.** Waiting can be difficult but be patient. The authorities want to make the right decision for you.

You can always ask your representative if you need help to cope with the waiting.



**A friend said the authorities won't review his asylum application. Why is that?**

The authorities first check if they need to examine an asylum application or not.

The authorities might not examine your application in full if you have already been given protection in another country or if you come from a country that they consider safe.

# What decision will I receive?

The asylum authorities will decide if you need asylum or if there are other options for you.

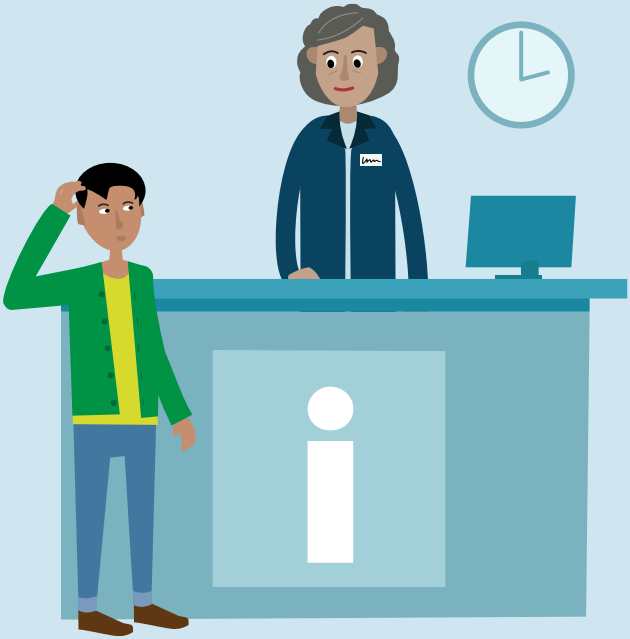
The decision will be explained to you.

If you receive a negative decision and if you or your representative disagree with it, you can challenge it. This is called an appeal.

# How can I get more information about the asylum procedure?

Besides your representative, there are also legal counsellors who can explain to you the asylum procedure, your rights and your obligations.

Ask your representative how to contact them.



If you would like a lawyer to help you, speak with your representative or another official.

**The lawyer, together with your representative, can help you to:**

prepare for the interview with the authorities.

talk with asylum officials

understand the decision on your asylum application and appeal, if you or your representative do not agree with the decision.

You may also contact UNHCR at anytime during your asylum procedure.

UNHCR supports and protects asylum seekers and refugees.

People working for UNHCR provide information and assistance to asylum seekers.

You can find more information at https://help.unhcr.org/.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

# How can I get help if I am not well or if I worry often?

Tell your representative, an official or the staff working at the place where you are staying if:

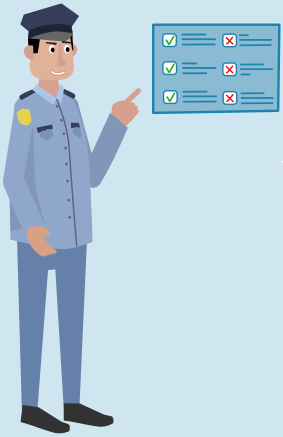
Somebody hurt you

You feel sad, angry, afraid or you find it hard to sleep

You have any other difficulties such as a disability or illness or if you are pregnant

In such cases, you will get help

# Do I have any obligations?



## Yes

**You must follow the laws and rules of this country.**

If you have doubts about the rules or laws, ask your representative.

**You must stay in the place where your representative told you to stay.**

The authorities chose a place for you. Do not run away or leave Ireland without the permission of the authorities.

**You must work together with the officials.**

When requested, you must answer their questions and follow their instructions.

**Be honest and tell the authorities everything you know when they ask you questions.**

What you say is very important for your application.

You may not remember everything and you may not be able to answer all the questions. If you can't remember, do not invent an answer, but explain that you do not remember.

**You must attend all appointments with the authorities.**

These appointments are very important. You must appear on the day and at the time given.

**You must provide correct contact details.**

To make sure you receive all the information and appointments, you must give an address or phone number to the authorities. The representative will also receive this information and can remind you of your appointments. If your contact details change, tell your representative and the staff of the asylum authorities. It is important that they can reach you.

**You must give all the documents you have to the authorities.**

Give them all the documents you have that relate to you and the reasons for which you left your country. This includes identity documents (passport), a birth or school certificate, medical document or other documents.

You need to submit all information and documents as soon as possible.

If you do not have the documents right now, you can provide them later. Talk to your representative. Your representative may be able to help you obtain those documents and to share them on time with the authorities.

**If you cannot meet your obligations, tell your representative and the staff of the asylum office immediately and explain the reason.**

# What happens if I do not meet my obligations?

If you do not meet your obligations, your application may be negatively affected.

You may lose some of the rights and support services.

**Your asylum procedure may be stopped or rejected if you do not meet your obligations, for example if:**

- you do not answer the questions from the authorities, or
- you do not allow them to take your fingerprints, or
- you leave the place where you are staying without permission.

In such cases, the authorities will think that you are not serious about your application. You will stop being an applicant and lose all the support provided

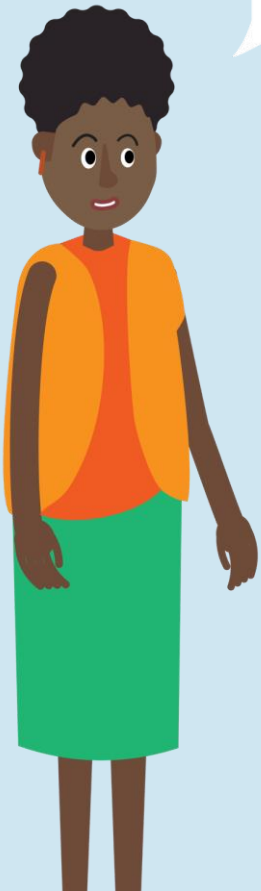
If you don’t tell the authorities the truth about yourself or your story or if you hide important information or intentionally destroy your documents, your application may be rejected and you may not be given asylum.

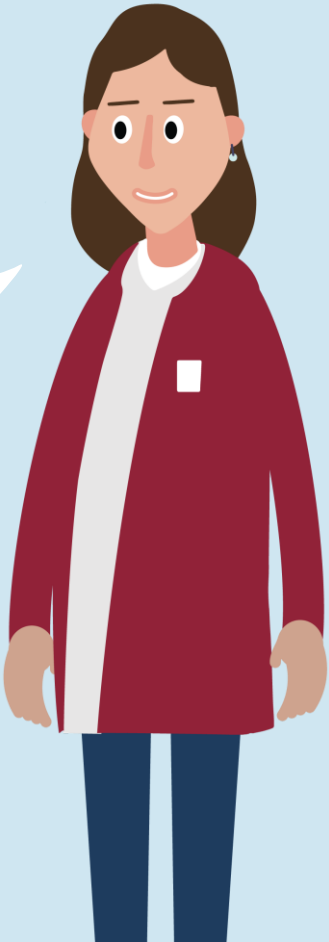
If the authorities find out later that you didn’t tell the truth during the asylum procedure, asylum could be taken away from you.

I explained to you the most important things you need to know. Your representative and the authorities will provide you with further explanations during the asylum procedure.

**Remember!**

**Asking for asylum is for free**

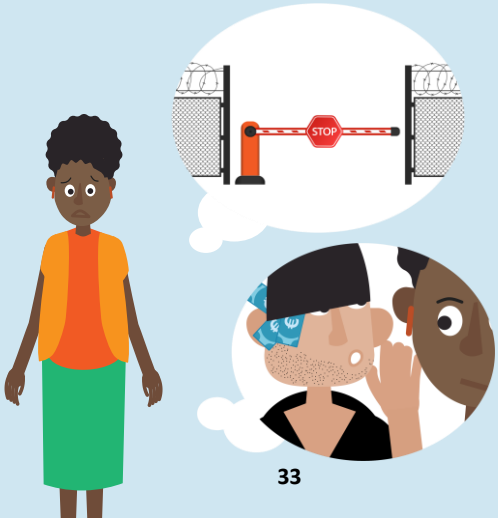




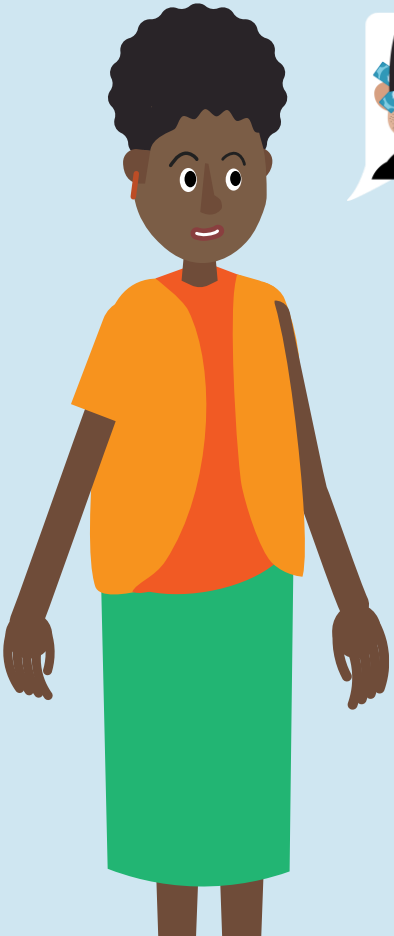
# Be cautious

Be cautious of people offering help in exchange for favours or money. They may have bad intentions.

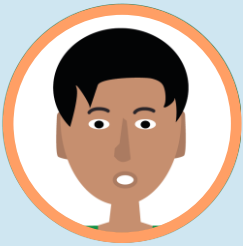
Someone might encourage you to try to leave. But remember that you must not leave, as this could be dangerous for you.



Immediately tell your representative, or the adults working at the place where you are staying, if somebody is trying to convince you to do something that you do not want or something that seems wrong.



## What if I want to go back to my home country and stop my application, what should I do?



If you want to go back to your home country and stop your application, tell your representative and the authorities. They can help you to go back safely.

**If you have further questions about what I just explained, ask your representative, the authorities or the staff working at the place where you are staying.**

euaa EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR ASYLUM

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

This brochure is for information purposes only. It does not in itself create rights or obligations. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has provided the main body of this material, and reproduction of and alteration to this brochure is authorised by the EUAA only for EU Member States. The EUAA does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, content, completeness, legality or reliability of the information included in this brochure by EU Member States or by any other responsible third party. Neither the EUAA nor any person acting on behalf of the EUAA is responsible for the use that might be made of the information found in this brochure.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2025