EU Council agrees on reforms to the use of safe countries of origin and safe third countries concepts

The EU Council has agreed on its position regarding two new pieces of legislation which aim to strengthen the use of safe country concepts in EU asylum procedures.

First, the Council approved reforms to the safe third country concept. The updated rules expand the conditions under which an asylum application can be declared inadmissible. Member States will now be able to apply the concept even without proving a ‘connection’ between the applicant and the third country. They may also use it when an applicant has merely transited through a safe third country or when there is a formal agreement with such a country to process asylum claims outside the EU. Unaccompanied minors are exempt from decisions based solely on such agreements. Applicants appealing an inadmissibility decision will no longer automatically have the right to remain in the EU during their appeal, though they may request permission from a court.

Second, the Council agreed on the first-ever common EU list of safe countries of origin, which enables accelerated asylum procedures for applicants from countries presumed to pose no risk of persecution. The list includes Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Kosovo*, Morocco and Tunisia. EU accession candidate countries are also considered safe unless they face armed conflict, fundamental rights restrictions or have a high acceptance rate for international protection in EU states. The European Commission will monitor these conditions and may suspend a country’s designation if needed.

This agreement allows the Council to begin negotiations with the European Parliament on final legal texts.

Source(s)

- European Council | Council of the European Union (8 December, 2025), [Asylum policy: Council pushes ahead with EU laws on safe countries of origin and safe third countries], https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/12/08/asylum-policy-council-pushes-ahead-with-eu-laws-on-safe-countries-of-origin-and-safe-third-countries/

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For more information, please contact: ias@euaa.europa.eu

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