



## **Ad-Hoc Query on “detention of asylum applicants at the border”**

**Requested by NL EMN NCP on 28 November 2014**

**Reply requested by 2 January 2015**

**Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom plus Croatia, Norway (17 in Total)**

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### **1. Background Information**

The Dutch parliament has requested the Minister for Migration to investigate the policy of the other EU Member States regarding the possibility of border detention of asylum applicants, who have not been granted entry to the Schengen area at the border or in transit zones.

We would be grateful if you could inform us about the policy in your country. Our questions are:

Questions: (Attention: our questions only concern asylum applicants)

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**A** *General questions*

- 1 Are asylum applicants who want to enter your country at a Schengen border (main airport, seaport) directly granted access to your country? Or are these asylum applicants subject to a border procedure at the Schengen border or in transit zones?
- 2 If asylum applicants are not granted access to your country at a Schengen border before their application is processed/examined, is it possible to impose restrictions of freedom? If so, what do you impose on them?
  - a. A form of (border) detention;
  - b. An alternative for detention, like placement in the lounge;
  - c. If none of the above: please specify?

**B** *Questions about housing*

- 3 If a form of detention is imposed on asylum applicants: in what kind of location are they placed?
- 4 If there is border detention: what is the maximum period asylum applicants can be hold in detention?  
If there is an alternative to detention: what is the maximum period they can stay there?

We would very much appreciate your responses by **Friday 2 January 2015**.

**2. Responses<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>If an asylum seeker arrives at the airport and applies for asylum, there is a special procedure in place:</p> <p>An asylum seeker is only permitted to enter into Austria and be admitted to the actual asylum procedure upon authorization of the first-instance asylum office (BFA). The asylum office can refuse entry into Austrian territory if the asylum claim is not within the parameters of the Geneva Convention (well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership or a particular group or political opinion) or if there is no need to take a decision on the merits (for example the responsibility of another Member State). The application and his/her claim may be refused at the center of first reception at the airport. However, the asylum office has to inform the UNHCR of its intended decision within one week and UNHCR has a right to veto this decision and demand that the asylum seeker is allowed to enter the Austrian territory, where the actual asylum procedure at one of the other two centers of first reception continues within Austria.</p> <p>In those cases mentioned above, the asylum seeker needs to stay in a Special Transit Center at the airport for the duration of the procedure-but for six weeks at the most. However, the person concerned always has the opportunity to voluntarily leave the country again.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

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	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Cyprus</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asylum applicants are not automatically granted access to the Czech Republic, excluding of vulnerable persons (unaccompanied minors, families with minor children, pregnant women, victims of torture, handicapped people etc.) where according to the Asylum Act any restriction of movement cannot be applied.</li> <li>2. In case his/her identity is unclear or if there is a fear of risk for public order, public health or state security, the Ministry of the Interior issues decision that entering the territory of the Czech Republic is not allowed for the individual asylum seeker. It is not a form of strict detention, the freedom of movement is not as limited as in case of detainees.</li> <li>3. If this restriction is applied, the asylum seeker is hold within the reception centre at the international airport directly in the transit zone.</li> <li>4. The asylum seekers can be kept in the reception centre at the airport for a maximum period of 4 weeks. If, after 4 weeks, further investigation is necessary to take a decision on the request for asylum, asylum seekers are allowed to enter the territory and are transferred to the standard accommodation centre for asylum seekers. If within 4 weeks the negative asylum decision is issued, the asylum seeker stays in the reception centre and waits for court decision about his appeal. The maximum period of stay in the reception center is than 120 day from lodging the asylum application.</li> </ol>
	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An application based on a need for international protection which is filed with the authorities at the Finnish border or on Finnish territory is processed in the asylum procedure (Aliens Act, section 94). The police or the Border Guard establish the identity, travel route and entry into the country of an alien applying for a residence permit on the basis of international protection (Aliens Act, section 97).</li> </ol> <p>In sum, asylum is asked from border control authorities or the police upon arrival in Finland. These authorities take the preparatory measures related to the application. Persons are not cleared to enter Finland at this point, when undergoing a Border Guard investigation to establish the applicant's identity, travel route and means of entry into Finland.</p> <p>After the investigation, the applicant is usually directed to a reception centre, where he/she is accommodated while the application is being processed. According to the Finnish Aliens Act (section 40), an alien may reside legally in the country while his or her application is being processed until there is a final decision on the matter or an enforceable decision on his or her removal from the country.</p>

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			<p>2. The legislation does not recognize 'border detention', only detention. An alien may be ordered to be held in detention if, for instance, it is necessary for establishing his or her identity. However, detention is not an end in and of itself. Alternative interim measures (e.g. obligation to report) are always considered in the first hand.</p> <p>An alien ordered to be held in detention shall be placed as soon as possible to a detention facility for foreigners ordered to be held in detention.</p> <p>At border crossing points, asylum applications are, as a rule, processed on the day of application. In case interpreters are not available or due to late arrival, the application is processed and the investigation conducted the next day.</p> <p>At Helsinki International Airport and in connection with the Border Guard's facilities, there is a separate waiting and rest area for persons subject to the Border Guard's measures and/ or decisions. Persons are not cleared to enter Finland at this point as their entry conditions are still being verified, but they are free to move in the transit area in between investigations.</p> <p>If none of the above: Receptions centres or private housing.</p> <p>3. According to the Aliens Act, an alien ordered to be held in detention shall be placed as soon as possible to a detention facility for foreigners ordered to be held in detention. In Finland, there are two detention facilities for foreigners; one in Helsinki, the other in Joutseno. The detention centres are established in connection with reception centres.</p> <p>In case the detention centre for foreigners is temporarily full or in case the closest detention centre is too far away, aliens ordered to be held in detention may be placed in the police's facilities for detainees.</p> <p>4. There is no specific border detention. With regard to detention overall, according to the Aliens Act an alien ordered to be held in detention shall be freed as soon as the criteria for his or her detention do no longer apply. An alien ordered to be held in detention shall be freed no later than six months from the date of the decision to detain the person.</p> <p>The detention period may be extended to no longer than twelve months in case the preparations concerning the alien's return are delayed due to the alien's unwillingness to cooperate in preparing his or her return or in case the proper return documents have not been received.</p> <p>If the applicant does not obtain housing himself/herself, he/ she is accommodated in a reception centre until the application processing is complete.</p>
	<p><b>France</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>1. Asylum seekers are not directly granted access to France. They need to apply for asylum directly at the border (airport, port or train station) when arriving and are consequently subject to an “accelerated” procedure (<i>procédure accélérée</i>).</p> <p>2. Asylum applicants waiting for a decision at the border are placed in a “waiting area” (<i>zone d’attente</i>) delimited by the competent</p>

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			<p>administrative authority to the places where they need to go during the asylum procedure, to sleep or in need of medical assistance in the very near area of borders' controls (boarding and landing at the airport, port or train station).</p> <p>3. The "waiting area" (<i>zone d'attente</i>) is located nearby the places of boarding and/or landing (airport, port or train station) and are either facilities specifically built to welcome asylum applicants or hotel services requisitioned for this purpose. It is normally so except when a group of minimum 10 asylum applicants enter the French territory outside a border crossing point, in which case they can be placed in a mobile "waiting area" and then moved to another normal "waiting area".</p> <p>4. Asylum applicants are detained in a "waiting area" for 4 days maximum under the control of borders' police, and then under the judicial judge's supervision for a maximum duration of 20 days. In some very specific cases (asylum application submitted at the end of the procedure, action for annulment submitted against refusal of an application for asylum at the border, group of at least 10 asylum applicants), asylum seekers can however stay up to 26 days.</p> <p>There is no alternative to this "waiting area" for asylum applicants at the border or in a transit zone.</p>
	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. - If asylum seekers are in possession of a true passport furnished with a correct visa, the German Federal Police is obliged to allow these to enter the country, unless the asylum seekers originate from a safe country of origin (§ 18a, section 1, subsection 1, AsylVfG = German Asylum Procedure Act). The asylum procedure prior to entering the country is only to be carried out for persons arriving from safe countries of origin.</p> <p>- If asylum seekers are in possession of a true passport and are subject to the requirement of carrying a visa but are not in possession of the same, the German Federal Police is obliged to transfer these immediately after the interview to the competent/nearest reception centre for registration (§ 18, section 1, AsylVfG = German Asylum Procedure Act).</p> <p>- If the asylum seekers do not identify themselves when requesting asylum at the German Federal Police with a valid passport, the so called airport procedure is to be carried out within the transit area and prior to entering the country (§ 18a, section 1, subsection 2, AsylVfG = German Asylum Procedures Act).</p> <p>2. In Frankfurt am Main the asylum seeker is required to remain in the separate building within the airport compound that has been declared as transit area by the German Federal Police and is under surveillance of the same. (§ 18a, AsylVfG = German Asylum Procedure Act, § 65, AufenthG = German Residence Act, § 44, AsylVfG = German Asylum Procedure Act).</p> <p>(Only those who ask for asylum with the German Federal Police and who do not identify themselves with a valid passport/passport substitute or those who originate from a safe country of origin will be processed under the so called airport procedure.)</p> <p>The German Federal State of Hesse has organised under its competence a branch office of the initial reception centre in Gießen that has been designated as transit area and is situated within the compound of the airport. If the asylum seeker – independently of where he/she wishes to travel – wishes to depart, the German Federal Police organises such a departure as quickly as possible and he/she will not be kept within the transit area. In accordance with the case-law of the German Constitutional Court there is no detention or detention-like lodging in these cases.</p> <p>3. The stay during the so called airport procedure does not represent a custodial nor a liberty restricting measure (German Federal</p>

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			<p>Constitutional Court)</p> <p>The persons concerned are lodged in a building within the airport compound specifically intended for such cases from where the departure or entry of the country can be organised by the German Federal Police at any time.</p> <p>4. 4. Thirty days after the arrival at the airport at the latest, the German Federal Police is obliged to obtain a judicial order for the stay in the transit area. (§ 15, section 6, AufenthG = German Residence Act). Theoretically, the maximum duration for an order to secure the departure is 18 months (analogically § 62, section 4, AufenthG = German Residence Act).</p>
	<b>Greece</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Article 24 of Presidential Decree 113/2013 regulates the so-called "border procedures". According to this, asylum seekers who lodge their applications for international protection at the transit zones of sea ports or airports enjoy the same procedural rights and guarantees as all other asylum seekers, as these have been transposed into Greek legislation from the European Directives. If no decision on such an application is issued within 28 days from the date of its submission, then the asylum seeker in question is allowed to enter the country and remain until such time as there is a decision on his/her application for international protection. For this 28-day period, the asylum seeker is kept in detention facilities located in the aforementioned transit zones or in areas adjacent to the sea port or airport in question .</p>
	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asylum applicants are not directly granted access to Hungarian territory. The only type of border procedure is the so called "airport procedure" regulated in Section 72 of the Asylum Act and Section 93 of the Government Decree no. 301/2007 which regulates the issue.</li> <li>2. Yes, it is possible to impose restrictions of their freedom until their application is processed/examined.</li> <li>3. There are special accommodation premises both in Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 of the Budapest airport for the duration of the procedure.</li> <li>4. Asylum seekers may not be held in the holding facility at the Budapest international airport transit zone for more than 8 calendar days. If the application is not deemed inadmissible or manifestly ill-founded in the admissibility procedure or 8 calendar days have passed, the asylum seeker has to be allowed entry into the country and a regular procedure will be carried out. During the regular procedure, these applicants are detained in asylum detention.</li> </ol>
	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. According to the current Asylum Law an asylum applicant is granted access to the territory but the draft of the new Asylum Law (hereinafter – the daft) which is now under discussion in the Government and had been worked out in order to transpose the requirements of Directive 2013/32/EU and 2013/33/EU provides the introduction of the border procedure.</li> <li>2. The draft defines - if a person applies for asylum at the border or in the transit zone applicant can be detained till the final decision on his application's admissibility is taken.</li> <li>3. Detention under border procedure takes place in specialized detention facilities close to the border.</li> <li>4. The max length for detention in the border procedure is 4 weeks. The time limits for detention have not finally decided yet and are still under discussion, particularly for how long period of time the applicant can be detained according to the decision taken by the</li> </ol>

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			State Border Guard before its judicial review.
	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If an alien who does not meet the entry conditions as defined in the Schengen Borders Code submits an application for asylum, the officer shall forward the request to the Department of Migration, which makes a decision on admission or refusal of admission to the territory.</li> <li>2. If asylum applicants are refused admission to Lithuania at a Schengen border no restrictions of freedom are applied.</li> <li>3. Asylum applicants are detained at the border crossing post facilities.</li> <li>4. 48 hours.</li> </ol> <p>No. Asylum applicants wait for the decision on temporal territorial asylum at the facilities of the border crossing points. The decision is taken within 48 hours by the Migration department. In exceptional cases, it can be prolonged until 7 days. If asylum applicants are detained for more than 48 hours, they are placed at the Foreigners registration centre.</p>
	<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In Luxembourg the only external border is Luxembourg International Airport. Article 6 (1) of the amended law of 5 May 2006 (Asylum Law) allows a third-country national to apply for international protection at the external border or inside the country. In principle, the international protection applicant is granted access to Luxembourg. If the person has not been detained before the filing of the application (i.e. for presenting false documents) the applicant will be referred by the police to the Directorate of Immigration in Luxembourg City where s/he can file the application for international protection. In case the person is controlled at the airport and presents false documents or had already been refused entry into the country and then applies for international protection, the person can be detained and placed in the detention center (article 10 (1) a) and c) of the Asylum Law).</li> <li>2. If the international protection applicant is referred them to the Directorate of Immigration to file the application, afterwards s/he is sent to a reception facility where s/he can move freely.</li> <li>3. If the international protection applicant is placed in detention, s/he will be sent to the detention center which is a closed structure.</li> <li>4. N/A. There are no alternatives to detention available in these cases.</li> </ol>
	<b>Malta</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asylum applicants are not granted access to the NL. They are only allowed to stay in the border area pending their asylum procedure.</li> <li>2. Border detention can be imposed (only if it concerns adult asylum applicants without minor children).</li> <li>3. Border detention can be imposed on asylum applicants in a specialised closed location.</li> <li>4. The border detention is imposed for a maximum period of 2 weeks. If, after 2 weeks, further investigation is necessary to take a decision on the request for asylum, the border detention can only be prolonged under very strict circumstances.</li> </ol>
	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asylum applicants are not granted direct access to national territory. They are subject to a special procedure and allowed to stay in the border area pending their asylum procedure.</li> <li>2. Asylum applicants are subject to a border procedure and they stay in detention in a specialized area within the airport, up to a first decision upon their application is taken. (when the applicant is a minor or an adult with a minor or is other vulnerable person this special procedure doesn't apply).</li> </ol>

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			<p>3. please see answer above.</p> <p>4. The border detention is imposed until a first decision is taken. According national Law this decision must be notified to the applicant within 7 days from the date of application. The border detention must be validated by the Court. In case of a negative decision, an appeal with automatic suspensive effect can be presented and the applicant stays in detention until a judicial decision is taken. The deadline for judicial decision is also reduced. If, after 60 days, there is no judicial final decision (following the two possible appeals with suspensive effect) the applicant enters in national territory.</p>
	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>The third country national who applies for a form of protection at the border police authorities stays in the transit area within the border checking points until receiving the decision on approval to entry the country or, as the case may be, until the rejection decision is final and irrevocable, but not more than 20 days from his/her entry into the transit area.</p> <p>The asylum applicant may be accommodated in special reception centres nearby the border crossing points that have the same juridical regime as the transit area.</p> <p>The asylum applicant accommodated into one of the above mentioned centres benefit from food, free of charge.</p> <p>After the completion of the 20 days term, in case the asylum procedure has not been finalized through a final and irrevocable decision, the asylum applicant is allowed to enter the country.</p> <p>During the period the asylum applicant is in the border crossing point he/she has the right to social and juridical assistance as well as humanitarian aids from the NGOs acting in the refugee area, as well as from the UNHCR's office in Romania and, also, enjoys the general rights and obligations of the asylum seekers.</p> <p>NOTE: Presently Romania does not have Schengen borders.</p>
	<b>Slovak Republic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p><i>General questions</i></p> <p>1. Third country nationals who lodge an application for asylum at the border cannot be refused entry. An alien, who entered the territory of the Slovak Republic by air, failed to comply with the conditions of entry to the territory of the Slovak Republic but applied for asylum, shall be placed in a transit centre. The transit centre is located in the transit area of an international airport or in a delimited area at another asylum facility where the applicant is being placed if he/she cannot be placed in the transit area of an international airport. The placement at the transit centre shall not be considered to be an entry and stay of the applicant in the territory of the Slovak Republic.</p> <p>2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Detention of an asylum seeker and his/her placement at the border is not possible.</li> <li>b. If an asylum seeker is refused entry to the territory of the Slovak Republic, he/she shall be placed in the transit centre.</li> <li>c. N/A</li> </ol> <p><i>Questions about housing</i></p> <p>3. Detention at the border is not possible. An asylum seeker can be detained in compliance with the law and shall be placed in one of the two detention facilities for aliens located in the territory of the Slovak Republic.</p> <p>4. Migration Office of the Ministry of the Slovak Republic shall terminate the placement of an asylum seeker in the transit centre and transfer the asylum seeker to the reception centre if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Slovak Republic does not issue a decision on (non)granting the asylum within</li> </ol>

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			seven days since lodging of the application (i.e. execution of the interview) or b) the Court does issue a decision in the asylum procedure within 30 days since lodging an appeal against the decision of the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Slovak Republic.
	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Asylum applicants are processed and accommodated to asylum centre. No restriction of movement is imposed against them.
	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In Sweden we have no border detention. The asylum applicants are directed to the Swedish Migration Board to submit their asylum application. This is also where they will submit their application if not entering at a Schengen-border, so the procedures are the same.</li> <li>2. Na.</li> <li>3. Na.</li> <li>4. Na.</li> </ol>
	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Yes</b>	The UK is not subject to the Schengen area, therefore the questions are not applicable.
	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Persons who apply for asylum at Norwegian borders will be subject to a border procedure. They are transported from the border to the National Police Immigration Service (NPIS) in Oslo, where their asylum application will be registered. Afterwards s/he may be detained according to the Immigration Act only following an individual assessment, e.g. of whether his/her identity is uncertain or if it is considered to be risk of absconding, cf. the Immigration Act § 106. Such asylum seekers may instead be obliged to report regularly to the police, or to stay in a designated location, cf. the Norwegian Immigration Act § 105. If an asylum seeker is detained at the border because s/he is suspected of having committed a crime, s/he can be detained in a regular prison, where his/her asylum application will be registered by a police officer. Normally, asylum seekers are granted free access to the territory and are offered housing in a regular reception center, following the initial asylum registration.</li> <li>2. See reply to question 1. N.A.</li> <li>3. See reply to question 1. Norway has one detention center for foreigners, which is located near to Oslo Airport. Foreigners who are detained according to the Immigration Act are placed here.</li> <li>4. Not applicable. See above answers. However, the maximum period for detention according to the Norwegian Immigration Act § 106 is 18 months.</li> </ol>

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