

Situational Update

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Overview of the Implementation of Safe Country Concepts

This biannual overview is published in January and July. This edition covers the period January-June 2025.

In the context of asylum, the term 'safe country' refers to countries which generally do not generate protection needs for their people. European Union (EU) law provides four safe country concepts which can be applied in the asylum procedure: safe country of origin, safe third country, first country of asylum and European safe third country. These concepts are regulated in the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (APD).

Currently, the implementation of the safe country concepts in EU+ countries is highly divergent. However, greater convergence is expected as the transposition of the safe country concept will become mandatory for all Member States under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which will enter into application in June 2026. In particular, provisions regulating the safe country concepts are found in Section 5 of the Asylum Procedures Regulation (APR). The APR aims to establish common criteria for designating third countries as safe countries of origin, a common EU list of safe countries, as well as a common procedure for processing such applications. An overview of changes introduced by the APR are available in the following briefings by the European Parliamentary Research Service: ['Safe country of origin' concept in EU asylum law](#) (May 2025) and [Safe third country concept in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) (December 2024).

This overview highlights developments between January and June 2025 concerning the implementation of the safe country of origin and safe third country concepts at the EU level and in EU+ countries. It also presents the state of play on the implementation of national lists of safe countries as of 30 June 2025, based on data available in the [Who is Who in International Protection in the EU+](#) platform.

Current state of play

Safe country of origin (see Table 1)

- ✓ 23 EU+ countries **have adopted a national list** of safe countries of origin.
- ✓ Finland is the only country which implements the safe country of origin concept on a case-by-case basis.
- ✓ Lithuania, Portugal and Romania do not implement the concept as a national list has not been adopted.
- ✓ Latvia and Spain do not implement the concept as relevant legal provisions on the designation of a list do not exist.
- ✓ Poland does not define the safe country of origin concept in law.
- ✓ Only **8 countries** are **recognised as safe by more than 14 EU+ countries which implement national lists**. These include Albania (by 21 countries), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia (20 countries each), Kosovo (19 countries), Georgia (17 countries) and Ghana (14 countries).
- ✓ A majority of countries of origin (**35 countries**) are **listed as safe by 3 or less EU+ countries** which implement national lists.
- ✓ **7 EU+ countries** which implement national lists (Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland) also **apply exceptions** for specific geographical areas or profiles of asylum seekers within a country of origin (see Table 2).

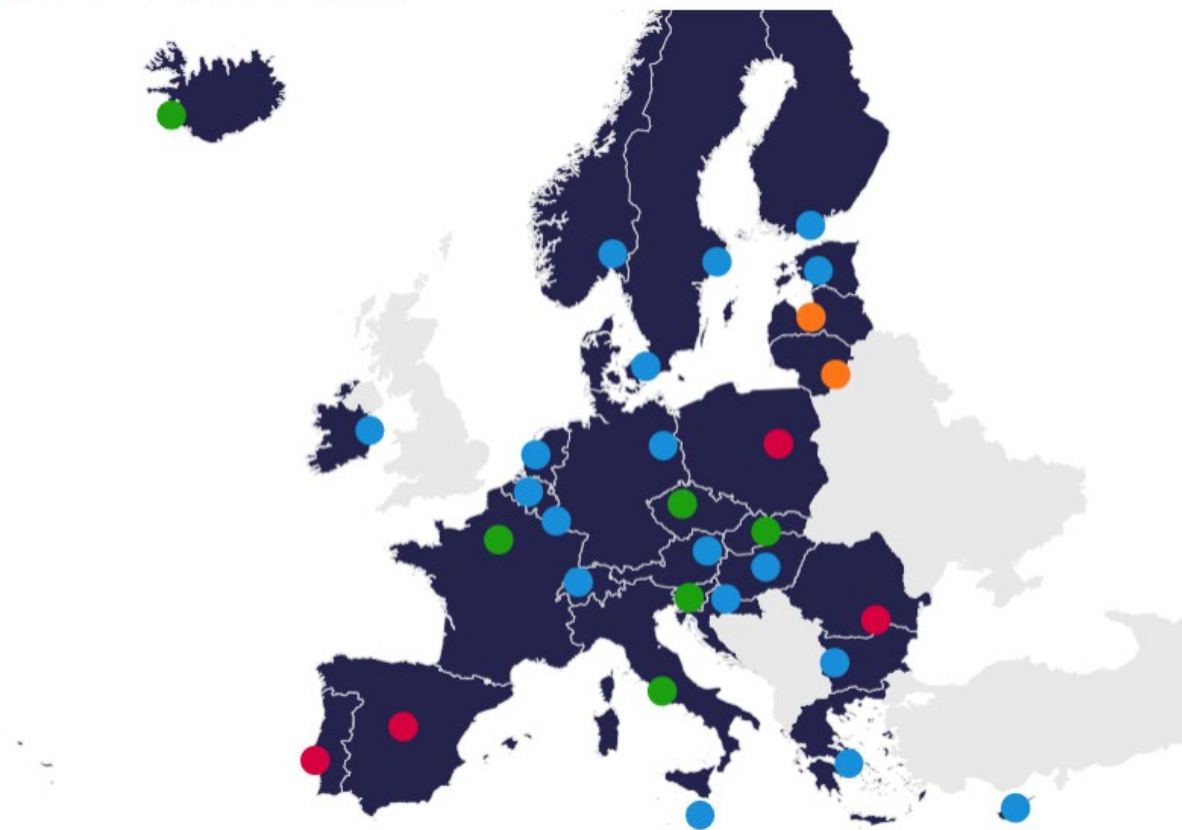
Safe third country (see Table 3)

- ✓ The safe third country concept is not applied uniformly in all EU+ countries.
- ✓ The safe third country concept is included in national legislation in all EU+ countries, except France, Iceland, Italy and Poland.
- ✓ Only **six EU+ countries have adopted national lists** of safe third countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Switzerland).
- ✓ When the national legal framework refers to the safe third country concept but a national list has not been adopted, **the concept is applied on a case-by-case basis in 14 EU+ countries** (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden).
- ✓ Czechia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain refer to the concept in national law but do not apply it in practice.



Estonia and Hungary are the only countries which apply exceptions to the application of the safe third country concept based on geographical location and certain profiles of applicants (see *Table 2*). The exceptions applied by both countries are identical to those applied to the application of the safe country of origin concept.

- Implementing the concept of safe countries of origin and safe third countries
- Implementing the concept of safe countries of origin
- Implementing safe third country concept
- Not implementing the safe country concept



Source: European Union Agency for Asylum



1. Recent developments

The European Commission proposes to facilitate the application of the safe third country concept

On 20 May 2025, in accordance with its obligations following the adoption of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the European Commission [proposed](#) measures to facilitate the application of the safe third country concept, which are currently under review by the European Parliament and the Council.

The key changes proposed include:

- A connection between the applicant and the safe third country will no longer be mandatory. Member States may choose to apply the safe third country concept when there is a connection as defined under national law.
- Transit through a safe third country before reaching the EU can now be considered as a sufficient link to apply the safe third country concept.
- When there is no connection or transit, the concept can be applied if there is an agreement or arrangement with a safe third country. Such an agreement or arrangement will ensure that there is an examination of the request for effective protection in the safe third country, so that applicants can receive protection if justified. This option will not apply to unaccompanied minors.
- To reduce procedural delays and prevent abuse, appeals against inadmissibility decisions based on the safe third country concept will no longer have an automatic suspensive effect.
- Member States will be required to inform the European Commission and other Member States before concluding agreements or arrangements with safe third countries. This will allow the European Commission to monitor that the agreements or arrangements fulfil the conditions set out in EU law.

The European Commission proposes a list of safe countries of origin to accelerate asylum procedures

On 16 April 2025, the European Commission [proposed](#) to establish a first EU list of safe countries of origin, including countries such as Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Kosovo, India, Morocco and Tunisia, with the possibility to revise or expand the list in the future. EU candidate countries would also be presumed to qualify, unless exceptions are applied.

Additionally, the European Commission proposed to fast-track two components of the APR ahead of its full implementation scheduled for June 2026:

- A 20% recognition rate threshold: Asylum applications from countries where the EU-wide recognition rate is 20% or lower may be handled through accelerated or border procedures.
- Designation of safe third countries and safe countries of origin, with exceptions: This allows Member States more discretion in defining which parts of a country or



which groups of people may be excluded from such designations based on specific circumstances.




The proposal is now pending approval by the European Parliament and the Council.

2. National lists

In the first half of 2025, only one revision was made to a national list of safe countries of origin. By decision of the Swedish Migration Board on 7 January 2025 (MIGRFS 2025:1), Sweden **removed Georgia** from the list of safe countries of origin.

Figure 1 presents an overview of changes to lists of safe countries that took place in 2024, as presented in the [Asylum Report 2025](#).

Figure 1. Overview of changes to lists of safe countries, 2024

 Countries added to safe countries of origin list	 Countries removed from safe countries of origin list	Other developments
Belgium Moldova	Italy Following the CJEU judgement in C-406/22: Cameroon, Colombia, Nigeria	Bulgaria A national list of safe third countries was adopted: Bangladesh, Iran, Türkiye
Bulgaria New list adopted: Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Georgia, Ghana, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Serbia, Tanzania, Tunisia, Türkiye	Netherlands Following the CJEU judgement in C-406/22, in practice: Georgia, India	Cyprus List updated with no changes on 31 May 2024.
Ireland Algeria, Botswana, Brazil, Egypt, India, Malawi, Morocco	Norway Ukraine	
Italy Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Egypt, Peru, Sri Lanka	Switzerland Benin	

Source: [Asylum Report 2025](#)

Tables 1, 2 and 3 present information that is available on countries applying safe country concepts. Table 1 presents countries implementing a list of safe countries of origin, and Table 3 presents countries applying the safe third country concept. The information is presented alphabetically by country of origin/third country (rows) and by reporting EU+ country (columns). The blue squares indicate the designation of the country of origin/third country as safe.

Information in the tables also indicates the total number of EU+ countries which apply the concepts and presents the number of countries which are considered safe countries by EU+ country. EU Member States designated as safe are not taken into account in the count.


For countries not bound by the recast APD – namely Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Switzerland – a similar national legal framework applies. References to these countries should be read in relation to the applicable national legal framework.


Table 2 provides an overview of EU+ countries that implement exceptions to the safe country of origin concept based on geographical areas or specific applicant profiles from a given



country of origin. The overview reflects the information found in the laws and regulations of the countries. For geographical exceptions, the application of the concept may differ in practice, particularly following the CJEU ruling in [CV v Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, Odbor azylové a migrační politiky](#) (C-406/22) of 4 October 2024. The CJEU held that a country cannot be designated as a safe country of origin if certain parts of its territory do not meet the material conditions required for such a designation. Following the ruling, the Dutch determining authority issued a [work instruction](#) to case officers in the Netherlands not to apply the safe country concept to applicants from India and Georgia, which both contain geographical exceptions under national law, and to process applications from these countries under the regular asylum procedure rather than the accelerated one.

**Table 1. National lists of safe countries of origin**

 Country included in national list

 Country included in national list with exceptions

Country of origin	Total number of EU+ countries	AT	BE	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	FR	HR	HU	IS	IE	IT	LU	MT	NL	NO	SE	SI	SK
		26	8	22	14	27	25	10	19	8	16	13	10	15	18	15	19	11	25	18	33	7	17	15
Albania	21																							
Algeria	10																							
Angola	1																							
Argentina	1																							
Armenia	9																							
Australia	8																							
Azerbaijan	1																							
Bangladesh	6																							
Barbados	1																							
Benin	5																							
Bosnia and Herzegovina	20																							
Botswana	3																							
Brazil	3																							
Canada	8																							
Cabo Verde	4																							
Chile	3																							
Costa Rica	2																							
Cuba	1																							
Egypt	6																							
EU Member States	8																							
Faroe Islands	1																							
Gabon	1																							



Country of origin	Total number of EU+ countries	AT	BE	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	FR	HR	HU	IS	IE	IT	LU	MT	NL	NO	SE	SI	SK
Gambia	4																							
Georgia	17																							
Ghana	14																							
Iceland	7																							
India	11																							
Israel	1																							
Côte d'Ivoire	1																							
Jamaica	2																							
Japan	5																							
Jordan	1																							
Kazakhstan	1																							
Kenya	2																							
Kosovo	19																							
Liechtenstein	9																							
Malawi	1																							
Mauritius	2																							
Moldova	10																							
Monaco	2																							
Mongolia	9																							
Montenegro	20																							
Morocco	11																							
Namibia	2																							
Nepal	3																							
New Zealand	8																							
Nigeria	1																							
North Macedonia	20																							
Norway	6																							
Pakistan	3																							



Country of origin	Total number of EU+ countries	AT	BE	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	FR	HR	HU	IS	IE	IT	LU	MT	NL	NO	SE	SI	SK
Peru	1																							
Philippines	1																							
Senegal	12																							
Serbia	20																							
Seychelles	1																							
South Africa	3																							
South Korea	1																							
Sri Lanka	2																							
Switzerland	7																							
Tanzania	2																							
Togo	2																							
Tunisia	10																							
Türkiye	4																							
United Kingdom and Northern Ireland	7																							
Uruguay	2																							
USA	8																							
Vatican City	1																							
Vietnam	1																							

**Table 2. Exceptions to the application of the safe country of origin concept**

Country of origin	Profiles exempted
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL) • People who are likely to be placed in criminal detention (NL) • Territorial exception: Nagorno-Karabakh (EE – applied also to safe third country concept)
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women (LU)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial exception: Republika Srpska (EE – applied also to safe third country concept)
Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NO)
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists who report on corruption, crime or are critical of the government (NL) • Environmental activists who actively oppose (illegal) mining and land development in areas where they occur (NL) • LGBTIQ applicants (NL)
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL, DK) • Territorial exception: Abkhazia and South Ossetia ((EE – applied also to safe third country concept, NL)
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL, NO) • Journalists (NL) • Women (LU) • Girls under 18 years old (NO) • Applicants who faced forced marriage (NO)
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious minorities who have experienced persecution as a result (NL) • Dalit women (including girls) (NL) • Journalists and individuals who have been critical of the government and government policy and have experienced persecution as a result, including (human rights) activists, academics and demonstrators (NL) • Single women (NO) • Territorial exception: Jammu and Kashmir (NL)
Jamaica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL)
Kosovo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minorities (NO)
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial exception: Transnistria (CH)
Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL) • (Online) journalists and (human rights) activists who criticise Islam, the royal family or the Moroccan government, including the government's official position on Western Sahara (NL) • People who are facing criminal prosecution (NL)
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NO)
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL) • People who are facing criminal prosecution (NL)
Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL) • Journalists (NL) • People who are likely to be placed in criminal detention (NL)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls under 18 years old (NO) • LGBTIQ applicants (NO) • Applicants who faced forced marriage (NO) • Applicants with albinism (NO)
Tunisia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTIQ applicants (NL)
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial exception: States which do not apply the death penalty (HU – applied also to safe third country concept)

**Table 3. National lists of safe third countries**

Country of origin	Total number of EU+ countries	CH	DE	EE	EL	HU	IE
		3	2	8	3	15	1
Albania	3						
Armenia	1						
Australia	1						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2						
Canada	1						
EU Member States	3						
Georgia	1						
Iceland	2						
Kosovo	2						
Liechtenstein	2						
Montenegro	2						
New Zealand	1						
North Macedonia	3						
Norway	3						
Serbia	2						
Switzerland	2						
Türkiye	2						
United Kingdom and Northern Ireland	1						
USA	1						

For more information, consult the [Who is Who in International Protection in the EU+](#) platform. The platform is updated on a regular basis and includes information on national lists (including designated exceptions), the relevant authorities responsible for the implementation of the safe country concepts, and links to the relevant national legislative acts, where applicable, for each EU+ country.

Additionally, relevant case law on safe country concepts is available on the [EUAA Case Law Database](#), using the relevant search tags: [safe country concept](#), [safe country of origin](#), [safe third country](#) and [first country of asylum](#).