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The number of unaccompanied children arriving to Italy rose throughout 2023,1073 and to address this challenge, a new legislative decree allows, in the event of emergency situations (for example substantial, multiple and frequent arrivals or rescues at sea), the public security authority to order anthropometric tests or other medical examinations (including X-rays) to identify age. In these cases, the authority must give immediate notice to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Tribunal for Minors, which authorises the execution in writing or, in cases of particular urgency, orally and subsequently confirmed in writing. The law also foresees a detailed procedure for the drafting of the reports on the examinations and relevant appeal mechanisms. Moreover, the law amended the ordinary procedure for age assessments, providing that the assessment must be carried out by a multidisciplinary and multi-professional team of experts (composed of a paediatrician, a psychologist specialised in child development or a child neuropsychiatrist, a cultural mediator and a social assistant) and completed within a period of 60 days.1074 ASGI highlighted that this is a derogation from previous legislation, when only a judicial authority was allowed to initiate the assessment, which had to be carried out by a multidisciplinary team.1075 Prior to the new law, Save the Children and UNHCR presented a mapping on the identification procedure and age assessments for unaccompanied minors and suggested further efforts to harmonise divergent practices across the country and to train staff on the specific procedures.1076

A new methodology for age assessments was proposed for adoption in Bulgaria, following EUAA guidelines. The methodology is planned to be piloted from March 2024 after officers assigned for this task are properly trained.

Updated work instructions were published on the age assessment process in the Netherlands. 1077 In Sweden, MRI pictures of a knee joint can only be made in one location since May 2023, but this has not caused any delays in the process.1078

In Cyprus, the Refugee Law was amended to state that asylum seekers who do not consent to the medical examination for an age assessment are presumed to be adults. However, they can submit additional information at any stage of the process to establish their minority and can request the medical examination at a later stage, which cannot be disregarded by the Asylum

Service.[1079]

The International Rescue Committee Hellas in Greece observed occasional shortcomings with the institutions accredited to do an age assessment: doctors and medical staff were not always aware of the specific legislative and policy framework.[1080]

The Irish Refugee Council received information from Tusla, the Irish Child and Family Agency, that a policy or internal guidelines did not exist in 2022 on age assessments for unaccompanied children who were referred from the International Protection Office or Dublin Airport. In 2023, the organisation noted that a revised policy was partially implemented.[1081]

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- 1081Irish Refugee Council. *Input to the Asylum Report 2024*. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-02/irish_refugee_council.pdf

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