Applicants with special needs - Lithuania

Overview

Content updated and validated on: 21/08/2025

Relevant EU legislation

Lithuania is bound by the recast Asylum Procedures Directive has transposed its provisions through the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners No IX-2206 of 29 April 2004, ĮSTATYMAS DĖL UŽSIENIEČIŲ TEISINĖS PADĖTIES - 2004 m. balandžio 29, d. Nr. IX-2206

Lithuania is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive has transposed its provisions through the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners No IX-2206 of 29 April 2004, ĮSTATYMAS DĖL UŽSIENIEČIŲ TEISINĖS PADĖTIES - 2004 m. balandžio 29, d. Nr. IX-2206

National legislation

Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners No IX-2206 of 29 April 2004, ĮSTATYMAS DĖL UŽSIENIEČIŲ TEISINĖS PADĖTIES - 2004 m. balandžio 29, d. Nr. IX-2206

Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania "On approval of the description of the procedure for the accommodation of unaccompanied minor foreigners, the search for family members or other legal representatives of unaccompanied minor foreigners who are not asylum seekers, the determination of their legal status and the performance of other procedural actions related to them, and the determination of the age of aliens" 25 May 2025

Competent authority and other stakeholders

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Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) | Priėmimo ir integracijos agentūra

State Border Guard Service (SBGS) | Valstybės sienos apsaugos tarnyba

State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service

Training initiatives

The staff working in the reception centres includes social workers, case workers, psychologists, paramedics, nurses, medical doctors, administrative personnel, and other relevant professionals. In accordance with national law, social workers and case workers are required to complete a prescribed number of training hours.

The Reception and Integration Agency annually approves a staff training plan encompassing a wide range of topics, including the prevention and identification of human trafficking and gender-based violence, reception of vulnerable persons, training regarding child protection and safeguarding standards for children, including unaccompanied minors, as well as the identification of victims of torture and violence, among others.

On the other hand, the activities of the SBGS are directly related to the implementation of fundamental rights. Training related to the protection of human rights is provided during the initial professional training of SBGS officers. Special attention is paid to staff training related to the processing, use and storage of personal data (including data of special categories of persons) and the protection of socially sensitive (vulnerable) groups, especially minors.

Experts of the Migration Department participate in online and in person training courses organized by EUAA (e.g. Vulnerability in the Pact on Migration and Asylum; The Reception Conditions Directive in the Pact on Migration and Asylum; The Asylum Procedure in the Pact on Migration and Asylum).

Special needs in reception

Identification of special needs

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According to the Procedure for Identifying the Vulnerability of Foreigners approved by Order No. A1-947 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour (31 December 2024), before conducting a vulnerability assessment, the Agency must inform the foreign national, both in writing and orally, about the purpose, procedure, and confidentiality of the process, including the individuals involved. The information provided is confidential but may be shared with competent authorities, such as the Migration Department or State Border Guard Service, where permitted by law. The foreign national must be informed that refusal to participate in the assessment may result in the application of general reception conditions applicable to non-vulnerable persons.

Consent to undergo the vulnerability assessment must be given in writing using a standard form. In the case of minors, the consent must be provided by their legal representative. Where a foreign national is unable to sign due to incapacity or disability, the responsible staff member must record this on the consent form.

When assessing the vulnerability of an accompanied minor, the legal representative must be present. For unaccompanied minors, the assessment must be conducted in the presence of a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and a provider of state-guaranteed legal aid, until a legal representative is appointed.

The vulnerability assessment must be conducted immediately and no later than seven (7) working days from the foreign national’s arrival at the designated location, or within thirty (30) working days in the event of a significant increase (20% or more) in arrivals.

The process is coordinated by a designated official appointed by the Director of the Agency. The coordinator may involve external representatives, including from the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA), other institutions, or NGOs, provided they sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement.

Vulnerability assessment procedure for foreign nationals

Pursuant to Order No. A1-947 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour (31 December 2024), the vulnerability assessment of foreign nationals is conducted by a multidisciplinary team of the Agency and follows a structured procedure designed to ensure a comprehensive, safe, and rights-based approach.

Assessment :

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The process begins with the creation of an electronic personal file in the Agency's information system by a social worker, recording personal data, legal status (if known), and family composition. A copy of the identity document is attached when available.

A physician then performs a medical examination, assessing the individual's physical condition, including visible injuries or signs of abuse and prepares a medical certificate. This is followed by a psychological evaluation conducted by a psychologist, who completes and uploads a psychological assessment form.

Based on these inputs, the social worker conducts a structured interview with the foreign national using the EUAA's Special Needs and Vulnerability Assessment (SNVA) tool, generating a detailed report.

If the person is identified as vulnerable, the social worker must, within three working days, update the individual's file with the vulnerability category and required support measures, upload the SNVA report, and input the data into the MIGRIS system, which is then shared with the Migration Department. If MIGRIS is temporarily unavailable, the information must be transmitted electronically within the same timeframe and later entered into MIGRIS once operational.

Guarantees and conditions:

The assessment must consider personal circumstances such as trauma, addiction, or mental health conditions that may indicate vulnerability.

It must be conducted in a physically and psychologically safe environment, free from threats, violence, coercion, or discrimination.

The foreign national's dignity, privacy, and confidentiality must be respected at all times, with due regard to cultural and social sensitivities.

The interview must be conducted in a language the individual understands, with an interpreter provided if necessary. Upon request and where feasible, the evaluator and interpreter must be of the same gender as the applicant.

In cases involving minors, communication must be age-appropriate and adapted to their level of maturity and comprehension.

The EUAA's SNVA tool is used to identify specific vulnerability categories and to ensure uniform and evidence-based assessments across cases.

Referral of applicants with special needs

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The employee of the Migration Department who has received information about an asylum applicant, i.e. minutes of the asylum applicant's initial interview or, where the asylum applicant is accommodated at the Agency, additional documents from the Agency concerning the asylum applicant's vulnerability, determines special procedural guarantees to be applied to the asylum applicant.

Reception and care of applicants with special needs and vulnerabilities

The institution operates in accordance with an approved Reception Standard, which is aligned with the EASO Guidance on Reception Conditions: Operational Standards and Indicators.

More specifically:

Foreign nationals originating from the same country and sharing the same national, religious, or other community affiliation shall, where feasible, be accommodated in close proximity. Consideration shall also be given to vulnerability and/or age when making accommodation arrangements.

Vulnerable individuals shall be accommodated together with their family members where it is in their best interests.

Vulnerable foreign nationals and their family members shall be housed in facilities that meet their specific needs, in accordance with the Description of the Conditions and Procedure for the Accommodation of Foreigners in Temporary Accommodation Facilities and the Procedure for Temporary Departure from Temporary Accommodation Facilities, as approved by Order No. A1-2 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 January 2025.

Reception facilities and other housing arrangements

LGBTQ individuals are accommodated in separate rooms to ensure privacy and safety. Victims of trafficking are housed in a designated "Victims Unit" located within a dedicated facility physically separated from the main premises of the Rukla Reception Centre. This unit includes private amenities such as a kitchen, lounge, laundry facilities and bathroom.

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Unaccompanied minors are accommodated separately in a dedicated Unaccompanied Minors Unit. All common areas, excluding private areas such as bedrooms and bathrooms, are under video surveillance, and continuous 24/7 monitoring and support is provided by staff from the Reception and Integration Agency (case workers).

Emergency assistance is available via clearly marked "Help" buttons installed throughout the premises, allowing residents to request immediate staff support. Additionally, anonymous electronic and physical “HELP” boxes are installed and accessible to both children and adults, enabling residents to report threats or concerns directly to the Centre's management.

The Centre is secured by perimeter fencing and monitored by video surveillance. Access by external individuals is strictly regulated and limited. Upon arrival, each resident is informed of the Centre’s rules in a language they understand, either in written form or with the assistance of an interpreter.

The Centre provides daily access to medical professionals and a psychologist, consultations with social workers, material assistance, and logistical support. This includes accompaniment and mediation with external institutions, such as migration offices, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and other relevant services.

Order No. A1-947 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 31 December 2024 approved the Procedure for the Identification of Vulnerable Foreigners, which sets out the framework for identifying vulnerable individuals and ensuring that their specific needs are duly taken into account.

Pursuant to Point 26.6 of the Procedure, individuals who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence must be provided with legal assistance, as well as access to appropriate post-trauma therapy and psychosocial support.

Detention of vulnerable persons and applicants with special reception needs

Article 114 (4) of the Law Nr. IX-2206 on the Legal Status of Foreigners, 29 April 2004 | Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties provides, that Vulnerable persons and members of families with foreign minors may be

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detained only in an exceptional case, taking into account the best interests of the child and vulnerable persons.

Reception of unaccompanied minors

Unaccompanied minors are accommodated separately in a dedicated Unaccompanied Minors Unit. All common areas, excluding private areas such as bedrooms and bathrooms, are under video surveillance, and continuous 24/7 monitoring and support is provided by staff from the Reception and Integration Agency (case workers).

Emergency assistance is available via clearly marked "Help" buttons installed throughout the premises, allowing residents to request immediate staff support. Additionally, anonymous electronic and physical “HELP” boxes are installed and accessible to both children and adults, enabling residents to report threats or concerns directly to the Centre's management.

The Centre is secured by perimeter fencing and monitored by video surveillance. Access by external individuals is strictly regulated and limited. Upon arrival, each resident is informed of the Centre’s rules in a language they understand, either in written form or with the assistance of an interpreter.

The Centre provides daily access to medical professionals and a psychologist, consultations with social workers, material assistance, and logistical support. This includes accompaniment and mediation with external institutions, such as migration offices, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and other relevant services.

Reception facilities and other housing arrangements

Unaccompanied minors are accommodated in the Refugee Reception Centre according to the order of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Social Security and Labor.

Unaccompanied minors are accommodated in a dedicated Unit for Unaccompanied Minors at the Rukla Reception Centre. This unit is physically

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separated from the rest of the Centre and is specifically adapted to meet the needs of children. Accommodation arrangements are carried out in accordance with the joint order of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

To ensure a safe and supportive living environment for unaccompanied minors, the following safeguards are implemented:

- Video surveillance is installed in all areas except designated spaces, in order to ensure the protection of privacy
- Continuous (24/7) supervision and support are provided by staff from the Reception and Integration Division (case workers).
- Emergency call buttons (“Help” buttons) are installed in the premises, enabling residents to request immediate staff assistance.
- Anonymous electronic and physical “HELP” boxes are available for residents to report concerns or threats directly to the Centre’s management. These are accessible to both children and adults.
- The entire premises are enclosed with secure fencing and monitored by security cameras, with strictly controlled access to prevent unauthorised entry.

All residents are informed of the Centre’s rules in a language they understand, either in writing or with the assistance of an interpreter.

The Centre also ensures the provision of daily medical and psychological services, social counselling, assistance with daily living needs, accompaniment to competent institutions, and referrals to external services, including healthcare providers, educational establishments, and migration authorities.

Age assessments

Article 123 of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners No IX-2206 of 29 April 2004, ĮSTATYMAS DĖL UŽSIENIEČIŲ TEISINĖS PADĖTIES - 2004 m. balandžio 29, d. Nr. IX-2206 regulates the age assessment procedure.

The Procedure for the Accommodation of Unaccompanied Minor Foreigners, the Search for Family Members or Other Legal Representatives of Unaccompanied Minor Foreigners Who Are Not Asylum Seekers, the Determination of Their Legal Status, and Other Related Procedural Actions, as well as the Procedure for the

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Age Assessment of Foreigners, was approved by Joint Order No. A1-229/1V-289/V-491 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania, dated 23 April 2014 (as consolidated by Order No. A1-290/1V-363/V-494 of 26 May 2025).

Access to education

Foreign children have the right to attend general education and to attend pre-school, taking into account the minor's age, age and maturity. According to the paragraphs 5.3.5 and 5.3.6 of the Implementation of Education of Children of the Aliens Entering the Republic of Lithuania for Employment or Residence at Schools of General Education, depending on the specific conditions, the pupil's readiness and language skills, the school may develop an individual education plan and a timetable of lessons. At the same time, the school provides conditions for the children of foreigners who do not know the Lithuanian language to study it intensively.

A minor asylum seeker:

- Has the right to attend preschool, pre-primary, general education, or formal vocational training programs.
- The right to start preschool or general education programs must be guaranteed immediately and no later than 3 months from the date of submitting your asylum application.
- If he/she started studying as a minor asylum seeker, has the right to complete general education program even if he/she turns 18 while studying.

A refugee:

- Foreigners granted asylum in Lithuania have the right to receive a monthly compensation during the integration support period to pay for the education of their child attending preschool or pre-primary education, whether living in temporary accommodation or at a permanent address within the municipality.
- Minor refugees receive the following educational services:
- Within the first month (or before September 1 for those arriving in summer), their academic achievements are assessed by the receiving school to match Lithuanian primary, basic, and secondary education standards.
- Children are integrated into classes according to their age, receive educational support, and intensive Lithuanian language lessons (extra

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classes or remedial groups).
- Children from birth to 5 years old can be educated in preschool programs upon parents' or guardians' request.
- Children who turn 6 during the calendar year are required to attend the pre-primary education program.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania ensures the education of refugees in preschool, pre-primary, general, and vocational programs and provides information on higher education opportunities.

Access to healthcare

Healthcare services for insured individuals are equivalent to those provided to all Lithuanian citizens, while uninsured individuals are entitled to essential healthcare services only.

Transition to adulthood

According to the Civil Code, a minor reaching the age of majority acquires full civil agency, which also means that the institutional guardian, i.e. the Refugee Reception Centre, will no longer be responsible for their care.

Although there is no national strategy for providing support for the transition to adulthood of unaccompanied minors, there are various support measures (financial, integrative etc.) available to those who have been granted international protection.

The availability of support and services available for unaccompanied minors, reaching the age of majority depends on their legal status.

Detention of unaccompanied minors

Unaccompanied minors are not detained.

Article 114 (4) of the Law Nr. IX-2206 on the Legal Status of Foreigners, 29 April 2004 | Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties provides that Vulnerable persons and members of families with foreign minors may be detained only in an exceptional case, taking into account the best interests of the child and vulnerable persons.

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Special procedural guarantees

First instance determination for applicants with special needs

Applicants with special needs/vulnerabilities may be subject to special procedures, such as: not applying the accelerated procedure, not applying provisions for inadmissible applications, medical examination, priority examination of the application, complex vulnerability assessment, adequate location to meet with social workers and psychologists, interview by a specially-trained civil servant, or interview by a same-sex civil servant and interpreter.

The Migration Department additionally applies the following special procedures:

- To accommodate the asylum seeker in accommodation facilities that meet his/her special needs, which are administered by non-governmental organizations working with asylum seekers;
- to allow the asylum seeker to live with an adult close relative or representative legally present in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania;
- to postpone the interview of the asylum seeker until the receipt of the conclusion of the comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of the asylum seeker;
- to provide alternative opportunities for the asylum seeker to provide evidence;
- to invoke the assistance of specialists (medical doctors, psychologists, social workers) in preparing the asylum seeker for the interview;
- to seek expert consultations on medical, cultural, religious, child-related or gender issues;
- to take into account the vulnerability of the asylum seeker when assessing the credibility of his/her statements;
- choose an appropriate interviewing methodology, taking into account the special needs of the asylum seeker;
- ensure the participation of a psychologist in the interviewing of the asylum seeker;
- ensure the participation of a lawyer or other authorized representative in the interviewing and in performing other procedural actions in the presence of the asylum seeker.

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Access to information

The responsible social worker, and, if already appointed, the guardian, shall provide information to the child in an age-appropriate manner. This may include the use of visual materials such as informational videos and posters, and the conversation shall take place in an environment that ensures the child feels safe and comfortable.

In addition, information is disseminated through posters and leaflets translated into various languages. Interpretation services are made available to facilitate communication, with the possibility to choose an interpreter of a preferred gender.

The informational materials (posters and leaflets) include details on the right to access all available services, including medical, psychological, social, legal, and other forms of support.

In the case of a vulnerable person, information, legal assistance, and other reception conditions shall be provided through a method of communication and information delivery that accommodates their specific needs, in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Identifying the Vulnerability of Foreigners, as approved by Order No. A1-947 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, dated 31 December 2024.

Personal interview

In all cases (not only for vulnerable persons), an interview may be waived when:

1) a decision to grant refugee status can be made on the basis of the evidence collected and the established factual circumstances;

2) an interview is not possible due to health conditions or long-term circumstances beyond the control of the asylum seeker.

Experts of the Migration Department conducting interviews of asylum seekers must have participated in specialized training, during which they are introduced

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to interviewing techniques and good practices, are taught to choose the most appropriate way of communicating with the asylum seeker, taking into account, inter alia, his or her age, maturity, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and vulnerability, as well as to recognize problems that may negatively affect the asylum seeker's ability to be interviewed based on relevant characteristics. Experts performing established functions related to the examination of asylum applications of vulnerable asylum seekers must have participated in relevant training and are further trained on issues related to the needs of such asylum seekers.

Special procedural guarantees apply to vulnerable persons: coordinate the time, place and environment of the asylum seeker's interview with the social and/or psychological staff of the accommodation facility; choose an appropriate interview environment, taking into account the special needs of the asylum seeker; ensure that the asylum seeker's interview is conducted by a civil servant specially trained in working with vulnerable persons; ensure that the asylum seeker's interview is conducted by the Migration Department expert of the same sex and an interpreter; choose an appropriate interview methodology, taking into account the special needs of the asylum seeker; ensure the participation of a psychologist in the asylum seeker's interview; ensure the participation of a lawyer or other authorized representative in the interview; invoke the assistance of specialists (medical doctors, psychologists, social workers) in preparing the asylum seeker for the interview; take into account the vulnerability of the asylum seeker when assessing the reliability of his/her statements.

The interview may be postponed until the conclusion of the comprehensive vulnerability assessment of the asylum seeker is received.

Interviewing vulnerable persons is guided by UNHCR guidelines, knowledge acquired in training, practice, and experience.

Legal assistance

IOM Lithuania officially launched the Migration Information Centre (MICenter), which offers a broad range of services to migrants, including legal consultations, career guidance, and psychological counselling. The centre’s legal experts, knowledgeable about trafficking and labour exploitation, provide consultations to refugees, especially those from Ukraine, helping them protect their rights and

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connect with relevant institutions when necessary

The institution operates in accordance with the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 December 2024 No. A1-939 on the Description of the Procedure for the Provision of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid to Foreigners.

Guarantees for unaccompanied minors

Directive 2013/32/EU, Article 25, has been fully transposed into Articles 21, 67 (2), 68, 71, 76 (6), 77 (3), 82 of the Law Nr. IX-2206 on the Legal Status of Foreigners.

As well as a by-law, executing the law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, named “On the approval of the Description of the Procedure for Granting and Revocation of Asylum in the Republic of Lithuania”. By-law point 6; 13; 19; 25.5.2; 25.5.3; 28; 101; 105,3; 131; 132;

Making, registering and lodging an asylum application

When lodging an application, unaccompanied minors (UAMs) is accompanied by a legal representative (lawyer) and a representative from the Child Protection Agency. A guardian is appointed to them after the lodging process and before the next step in the procedure. UAMs who are more than 14 years of age are photographed and fingerprinted.

Unaccompanied minor aliens must be taken into temporary guardianship/curatorship for the whole period of a child’s stay in Lithuania. The temporary guardian/curator of an unaccompanied minor alien represents the interests of the unaccompanied minor alien. Unaccompanied minor aliens receive state-guaranteed legal aid unless the laws of the Republic of Lithuania provide otherwise.

Having received information about an unaccompanied minor alien, the Migration Department together with NGOs and IGOs and the temporary guardian/curator of the unaccompanied minor alien, immediately organise search for the minor’s family members.

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Information provision

The responsible social worker, and, if already appointed, the guardian, shall provide information to the child in an age-appropriate manner. This may include the use of visual materials such as informational videos and posters, and the conversation shall take place in an environment that ensures the child feels safe and comfortable.

In addition, information is disseminated through posters and leaflets translated into various languages. Interpretation services are made available to facilitate communication, with the possibility to choose an interpreter of a preferred gender.

The informational materials (posters and leaflets) include details on the right to access all available services, including medical, psychological, social, legal, and other forms of support.

In the case of a vulnerable person, information, legal assistance, and other reception conditions shall be provided through a method of communication and information delivery that accommodates their specific needs, in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Identifying the Vulnerability of Foreigners, as approved by Order No. A1-947 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, dated 31 December 2024.

Best interests of the child in the Dublin procedure

An unaccompanied minor will be assigned a representative who will assist the applicant throughout the asylum procedure. The representative ensures that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration, meaning that their needs, safety, wellbeing, social development, and views are taken into account. The representative will also consider family reunification possibilities.

During the Dublin procedure, the Migration Department will always act in the best interests of the child and will not send the applicant to a country where it is established that the applicant’s human rights could be violated.

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In establishing the best interests of the child, the following factors shall be considered:

- whether it is possible to bring the applicant together with their family in the same country;
- ensuring the applicant will be safe and secure, especially from people that may want to treat them badly or do them harm;
- ensuring that the applicant can grow up in a safe and healthy way, and that they have food and shelter and that their social development needs are met;
- that the applicants views are taken into account – for example, as to whether they would like to stay with a relative or would prefer not to do so;
- The relative's consent/ability to fully care for the minor and meet his or her needs.

Personal interview

There is no minimum age for the interview.

The initial steps regarding an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker are carried out in the presence of an authorised representative and a representative of the child protection authority. The representative of the child protection authority is invited by the authority that accepted the asylum application.

The interview of an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker shall be conducted in the presence of an authorized representative providing legal assistance and a natural or legal person who, in accordance with the procedure established by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, is appointed as the guardian (caretaker) of the unaccompanied minor, who are given the opportunity to inform the unaccompanied minor asylum seeker about the significance and possible consequences of the interview before the interview and, if necessary, to help him prepare for the interview, and during the interview, under the conditions established by the authorized expert conducting the interview, to ask the unaccompanied minor asylum seeker questions and/or to provide comments on his answers.

Interviewing unaccompanied minors shall be guided by UNHCR guidelines, knowledge, practice and experience acquired in training. Experts of the Migration Department conducting interviews of asylum seekers shall have participated in specialized training, during which they shall be introduced to interviewing

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techniques and good practice, and shall be trained to choose the most appropriate way of communicating with the asylum seeker, taking into account, inter alia, his or her age, maturity, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and vulnerability, as well as to identify problems that may negatively affect the asylum seeker's ability to be interviewed based on relevant characteristics. Experts performing established functions related to the examination of asylum applications of unaccompanied minors shall have participated in relevant training and shall be further trained on issues related to the needs of such asylum seekers.

The interview may be waived, as is the case for adult asylum seekers, when:

1. a decision to grant refugee status can be made on the basis of the evidence collected and the established factual circumstances;
2. an interview is not possible due to health conditions or long-term circumstances beyond the control of the asylum seeker.

Legal representation during the asylum procedure

According to the law, unaccompanied children are linked to a legal guardian as soon as possible. No child in Lithuania can be without a legal representative.

A person who is accompanying a child which is not his/her biological child may apply to become a guardian by registering with Migration Department. The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service will then provide with initial indication on how to become a legal guardian (temporary foster parent), collect the relevant documentation (a form and a declaration), conduct research to determine whether there are any legal obstacles. Finally, if an application is successful the adult is contacted by the Foster Care Centre which will provide with the relevant information for the care of the child. During the temporary custody, guardians will benefit from support and services from the Foster Care Centre.

On the other hand, if the child comes to Lithuania unaccompanied, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service is in charge of finding a person or a family that will act as a legal guardian of the child. Similarly, the Service collects the relevant documentation from the family, conducts the research and coordinates the appointment of the person as the legal guardian of the child.

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According to the Procedure for the Provision of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid to Foreigners, approved by Order No. A1-939 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania on 27 December 2024, foreigners are entitled to both primary and secondary state-guaranteed legal aid, depending on their individual circumstances and the stage of the relevant procedure.
Unaccompanied minors are expressly entitled to access both forms of legal aid.

Legal assistance and counselling

Unaccompanied minors have access to state-guaranteed legal aid, unless the laws of the Republic of Lithuania provide otherwise (Article 32(5) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners).

According to the Procedure for the Provision of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid to Foreigners, approved by Order No. A1-939 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 December 2024:

- Article 3.1: State-guaranteed legal aid includes legal services provided free of charge to specific categories of foreigners, including unaccompanied minor foreigners.
- Article 6.1: The Agency is responsible for coordinating the provision of state-guaranteed legal aid to foreigners. This includes identifying the legal aid needs of the foreigner or their legal representative, determining the appropriate type of legal aid, and ensuring its effective and non-duplicative delivery.
- Article 14: Secondary state-guaranteed legal aid is delivered by legal service providers with whom the Agency has entered into service contracts, in accordance with the procedure set out in Point 6.3.

Unaccompanied minors are entitled to receive both primary and secondary state-guaranteed legal aid.

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