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EASO Publishes Practical Guide on Age Assessment

Following the publication of the 'EASO age assessment practice in Europe' in 2013, a new EASO Practical Guide provides updated guidance, key recommendations and tools on the implementation of the best interests of the child when assessing the age of a person from a multidisciplinary and holistic approach. It also provides up-to-date information on the methods conducted by EU+ states and on new methods to be explored.

Age assessment remains a complex process with potential far-reaching consequences for applicants undergoing the assessment. Age assessment methods and processes differ across EU Member States and reliable multidisciplinary and rights-compliant age assessment processes are not always guaranteed. To support national authorities in the safeguarding of the principle of the best interests of the child, the Practical Guide:

- analyses the impact of age assessment on the applicant and the motivation for such an assessment;
- offers guidance on the application of the necessary safeguards in the assessment process;
- describes how to implement the assessment process using a holistic and multidisciplinary approach;
- provides a model for a workflow highlighting a gradual process and use of methods to prevent unnecessary examinations;
- explores new methods used to assess an applicant's age, the latest developments in the methods already in use and the potential impact of each method on the rights of the applicant;
- provides key recommendations to address practical challenges that might appear prior to, after and at different stages of the process;
- contains a set of tools and reference documents to complement the information provided in the practical guide, including a glossary, a compilation of legal framework and policy-guidance documents, practical tools for ensuring the best interests of the child, and an updated overview of the methods and procedural safeguards in use in the EU+ territory.

While this publication addresses age assessment for the specific purpose of international protection procedures, it may also serve as a useful reference in other contexts where age assessment is required (migrant children, minimum age of criminal responsibility, etc.).

This publication was developed by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in consultation with experts from EU+ states, the European Commission, EU agencies and international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The diverse profiles of experts involved, including social workers, forensic anthropologists and radiology researchers, as well as policy officers and reception officers, ensures that the publication reflects a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach.

The Practical Guide on Age Assessment is available on the EASO website.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

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