



Information for asylum-seeking children who have a family member in another European country

1) Who is this information leaflet intended for?

This information leaflet is intended for **minor children** (those under 18 years of age) who have applied for asylum in Cyprus, are without their parents or legal guardian and want to go and live with a family member or close relative who is legally staying in another European country. The leaflet explains both the legal rules and the procedures to be followed when pursuing family reunification.

2) What do I need to do to join my family member/relative in another European country?

There is a European Union law commonly known as the **'Dublin Regulation'**, which establishes the country that is responsible for receiving and deciding on asylum applications based on agreed criteria. The Regulation applies to the following so-called **'Dublin countries'**: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

When you attend the Asylum Service of the Republic of Cyprus for your first asylum interview, you have to provide correct and detailed information and documentation on your identity, age and any family members/relatives who are in a 'Dublin country'. Providing this information at the earliest opportunity will facilitate your application to join your **family member (mother, father, brother or sister)** or **close relative (aunt, uncle or grandparent)**. An 'aunt' or 'uncle' is defined as the sibling of your mother or father.

Your **guardian/representative**, who is appointed by the government to assist you during your stay in Cyprus until you reach 18 years of age, will be present at your interview at the Asylum Service and will assist you with your application for family reunification. Your guardian/representative will accompany you whenever you have to talk to the authorities. He/she is there to ensure your **best interests**. To ensure your best interests means that your needs, safety, well-being and your own views will be taken into account. **An application to join your family member/relative will only be made if it is in your best interests.**

3) How do I prove that I am a minor?

You must give to the Asylum Service any documents in your possession to **prove your date of birth**, such as your passport or birth certificate (birth certificates as proof of age may not always be considered as credible evidence). During your interview at the Asylum Service, you may undergo an 'age assessment'. If following the age assessment there are still reasonable doubts about your age, you may be asked by the Asylum Service to go for medical examinations to see if you are younger or older than 18 years. **However, medical examinations will only take place if you and/or your guardian/representative agree in writing.** The medical examination procedure will be explained to you by the Asylum Service officer and your guardian/representative. If there is anything that you do not understand, you should ask for it to be explained to you.

4) What other information is needed?

In order to submit your request for family reunification to the Dublin country where you have a family member or relative, the Asylum Service will need from you the following information:

- Written consent from your family member/relative that he or she agrees to take care of you;

- Written consent from you and/or your guardian/representative that you agree to be transferred;
- A document that shows that your family member/relative is legally present in the country (this could also be as an asylum-seeker);
- Evidence that you are related to the person that you wish to join;
- Full address of your family member/relative;
- Details of your family member/relative's income and living conditions (accommodation);
- Evidence that your family member/relative is able to take care of you.

Remember: both you and your family member/relative in the other Dublin country must state in writing that you wish to be reunited. To make an application, information is needed on your age, your family member/relative, and his or her ability to look after you.

5) How long does the procedure take?

The Asylum Service of the Republic of Cyprus will review your case and the documentation you have provided and, if satisfied, submit a transfer request to the Dublin country where your family member/relative lives. The Dublin Regulation requires that such transfer requests should be made within **three months** of the date of making the asylum application. Before the request can be made, all of the necessary information and documentation must be gathered, including proof of your age. Your guardian will be notified of the date your application is sent.

The country in which your family member/relative lives will examine the request and make a decision within **two months** of the request being made. If the country accepts responsibility for you, your transfer will take place within **six months** of the date of the acceptance. That country will then examine your application for asylum and decide whether you should be allowed to stay and live there.

If the country does not accept responsibility for you, the Asylum Service may write to ask if they could reconsider the decision. The country usually replies within two weeks but sometimes it may take longer.

6) Why have I been fingerprinted?

If you are 14 years of age or older and you make an application for asylum, a picture or image of your fingers (called a '**fingerprint**') will be taken and transmitted to a fingerprint database called '**Eurodac**'. You must cooperate in this procedure. **All people who apply for asylum in the EU are obliged by law to have their fingerprints taken.**

Your fingerprints might be checked at some point to see if you have ever applied for asylum before in another 'Dublin country' or to see if you were previously fingerprinted at a border of another 'Dublin country'. If it is discovered that you have already applied for asylum in another 'Dublin country', you may be sent back to this country, if it is in your best interests for you to go there. This country will then be responsible for examining your application for international protection.

7) I have more questions, where can I get information?

Your guardian/representative will be able to answer any more questions that you may have.

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