

Vulnerability

The EUAA is committed to supporting EU and associated countries in their efforts in identifying, assessing, and responding to the special needs of applicants for international protection who are in a situation of vulnerability. The EUAA encourages practical cooperation and information sharing among EU and associated countries and other relevant experts on issues relating to persons with special needs. Practical cooperation activities are undertaken to foster convergence in line with EU standards related to the identification and support afforded to vulnerable persons in the asylum and reception systems of the Member States. Operational standards, indicators, guidance, best practices, and practical support tools, including in the context of operational support, are developed to assist Member States in dealing with vulnerable persons.

Technical Support

Themes

Vulnerability Toolkit

Technical Support

Vision on vulnerability

The EU asylum *acquis* applies a category approach when referring to vulnerability. It provides some examples in a non-exhaustive list of categories of applicants for international protection who fall into a category of vulnerable persons and might have special needs.

Identification, assessment, and referral to adequate support of vulnerable applicants is an obligation for Member States. The EU asylum acquis leaves it to the discretion of each Member State to decide the methodology for identifying and assessing the needs of applicants for international protection. Nevertheless, the Agency develops tools based on good practices to support Member States in these tasks.

Identification, assessment, and adequate support are the three pillars of vulnerability case management.

Vision on vulnerability

EUAA's network approach - Vulnerability Experts Network

EUAA Vulnerability Experts Network

The EUAA Vulnerability Experts Network (VEN) was launched in 2018 in order to enhance the identification and response to the special needs of vulnerable persons who apply for or are in need of international protection. The network aims to foster convergence in line with EU standards related to the identification, assessment and support afforded to vulnerable persons in national asylum and reception systems.

The structure of the VEN is based on the specific role of its groups and their multidisciplinary contribution to the network. The steering group is composed by representatives of Member State authorities, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, EU Commission, Fundamental Rights Agency. The advisory group is composed of representatives of civil society organisations, international organisations, and academia.

In order to reach its objectives, the VEN facilitates active cooperation among EU and associated countries that involves:

- discussion and sharing of practical experience and challenges related to vulnerable persons.
- exchange of information and good practices.
- collection and analysis of information and data on vulnerable persons from internal and external sources.

Practical guides and tools

- Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects
- Practical Guide on Age Assessment
- Practical tool for Guardians: Transnational procedures in the framework of international protection
- Report on Persons with disabilities in asylum and reception systems
- Situational update on Displaced Ukrainians with disabilities seeking temporary protection in Europe
- Mapping report on Victims of Torture

- Mapping report on Critical incident management in the field of asylum and reception

- Mapping report on Transitioning into Adulthood

- Practical Guide on Family Tracing
  - Part I - Principles and practices on family tracing in the EU+ and third countries [EN]
  - Part II - Tracing and identifying family members under the asylum and migration management regulation [EN]
    - Family Tracing Form - Adult [EN]
    - Family Tracing Form - Child [EN]
- Guidance on Mental Health and Well-being of Applicants for International Protection:
  - Part I - for senior management [EN]
  - Part II - for those working in the first line [EN]
  - Part III - Toolbox to support those working in the first line [EN]
- Practical Guide on applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics
  - Cross-cutting elements [EN]
  - Examination Procedure [EN]
  - Reception [EN]
- EUAA Strategy on Vulnerability [EN]
- Practical Tool for Guardians: The asylum procedure [EN]
- Practical Tool for Guardians: Introduction to international protection [EN]
- Practical Tool for Guardians: Temporary protection for unaccompanied children fleeing Ukraine [EN]
- Age assessment booklet for children: All you need to know about age assessment [EN]
- Consultation with Applicants for International Protection on Mental Health [EN]
- Poster of 8 EASO Standards for the welfare of asylum and reception staff [EN]
- Practical Guide on the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff:
  - Part I - Standards and policy [EN]
  - Part II - Toolbox [EN]
  - Part III - Monitoring and evaluation [EN]
- Mental Health of Applicants for International Protection in Europe: Initial mapping report [EN]
- Age assessment practices in EU+ countries: updated findings [EN]
- Report on Asylum Procedures for Children [EN]
- Practical Guide on the Best Interests of the Child in Asylum Procedures [EN]
- Age Assessment Practice in Europe [EN]

Vulnerability toolkit

- Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN) [EN]
- Special needs and vulnerability assessment tool (SNVA) [EN]
- Referral Tool [EN]

A set of self-help tools for parents, children and peer support

- How can I support my child during difficult times?
- How can I deal with situations in which my parents seem sad, worried, or angry?
- How to handle situations when my friend or sibling is sad, angry or does dangerous things?

This set of self-help tools is complemented by instructions to support their rollout.

Watch our animations

- Video animation: Prevention of Substance Use
- Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff: The importance of early identification of signs of stress
- Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)
- Age Assessment (available in 27 languages)
- Registration and Identification of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers (available in 2 languages)
- Age Assessment for Children (available in 10 languages)
- Psychological First Aid (PFA) – A brief guide for those working in the first line

Support to operations

Support to operations

The EUAA provides ongoing technical support in the area of vulnerability to the EUAA operations in the Member States. In particular EUAA provides support in ensuring identification, assessment and referral workflows through the development of standard operating procedures and tools on vulnerability related issues.

Ongoing support in the area of vulnerability is provided to countries of the external dimension.

Themes

☐ Children and youth

The EUAA provides support and develops practical cooperation among EU and associated countries and other relevant experts on issues relating to children, including unaccompanied children. The agency focuses on addressing issues such as age assessment, family tracing, the best interests of the child, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and the trafficking of children.

The EUAA released dedicated publications and practical tools on child-related topic:

- Practical Guide on Age Assessment

- Practical Guide on Family tracing:
  - Part 1
  - Part 2
- Practical tools for guardians:
  - Transnational procedures in the framework of international protection,
  - Introduction to international protection,
  - The asylum procedure,
  - Temporary protection for accompanied children fleeing Ukraine)

- Mapping Report on Transitioning into Adulthood [EN]
- Age assessment practices in EU+ countries: updated findings [EN]
- Report on Asylum Procedures for Children [EN]
- Practical Guide on the Best Interests of the Child in Asylum Procedures [EN]
- Age Assessment Practice in Europe [EN]
- Age Assessment for Children[EN] (available in 10 languages)
- Age Assessment (available in 27 languages)[EN]
- Guidance on Reception Conditions for Unaccompanied Children: Operational standards and indicators (2018)[EN]

☐ Persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics

Through the implementation of its activities, which include thematic meetings and their follow up, the EUAA aims to hold discussions on and promote indicators for appropriate and safe reception centres for persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) needs, as well as to provide elements of expertise on SOGIESC asylum claims. In order to reach this objective several activities have been conducted.

The EUAA released dedicated publications and practical tools practical tools on SOGIESC related issues:

- Practical Guide on applicants with divers SOGIESC. The Guide is composed of the following parts:
  - cross-cutting elements,
  - examination procedure
  - and reception.

- Survey on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity [EN]
- Guidance on Membership of a Particular Social Group [EN]
- COI Research Guide on LGBTIQ (November 2021) [EN]
- Practical Guide: Researching the situation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons (LGB) in countries of origin [EN]

☐ Mental health and wellbeing

Guidance on mental health and well-being of applicants for IP:

- Part 1,
- Part 2,
- Part 3.

The Agency launched two consultations on the mental health concerns of applicants for international protection. These included a survey with professionals in 2020 looking also at the challenges they face providing for applicants and a consultations with 81 applicants from 7 Member States in 2021 on the topic of mental health. The findings are compiled in two reports and will inform the development and type of support initiatives needed by authorities:

- Mental Health of Applicants for International Protection in Europe
- Consultations with Applicants for International Protection on Mental Health: A participatory approach supported by member states and civil society]

The Agency is currently developing a guidance package on the **mental health and wellbeing of applicants for international protection**. All videos, pocketbooks and other practical guides and tools will be published in the section below as they become available, and will be complemented by instructions on how to use them.

A set of self-help tools for parents, children and peer support

- How can I support my child during difficult times?
- How can I deal with situations in which my parents seem sad, worried, or angry?
- How to handle situations when my friend or sibling is sad, angry or does dangerous things?

This set of self-help tools is complemented by instructions to support their rollout.

Psychological First Aid (PFA): A brief guide for those working in the first line

- Watch the video

The animation is complemented by instructions on how to use the animation to create awareness on PFA in first line officers interested in the topic, new recruits and volunteers.

☐ Persons who have been subjected to rape, or to other serious forms of psychological, physical, or sexual violence

The EUAA conducts activities aimed at addressing issues raising from gender and age-specific concerns in the context of asylum. In particular, the EUAA has organised meetings and webinars on topics such as child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and gender-related persecution ensuring follow up of key recommendations emerging from such exchanges.

☐ Persons who have been subjected to torture

The agency supports activities that are aimed at strengthening the identification, assessment, referral and rehabilitation of persons who have been subjected to torture by promoting an interdisciplinary response and the implementation of special procedural and reception guarantees by organising regular exchange meetings, launching of surveys to collect good practices, and other relevant activities.

- Report on Victims of Torture: Identification, support and examination of claims.

☐ Persons who are at risk or victims of trafficking

Under the coordination of the EU Commission, the EUAA supports the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025) in cooperation with other JHA Agencies. The EUAA aims to build capacity and strengthen practical cooperation on THB in the context of asylum. Identification, protection, and

referral of victims of trafficking in human beings and the potential nexus with international protection are the focus of the expert meetings and practical tools. Additionally, trafficking in human beings is one topic addressed in several training modules of the EUAA training curriculum, often delivered in the operational work of the agency.

☐ Staff welfare

The agency published a threefold practical guide on the welfare of asylum and reception staff. The aim of the guidance is to provide managers and staff with the necessary knowledge on how to proactively prevent, respond to and reduce the risks of stress and burnout.

- Practical Guide on the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff: Part I - Standards and policy [EN]
- Practical Guide on the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff: Part II - Toolbox [EN]
- Practical Guide on the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff: Part III - Monitoring and evaluation [EN]
- Poster of 8 EUAA Standards for the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff [EN]
- Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff: The importance of early identification of signs of stress [EN]

☐ Persons with disabilities

The EUAA work on the topic of persons with special needs, in particular with disability, aims at encouraging practical cooperation and information sharing among EU and associated countries and other relevant experts. Activities related to supporting the identification, assessment, and response to special needs of persons with disability foster convergence in line with EU standards in the asylum and reception systems of the Member States. The EUAA has created spaces for discussions on challenges faced by staff working with applicants with disabilities as well as on the actions to increase identification of applicants with disability; to enhance the immediate response to their needs; and to make services accessible to them.

- Persons with Disabilities in Asylum and Reception Systems

- Displaced Ukrainians with Disabilities Seeking Temporary Protection in Europe

Vulnerability Toolkit

Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)

IPSN

The IPSN Tool is an interactive online solution that allows the user to identify potential special needs in the context of the asylum procedure and reception. It supports the identification of 14 different categories: accompanied and unaccompanied children, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders, persons who have been subjected to torture, to rape or to other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, LGBTI and people with gender related special needs. The tool suggests special guarantees focusing on five aspects:

- first contact – making an application
- reception support
- lodging the application
- personal interview
- end of the first instance asylum procedure.

The users of this tool are officials and other actors in contact with applicants for international protection.

Go to the tool Watch video tutorial

Special needs and vulnerability assessment tool (SNVA)

SNVA

The SNVA tool is designed to support MS authorities in the assessment of the special needs of persons in a situation of vulnerability. It aims to support specialised staff in assessing special needs in a structured way and to identify appropriate future actions to be taken in the interest of the applicant. A timely response and a prompt access to services will also avoid vulnerable applicants to become more vulnerable due to delayed service provision.

The users of the tool are specialised professionals tasked to assess the needs of persons in a situation of vulnerability and to take actions in order to provide timely and adequate response to those needs.

Go to the tool

Referral toolkit

Referral tool

The objective of the Referral Tool is to facilitate the referral of applicants with special needs to adequate support. In order to achieve its main objective, the tool also supports authorities in mapping the available services in the territory, harmonises the communication among the actors involved in the referral process, and allows services to update their information when needed. The tool offers guidance in three main parts:

- standard referral form
- mapping tool to search for the adequate service provider
- guidance on how to conduct a referral

The tool is designed for staff working in asylum or in reception who might come across vulnerable cases in their daily work. In addition, the tool is used by focal points designated by the competent authorities to map the services available within a given territory. Finally, the tool is intended for service providers, including individuals, entities or organisations that deliver support to applicants, who can register their services in the repository to facilitate effective referrals.

The users of this tool are registration officers, reception officers, asylum case officers, first line officers, decision and policy makers.

Go to the tool

Related content

- Asylum Processes
- Reception
- Case Law database

- Information and Documentation System

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