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Section 3.4. Processing asylum applications at first instance

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icon for processing applications at first instance

CEAS is based on the principle of common standards to grant and withdraw international protection, while ensuring fair and efficient procedures. The aim is that similar asylum cases are treated in a similar manner in all Member States, leading to uniform decision-making and convergence across the EU, while ensuring that an individual assessment is provided in each case.

The procedures foreseen in the recast APD aim to ensure that decisions on applications for international protection are taken on the basis of facts and by persons with appropriate knowledge and training, after an adequate and complete examination has been undertaken without undue delay and subject to remedies. Within this framework, Member States have established their asylum systems and procedures in various ways.

In 2023, various measures were implemented to manage the case load and prioritise the examination of specific cases.

The reorganisation of determining authorities was initiated or finalised in 2023. Some countries proposed legislative changes to further accelerate the asylum procedure, while new working methods, prioritisation policies and recruitment of additional staff were introduced to maximise the number of decisions taken. Some EU+ countries introduced new information systems or prepared projects for the digitalisation of their systems. Determining authorities followed up on lessons learned from past quality assessment initiatives, provided more training to staff and started new quality review processes for first instance procedures and decisions.

The CJEU and national courts provided guidance on how to assess various aspects of first instance proceedings and claims from specific nationalities and profiles (for example, westernised applicants, religious persecution cases and claims of forced conscription). They also reviewed the use of electronic notifications and the protection of confidentiality during interviews taking place through Microsoft Teams, as well as the provision of a derived right to international protection. Courts also clarified the effects of applying for international protection on other ongoing procedures, namely extradition and temporary protection.

NGOs continued to raise various concerns related to delays in scheduling personal interviews, the lack of adequate training of officers carrying out interviews and the length of asylum procedures. UNHCR also expressed its position on the externalisation of asylum procedures. The use of AI in migration was also a topic of concern.

Section 4.4.1 Reorganisation

3.4.1. Re-organisation of first instance authorities

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Section 4.4.2 Legislation changes

3.4.2. Legislation and policy changes

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icon for prioritization policies

3.4.3. Case load management and prioritisation policies

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Section 4.4.6 Personal interviews

3.4.4. Personal interview

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icon for processing of applications from specific nationalities

3.4.5. National policies and practices for specific profiles and nationalities

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3.4.6. Derived right to international protection

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icon for the length of asylum processes

3.4.10. Length of the asylum procedure before the determining authorities

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icon for digitalisation of first instance procedures

3.4.11. Digitalisation

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icon for the length of asylum processes

3.4.12. The interplay between international protection applications and other procedures

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