

## 4.3.3 Accelerated procedures

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According to the recast Asylum Procedures Directive, when an application for international protection is likely to be unfounded or where there are specific grounds, such as the applicant is from a safe country of origin or presented false information, Member States may accelerate the examination of the application. This can be done by introducing shorter, but reasonable, time limits for certain procedural steps without compromising the right to a fair process or the applicant's access to basic rights and guarantees. In the circumstances when a procedure can be accelerated – which are the same circumstances to examine an application at the border or in transit zones (see [Section 4.3.1](#)), the directive allows Member States to consider an application as manifestly unfounded.

In 2021, countries introduced amendments to the use of the accelerated procedure, extending its coverage to certain categories of applicants or changing the time limits, while national courts reviewed some of these changes. The quality of decisions pronounced in accelerated procedures was also examined.

Lithuania introduced amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens in December 2021, including changes for the accelerated procedure.<sup>505</sup> An appeal against a decision in an accelerated procedure may be lodged with the regional administrative court within 7 days of notification, and a second appeal may be lodged with the Supreme Administrative Court within 14 days from publication of the appeal decision. ECRE expressed concerns about the extension of the accelerated examination to applications from asylum seekers entering from Belarus, including vulnerable applicants.<sup>506</sup> Furthermore, UNHCR published legal observations before the adoption of the amendments, raising concerns about the safeguards applicable to the accelerated procedure.<sup>507</sup>

In the Netherlands, the legal provisions that came into force in June 2021 provided that the Track 2 simplified procedure, equivalent to the accelerated procedure, was extended to other categories of applicants besides applicants from safe countries of origin.<sup>508</sup> The Work Instruction 2021/14, implemented as of 25 June 2021, excludes unaccompanied minors from this procedure, which was considered a good practice by ECRE.<sup>509</sup>

In Slovenia, the time limit to lodge an appeal before the Administrative Court against a decision issued in the accelerated procedure was reduced from 8 days to 3 days through the adoption of the "Act amending the International Protection Act".<sup>510</sup> The suspensive effect of the appeal is automatic, and the court must take a

decision within 7 days, although according to civil society organisations, in practice the court procedures were usually longer.<sup>511</sup> The proposal also reintroduced the possibility of appealing to the Supreme Court, which was abolished in 2016.<sup>512</sup>

The Belgian Constitutional Court [reviewed](#) several legislative provisions in February 2021 and clarified that the accelerated procedure can be applied to unaccompanied minors only when the applicant comes from a safe country of origin, has made an inadmissible subsequent application or poses a threat to national security or public order.

External evaluators of the working group Egger, Dreher und Partner AG and Ecoplan AG, on behalf of the SEM in Switzerland, analysed the quality of asylum decisions in the accelerated procedure following the revision of the Asylum Act in March 2019. They concluded that the accelerated procedure took an average of 55 days and that generally the quality of asylum decisions was satisfactory. The study also looked at the rate of decisions appealed and concluded that approximately 96% of all negative, appealable asylum decisions became legally binding, either because they were not appealed or because they had been upheld by the Federal Administrative Court.<sup>513</sup> UNHCR commented on this evaluation and noted the limited number of decisions included in the study and that the study does not offer a complete picture of the functioning of the new system.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>505</sup> Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania | Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikal? ministerija. (2021, December 23). Seimas pritar? ?statymo „D?l u?zsienie?i? teisin?s pad?ties“ pataisoms [The Seimas approved amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens]. <https://vrm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/seimas-pritare-istatymo-del-uzsienieciu-teisines-padeties-pataisoms>

<sup>506</sup> European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (September 2021). Extraordinary responses: legislative changes in Lithuania, 2021. Legal Note 11: ECRE's assessment of recent changes to asylum legislation in Lithuania and their impact, with reference to compliance with EU and international law. <https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Legal-Note-11.pdf>

<sup>507</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021, July 28). UNHCR legal observations on the amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Legal Status of Aliens (No XIV-506). <https://www.refworld.org/docid/610d26971a1.html>

<sup>508</sup> Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Ministry of Justice and Security | Immigratie- en Naturalisatiediens, Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2021, June 25). Combination of the application interview and initial interview and introduction of flexible AA. <https://ind.nl/en/Pages/Combination-of-the-application-interview-and-initial-interview-and-introduction-of-flexible-AA.aspx>

<sup>509</sup> European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (2022). Input to the Asylum Report 2022. [https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-03/European\\_Council\\_on\\_Refugees\\_and\\_Exiles\\_ECRE.docx](https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-03/European_Council_on_Refugees_and_Exiles_ECRE.docx)

<sup>510</sup> Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o mednarodni za?iti (ZMZ-1A) [Act amending the International Protection Act (ZMZ-1A)]. <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO8192>

<sup>511</sup> European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (2022). Input to the Asylum Report 2022. [https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-03/European\\_Council\\_on\\_Refugees\\_and\\_Exiles\\_ECRE.docx](https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-03/European_Council_on_Refugees_and_Exiles_ECRE.docx)

<sup>512</sup> Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o mednarodni za?iti (ZMZ-1A) [Act amending the International Protection Act (ZMZ-1A)], March 26, 2021. <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO8192>

<sup>513</sup> State Secretariat for Migration | Staatssekretariat für Migration. (2021, August 23). Die beschleunigten Asylverfahren funktionieren grundsätzlich gut, Optimierungen sind umgesetzt oder eingeleitet [The accelerated asylum procedures are working well, optimisations have been implemented or initiated].

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/sem/medien/mm.msg-id-84791.html>

[514](#) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021, August 23). Nouvelle procédure d'asile : Le HCR se félicite des résultats de l'évaluation externe et recommande une gestion de la qualité régulière et globale [New asylum procedure: UNHCR welcomes results of external evaluation and recommends regular and comprehensive quality management]. <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/ch-fr/68487-nouvelle-procedure-dasile-le-hcr-se-felicite-des-resultats-de-levaluation-externe-et-recommande-une-gestion-de-la-qualite-reguliere-et-globale.html>

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