Parliament passes new Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens

On 18 May 2026, the Parliament of Estonia (Riigikogu) passed the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens (831 SE). Given the extensive amendments, a new consolidated text of the act has been drafted, while the current act will be repealed. A key change introduced by the act is the border procedure, under which decisions on applications for international protection may be taken at the border.

During the second reading, an amendment was introduced to broaden the definition of a refugee's family member. The change follows the Supreme Court judgment in *XX* v *Police and Border Guard Board* (5-25-79, 23 March 2026), which held that the current act was unconstitutional as it excluded from the definition a refugee's *de facto* partner with whom the refugee had lived in cohabitation before arriving in Estonia, where marriage or registered partnership had been legally impossible in the country of origin for reasons beyond their control.

The act was approved with 53 votes in favour and 20 against and has been forwarded to the President of the Republic.

Source(s)

- Estonian Parliament | Riigikogu (18 May, 2026), [The Riigikogu passed the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens], https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/pressiteated/the-riigikogu-passed-the-act-on-granting-international-protection-to-aliens/

Related development(s)
Estonian government submits draft law to Parliament to align with the Pact on Migration and Asylum
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