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4.4.12. Processing of applications lodged by specific nationalities

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icon for processing of applications from specific nationalities
Due to the evolving situations in Afghanistan and Ethiopia, the processing of requests for international protection lodged by nationals from these countries of origin, in particular possible negative decisions, were suspended for a period of time in several EU+ countries.580

Norway suspended cases lodged by Afghan nationals in July581 and lifted the measure on 27 January 2022.582Belgium decided to temporary suspend the notification of negative decisions for applicants from Afghanistan in August 2021583 and lifted the suspension fully on 2 March 2022.584The processing of applications continued, such as the organisation of personal interviews, as well as the notification of decision to grant refugee status or declaring an application inadmissible for persons with a protection status in another Member State. In the Netherlands, the moratorium on decisions was imposed in August 2021 for 6 months.585

A moratorium on decisions and returns for Tigrayan applicants from Ethiopia was also taken in the Netherlands in July 2021.586 The moratorium for Tigrayans was ended in November 2021, while Tigrayan ethnics were considered to be a risk group, with Tigrayan women a vulnerable minority group. The Netherlands also considered that there was no internal protection alternative for Tigrayans and they were not required to turn to the authorities or international organisations for protection in Ethiopia.587

Suspensions for negative decisions only were applied in Finland, Luxembourg and Switzerland. In Finland, the Immigration Service suspended the pronouncement of negative decisions on removals to Afghanistan on 9 July 2021. The asylum authority confirmed in November 2021 that negative decisions were still not issued and that only positive decisions were pronounced.588

In Luxembourg, cases lodged by Afghan nationals were processed where the need for protection was evident, so only positive, inadmissible and Dublin decisions were issued, while negative decisions were suspended. From the end of November 2021, the examination of these cases resumed, and in December 2021, the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum scheduled applicants for a complementary interview to discuss changes in their situation if the initial interview was done before 15 August 2021.589

In Switzerland, the policy of deciding only clear cases was considered problematic by the Refugee Council as other Afghans remained in an uncertain situation.590 In Latvia, asylum authorities considered that there was no need to provide the personal interview if the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs had proof to grant refugee status.

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