

Information provision - Latvia

Overview

Relevant EU legislation

Latvia is bound by EU legislation and has transposed relevant provisions through the Asylum law | [Patvēruma likums, Latvijas Vēstnesis 2, 05.01.2016. OP number: 2016 / 2.1](#), (17 December 2015)

National legislation

Asylum law | [Patvēruma likums, Latvijas Vēstnesis 2, 05.01.2016. OP number: 2016 / 2.1](#), (17 December 2015)

Competent authority and other stakeholders

Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Reception	Access to procedure: State Border Guard (SBG) Valsts robežsardze Reception: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP) Detention: State Border Guard (SBG) Valsts robežsardze
Registration of application	State Border Guard (SBG) Valsts robežsardze
Lodging of application	State Border Guard (SBG) Valsts robežsardze

Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Dublin procedure	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Assessment of application	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Communication of first instance decision	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP) Detention: State Border Guard (SBG) Valsts robežsardze
Content of protection	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Appeal procedure	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde (PMLP)
Communication of second instance decision	Administrative Courts
Resettlement	N/a

Provision of information in the asylum procedure

Access to procedure

According to Section 7 (4) of the [Asylum Law](#), in order to ensure that asylum seekers are able to exercise their rights and comply with the obligations outlined in the Asylum Law, the State Border Guard and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs provide timely information about the asylum procedure, including the time periods, rights, obligations, potential consequences of non-compliance, revocation of applications, the competence of involved institutions, legal aid services, and reception conditions. This information is provided in writing in a language that the asylum seeker

understands or is reasonably expected to understand. If needed, the information is also provided orally.

As per Section 11 (2) 3) of the Asylum Law, asylum seekers are entitled to receive information about the asylum procedure and the appeal process upon request, free of charge, from the State Border Guard and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

Upon lodging an application for refugee or alternative status, asylum seekers are individually provided with various informational materials:

- A common booklet prepared by the European Commission regarding the Dublin Regulation (EU) No 604/2013, available in 15 languages.
- A guideline developed by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs detailing the asylum procedure, rights, obligations, and consequences of non-compliance, available in 14 languages.
- An information leaflet for asylum seekers, developed by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights in collaboration with UNHCR, available in .

The information is also provided in oral form with the assistance of a translator.

The materials cover essential information on the asylum procedure and on Dublin regulation, deadlines, rights, obligations, consequences of non-cooperation, withdrawal of applications, and institutions providing legal assistance. The competent authorities for providing this information include the State Border Guard, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, and the Latvian Centre for Human Rights.

With regards to materials for applicants with special needs, there is a specific part of the common booklet for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) prepared under the Dublin Regulation. All other materials are intended for all applicants, including UAMs.

Regarding asylum seekers in detention, if there are signs that an individual may wish to seek international protection, such as fear of returning to their home country, the State Border Guard, State Police, or Latvian Prison Administration will inform them about the possibility of applying for refugee or alternative status.

Information is provided in various languages:

- Booklet on Dublin Regulation (Albanian, English, Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Pashto, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Urdu)

- Guidelines developed by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (English, Arabic, Azerbaijan, Belarusian, Dari, Farsi, French, Georgian, Russian, Kurdish, Pashto, Tigrinya, Turkish, Latvian)
- Information leaflet developed by an independent non-governmental organisation Latvian Centre for Human Rights (English, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Kurmanji, Pashto, Sorani, Urdu, Vietnamese)

The information is typically available in writing (leaflets, booklets) but can also be provided orally if needed.

For more information:

- Asylum Seeker's Guide in Latvia (Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs)
- Information Leaflet for Asylum Seekers (Latvian Centre for Human Rights)

Dublin procedure

According to the [Asylum Law](#), after the receipt of an application for refugee or subsidiary protection status, the State Border Guard and the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs ensure that applicants are informed in a timely manner about the asylum procedure. Information on the Dublin III Regulation is provided as soon as the application is received as well.

The information covers criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining the application, purpose and process of the personal interview, applicant rights and obligations under the Dublin Regulation and the legal grounds and information for appeal.

Information is provided in written form, included in the common booklet prepared by the European Commission. If necessary, the information is explained orally, with translation assistance.

The common booklet is available in 15 languages, including Albanian, English, Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, French, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Pashto, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Urdu.

The booklet is supplemented with specific national information, such as contact details of authorities involved in the asylum procedure and legal assistance providers in Latvia. A specific section of the booklet addresses applicants with special needs.

When a transfer decision is made, applicants are informed about the legal grounds and possibility of appealing the decision and the contact information for authorities and organizations providing legal assistance.

This information is included in the written decision and, if necessary, explained orally with translation assistance.

Information about the possibility and legal grounds to appeal the decision is included in the written decision itself. Details on authorities involved in the asylum procedure and providers of legal assistance are shared with the applicant as soon as the application is received.

For more information:

- Asylum Seeker's Guide in Latvia (Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs)
- Information Leaflet for Asylum Seekers (Latvian Centre for Human Rights)

First instance determination

At the stage of registering an asylum application, applicants are informed of the possibility of an admissibility interview by the State Border Guard. This information is communicated individually and orally, ensuring that the applicant understands the purpose and scope of the interview. The admissibility interview, as outlined in Section 23 of the Asylum Law, is conducted by trained officials specialised in international human rights, EU asylum law, and negotiation methods. The interview is aimed at gathering information for determining the Member State responsible under the Dublin III Regulation. Additionally, it collects basic details about the applicant's personal circumstances and motivations for seeking international protection. If applicable, the interview also identifies any special procedural or reception needs, with all proceedings documented in official minutes.

According to the Section 24 of the [Asylum Law](#) and no later than within one month from the day an application is accepted for examination, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs takes responsibility for informing applicants about their personal interview. This notification is provided in writing, typically via an official letter. The communication includes the aim of the interview, the date, time, and location, and whether the interview will take place in person or remotely. Applicants are reminded to bring relevant documents to the interview, and they are informed of their rights and obligations, including the potential participation of legal representatives or other third parties, if applicable.

The scope of the personal interview is comprehensive and focuses on gathering detailed information about the applicant's persecution, as defined under Section 37 of the Asylum Law, or threats of serious harm, as provided in Section 40. If needed, the timeline for conducting the interview may be extended.

At the conclusion of each interview, applicants are informed orally about their rights to submit additional documents or evidence. The interviewer explains the methods available for submission and the applicable deadlines. Applicants are also provided with information about the next procedural steps

When a decision is issued, whether positive or negative, it is communicated formally via post, including the decision, a summary, and a translation. In cases where an applicant is granted protection, these documents include detailed information about the beneficiary's rights and obligations.

In the event of a negative decision, the applicant is provided with information about their right to lodge an appeal, and the right to legal assistance and representation.

Legal assistance and representation

Applicants are informed about their right to consult, at their own cost, a legal adviser or other counsellor on matters relating to their application at all stages of the procedure. This information is provided by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and the State Border Guard. The format in which this information is communicated depends on the specific circumstances and procedural stage. It may include oral communication during individual meetings, written notices or official letters.

Regarding the right to free legal assistance and representation during the appeal procedure, this information is included in the decision, a summary of the decision, and its translation, which are sent to the applicant by post, if the applicant is not detained. In detention, upon receiving the decision, applicants are informed of their rights to appeal, including the availability of free legal assistance and other options for legal aid. Additionally, these rights are accessible to applicants throughout the entire procedure, either through individual requests or as part of the general procedural framework.

Resettlement and humanitarian admissions

Latvia does not implement resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes.

Content of protection

Applicants are informed about their rights and obligations. The information is included in a decision granting them the international protection status. The information includes travel documents, residence permits, financial allowances, and the obligation to declare their living place in Latvia.

Each decision document also contains informative phone numbers for the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, enabling applicants to inquire about the next steps.

Social mentors offer further guidance, particularly regarding integration-related matters. They provide applicants with information on accessing various services and adapting to life in Latvia.

The information is offered in oral communication by mentors. Social mentors are also guiding individuals with specific needs.

Employment-related rights are addressed as part of the integration process, with social mentors offering personalized support after the status is granted. Similarly, access to education is explained.

For more information:

- [Society Integration Foundation's One-Stop Shop for Foreigners](#)
- [Live Latvia portal](#)

Provision of information in reception

Reception conditions

Applicants are informed of their rights, obligations, and reception conditions upon entering an accommodation centre for asylum seekers. This information is provided individually to each applicant. The accommodation centre maintains an informational stand where all relevant details are available in written format and in multiple languages.

The staff of the Accommodation Centre is responsible for providing the necessary information. The scope of information includes reception conditions, domestic protocols within the centre, details of the asylum procedure, guidance on where to seek legal advice, and instructions on how to access social and integration support services. The materials are developed by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, with additional visual and written supports provided by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Information is initially provided orally upon arrival and is supplemented by written and audiovisual materials available within the centre.

The information is produced in multiple languages.

Applicants are also informed about legal assistance and representation. This information is communicated both orally and through printed materials prominently displayed in common areas of the accommodation centres.

Healthcare access is addressed immediately upon arrival at the centre. Each applicant undergoes an initial medical examination and completes a health questionnaire conducted by medical staff. The medical team informs applicants about the healthcare services available to them, coordinates necessary treatments, and facilitates appointments with specialists. General practitioners and accompanying medical professionals ensure continuity of care.

Social workers and social mentors stationed at the accommodation centre provide additional support, helping applicants navigate their stay in the country and offering assistance for at least a year after they receive legal protection status. This includes supporting information provision on employment conditions and other integration areas.

Regarding education, parents of minor children are informed upon arrival of their obligation to enrol their children in school. The administration of the accommodation centre promptly notifies the Ministry of Education and Science in writing about the newly admitted minors. Within a month, the administration communicates the assigned educational institution to the parents. Social workers organize the first school visit.

In detention

The [Asylum Law](#) defines the procedures for informing third-country nationals in detention about the reasons for their detention and the methods for challenging the detention order. Upon detention, an official of the State Border Guard must immediately draw up detention minutes either at the location where the asylum seeker is detained or after the individual has been delivered to the detention premises. The detention minutes include detailed information such as:

The name, surname, and position of the official who prepared the minutes, as well as the time and location of preparation.

- The name, surname, date of birth, and nationality of the detained asylum seeker.
- The details of the official who conducted the detention, including the time, place, and circumstances of the detention and the time of delivery to the State Border Guard premises.
- A record of the facts of the detention.

- The reasons for detention and the applicable legal provisions.
- The procedures for appealing the detention.
- The possibility of requesting free legal aid and representation.

The detention minutes are prepared in two copies, one of which is given to the detained individual while the other is added to their asylum case file. Both the official and the detained asylum seeker must sign the minutes. If the detained person refuses to sign or accept the copy, this is noted in the minutes.

The asylum seeker is informed of the detention details in a language they understand or are reasonably expected to understand, with the assistance of an interpreter if necessary. The reasons for detention, appeal procedures, court oversight mechanisms, and the option to request free legal aid are explained. Written information about these aspects is also provided in a language the detained person understands or is reasonably expected to understand.

Upon placement in the State Border Guard accommodation premises for asylum seekers, the detained individual is informed of their rights, obligations, and the facility's rules and procedures, as specified in the Asylum Law. This information is communicated by an official of the State Border Guard and includes:

- The rights and obligations of the detained individual, as well as safety measures in place.
- The internal rules of the accommodation facility.
- The fire safety and electrical safety regulations.
- The daily schedule of the accommodation facility.

This information is provided upon arrival, in a language the detained individual understands or is reasonably expected to understand, with the aid of an interpreter if necessary. The detained asylum seeker acknowledges receipt of this information by signing a document confirming that they have been made aware of these details.