



## Iceland

### National developments in 2024



Despite a decrease in the number of applications for international protection received in 2024, Iceland faced backlogs in processing due to increases in arrivals in previous years. In this context, legislative and policy changes in Iceland in 2024 aimed to increase efficiency in asylum-related processes.

Amendments to the Act on Foreigners, adopted in June 2024, introduced various changes to the procedure for applications for international protection and the legal effects of international protection:<sup>1</sup>

- **Validity and extension of residence permits:** The validity period of residence permits connected to protection statuses was shortened. In addition, residence permits connected to the local equivalent of subsidiary protection can only be renewed if the Immigration Service assesses and concludes that the conditions for granting this form of protections are still met.
- **Family reunification for holders of subsidiary protection:** A condition was introduced that the right to family reunification for holders of this status is permitted only after the status is renewed at least once. Nevertheless, exceptions may be granted for compelling reasons.
- **Family reunification for holders of humanitarian permits:** A condition was introduced that the right to family reunification for holders of this status is permitted only after the status is renewed twice. Exceptions may be granted for urgent care considerations.
- **Equivalent of admissibility procedure:** The requirement for authorities to examine an applicant's relation to Iceland was repealed in cases when: i) Iceland is not responsible for the asylum application under the rules of the Dublin III Regulation; ii) applicants have already received protection in another Member State; and iii) applicants are eligible to receive protection in a safe third country. The provision requiring substantive processing of an application if no final decision has been issued at the administrative level within 12 months was also repealed.
- **Processing applications at second instance:** Members of the Immigration Appeals Committee are no longer appointed part-time. The committee will consist of three full-time members, and the committee chairperson and vice-chairperson have the authority to rule on their own in certain cases.

To ease the pressure on the protection system and avoid lengthy, costly proceedings, the Ministry of Justice introduced changes to encourage applicants for international protection to voluntarily return home.<sup>2</sup> Staff capacity was reinforced in this area through expertise-sharing by Norway and training by Frontex.

Iceland started to develop a strategy for the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. To this end, working groups were created across the Ministry of Justice, Directorate of Migration and the police to identify and operationalise concrete actions towards applying the new legislative instruments. Iceland is not bound by the instruments included in the pact and has chosen to voluntarily opt in to some of them.

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### Key indicators for 2024



Iceland and Liechtenstein do not currently take part in the EUAA's [\(EPS\) data exchange](#), and thus these indicators are not available for the report.

For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2025](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





## Sources

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<sup>1</sup> Directorate of Immigration | Útlendingastofnun. (2024, July 4). [Breytingar á lögum um útlendinga](#) [Amendments to the law on foreigners].

<sup>2</sup> Directorate of Immigration | Útlendingastofnun. (2024, July 12). [Amendments to the Regulation on financial assistance for voluntary return](#).