Please cite as: EUAA, 'Section 3.9. Legal assistance and representation' in *Asylum Report 2024*, Ιούνιος 2024.

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Legal assistance is fundamental to inform applicants of their rights and obligations during the asylum process. A legal representative can ensure that the applicant fully comprehends the process and fully complies with the relevant obligations.

The provision of legal aid in the early stages of the asylum procedure increases the efficiency of the entire process by allowing case officers to assess a complete and accurate file, reducing the burden on decision-makers, reducing the rate of appeals and safeguarding the right to *non-refoulement*. EU legislation requires Member States to make free legal assistance and representation available on request and under certain conditions during appeal procedures. 709

In 2023, many EU+ countries continued to improve access to and the quality of legal assistance in all stages of the asylum procedure. Developments included institutional changes, specialised training and amending the eligibility criteria to work as a legal assistance provider in the field of international protection.

Nonetheless, challenges were reported on accessing legal aid, particularly at the borders or in detention. For example, the lack of communication with a lawyer and an effective right to legal assistance for asylum seekers in detention was raised within different fora. Some countries amended national provisions to reinforce the right of detained asylum seekers to be in contact with family members, legal counsellors and relevant organisations.

With displaced persons continuing to arrive from Ukraine, some EU+ countries continued to provide legal information on and assistance with the temporary protection procedure.

Section 4.10.2 Legal right representation

3.9.1. Access to legal aid during the first instance procedure

Read more...

Section 4.10.3 Legal aid appeals

3.9.2. Access to legal aid during appeals

Read more...

Section 4.10.3 Legal aid appeals

3.9.3. Legal aid at the borders or in detention

Read more...

Section 4.10.5 Quality assurance

3.9.4. Supporting lawyers working on international protection cases

Read more...

Section 4.10.5 Quality assurance

3.9.5. Continued legal assistance following an international protection procedure

Read more...

Section 4.10.3 Legal aid appeals

3.9.6. Specific aspects of providing legal aid for displaced persons from Ukraine at the border and in detention

Read more...

- 709Official Journal of the European Union: Procedures Directive. (2013, June 26). Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), Articles 20 and 21.

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