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ASILE

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MEETING DOCUMENT

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To:	Asylum Working Party
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Delegations will find enclosed presentations given during the Asylum Working Party meeting held on 03 March 2026.

Age Assessment & Representation under the Pact:

EUAA Guidance and tools, Current Practice, and Implementation Challenges



Practical guide on Age assessment

Aim

To support Member States in the age assessment procedure

Purpose and context

- Updates the 2018 edition to align with the Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024), notably Article 25 of the APR.
- Developed in consultation with EU+ countries via EUAA networks and with the support of the European Commission, UNHCR, UNICEF.
- Aims to strengthen effective age assessment processes, including protection and procedural safeguards for children and applicants with disputed age.



November 2025

Practical Guides and Tools

EUAA

Practical Guide on Age Assessment

Third edition



Annexes and tools:

Supporting Implementation in Practice



Annex 1
Age Assessment Interview:
structure, questions, and child-sensitive techniques.



Annex 2
Psychosocial Assessment: guidance for psychologists and social workers.



Annex 3 – Checklists: standards on information provision, care, and safety.
Annex 4 – Consent Form: template for informed consent by applicant and guardian.



Annex 5
Overview of Age Assessment Methods:
comparative summary from previous editions.





From principle to operational obligation

Arrival / Screening:

- Security, Identity, **Health** and **Vulnerability** checks **(3/7 days)** (SR, Art 12)
- Temporary representative / guardian



Within 30 days

- **Age Assessment (AA)** (APR, Art 25),
- **Best Interests Assessment (BIA)** / **Vulnerability Assessment (VA)**

Reminder: Border Procedure **within 12 weeks**

Systematic documentation and follow-up

→ BIA findings must inform procedural steps and reception conditions.

Key shift: BIC is no longer only a guiding principle — it is embedded in binding procedural timelines and safeguards.



Arrival /
Screening



(3/7 VC)



within 30 days AA, VA / BIA

Placement in more permanent reception



Procedural guarantees
/ adjusted **Reception**
conditions

THE CASCADE APPROACH

Step-by-step logic:

1. Age verification (e.g. during the screening)
2. Review of documents and statements – substantiated doubt?
3. **Referral to the determining authority**
4. Evaluation of findings – **Substantiated doubt**
5. Initiation of age assessment :
 - **Multidisciplinary approach:** Review of information/ Age assessment interview/ Psychosocial assessment

Medical examination — last resort, least invasive

Holistic evaluation of all evidence

Stops as soon as sufficient clarity is reached

Multidisciplinary and Child-Sensitive Approach



Snapshot of current practices

- **Methods:** most systems rely heavily on medical methods or mixed/cascade models; none reported non-medical-only.
- **Actors/roles:** determining authorities only sometimes coordinate and decide; medical professionals involved everywhere; multidisciplinary models uneven.
- **Safeguards:** guardianship, information, consent, benefit of the doubt widely referenced—but applied inconsistently.
- **Timelines/data:** big variation; data gaps where systems are decentralised.

EUADA

Mapping Report



Age Assessment Practices in EU+ Countries:

A Baseline for Pact Implementation

February 2026

Foreseeable implementation challenges

- Capacity bottlenecks
- Timelines
- Consistency of safeguards
- Coordination across actors
- Mutual recognition to avoid repeat assessments in the framework of AMMR.





Best practices:

- ✓ Multidisciplinary Models
- ✓ Strong Safeguards
- ✓ Procedural Quality
- ✓ Capacity Building

Best practices & Recommendations

Recommendations:

- 1- Adopt a Genuine Multidisciplinary & Cascade
- 2- Clarify Roles & Responsibilities
- 3- Strengthen Safeguards

EUAA work in support of Guardians



EUAA and FRA joined forces in the development of a series of practical tools for guardians of unaccompanied children with international protection needs. All the booklets affected by the Pact will undergo an **update during 2026**.



**TEMPORARY
PROTECTION**



**INTRODUCTION TO
INTERNATIONAL
PROTECTION**



ASYLUM PROCEDURE.



**TRANSNATIONAL
PROCEDURES.**

EUAA Training modules on Children



Complete

**Children in the
asylum process**

**November
2026 TBC**

**Best interests
of the child**

Q1 2027

**Age
assessment**

**Upcoming
development**

**Managing
age
assessment**

**Upcoming
development**

**Training for
guardians**

Operational support on Age Assessment and Guardianship:

Operational support on Age Assessment and Guardianship is in place in **four out of the 12 EUAA OPs** for example:

- **EL Op:** development of operational guidance, tools and workflows; referrals for appointment of guardians and information provision on age assessment
- **LT Op:** development of secondary legislation incorporating SOPs for age assessment and guardianship; capacity building activities on age assessment
- **CY Op:** development of SOPs on Age Assessment (not endorsed yet); information provision on age assessment in the safe zone at Pournara FRC
- **RO Op:** workshop on guardianship and age assessment held in 2025





Questions?





Asylum Working Party 3 March 2026

Age Assessment – Unaccompanied Minors

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“Presumption of minority” in the BP

- **Article 53(1)APR:**

- UAMs exempted from the BP, apart from those who are a threat to national security or public order in the Member State concerned (Art. 42(3)(b) APR);
- age assessment becomes mandatory where there are doubts about the minority of the applicant (v. Art. 25 APR – optional)

- Need to balance the rights of the applicant with the general interest to have an effective BP. Balancing test recognized by EUCJ and also by ECtHR jurisprudence (*Darboe and Camara v. Italy* 2022, *A.C. c/ France* 2025 and *F.B c/ Belgique* 2025).

- ⇒ Temporarily placement in the BP while the age assessment is carried out
- ⇒ AA -= vulnerability assessment => max 30 days (Art. 25(1) RCD)
- ⇒ “Presumption of minority” in this context: all reception conditions for UAMs are applicable – including prompt appointment of a (temporary) guardian, adequate accommodation and support, etc.
- ⇒ Detention in the BP only as a last resort: RFM, if not sufficient ATD, and only exceptional detention. Only detention ground for presumed UAMs: Art. 13(2) RCD – for the own security of the applicant.

The future of the digitalisation of asylum

Asylum Working Party, 3 March 2026

Role of the digitalisation for the Pact implementation

Operational dimension: supporting the implementation of the legal requirements:

- shorter procedural timelines
- faster processing of the applications
- interlinks between different procedures (e.g. reception – Dublin, screening-asylum-Dublin, etc.)

Strategic dimension: modernising asylum procedures through digitalisation and the use of AI:

- overcome bottlenecks,
- reduce the administrative burden
- facilitate cooperation and information exchange
- poss. proposal for digitalisation in the area of asylum



First step: map the state of play

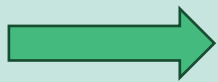
- ✓ Study commissioned by DG HOME to external contractor (Part 3: Digitalisation of Screening, Asylum, Reception and Dublin)

- ✓ Objective:
 1. Map the current level of digitalisation in Member States
 2. Support the Commission's work towards a comprehensive, integrated and digital EU migration management system

Scope of the study

Part 3: Digitalisation of Screening, Asylum, Reception and Dublin

1. map and assess the current level of digitalisation of migration management across screening, asylum, reception and the Dublin procedure in EU Member States;
2. focuses exclusively on the existence of digital case management systems (CMS) and digital tools, and not on policies or procedures.
3. identify pathways towards a more comprehensive, integrated and digitalised EU migration management system.



first approximation of the digital landscape, rather than a fully comprehensive or definitive picture

Methodology of the study

How it was done?

- Data collection
- Desk research
- Online survey to Member States (August–October 2025)

Who participated?

- 18 Member States provided usable input
- 14 online responses
 - 4 offline submissions
- 13 Member States provided additional clarification (mini-survey)
- National authorities (mainly Ministries of Interior and migration authorities)

What questions have been asked?

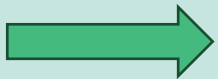
- Existence of Case Management Systems
- Availability and coverage
- Users and governance
- Functionalities and data processed
- Integration across authorities
- Interoperability with other systems



Main findings

1. Uneven levels of digitalisation
2. Fragmented landscape of case management
3. Differences in maturity, integration and interoperability
4. Divergent digitalisation of workflows and data practices

These differences limit scalability, data reuse and cross-border cooperation, and they increase administrative burden for authorities operating across multiple systems.



Clear willingness among Member States to engage further on digitalisation and to improve existing systems

Uneven levels of digitalisation

- ✓ High variation between Member States
- ✓ Digitalisation more advanced in asylum than in reception
- ✓ Many countries operate mixed digital–paper workflows
- ✓ Only a few report fully digital workflows

Fragmented landscape, differences in maturity, integration and interoperability, divergent digitalisation of workflows and data practices

- ✓ Across Member States and at national level
- ✓ Different combinations of systems and tools
- ✓ Different levels of maturity (concept → operational)
- ✓ Systems developed in policy silos (screening, asylum, reception, Dublin)
- ✓ Different authorities with limited digital connection
- ✓ Technical fragmentation
- ✓ Limited integration across administrative levels
- ✓ Weak or unclear interoperability standards
- ✓ Inconsistent data collection methods and update frequency

Digital case management in migration

Positive developments:

User-friendly systems in several countries

Effective case tracking and workflow management, strong reporting, analytics, and data security

Improved inter-agency collaboration

Automation reduces paper and administrative burden

Challenges:

Systems do not fully meet diverse user needs

Budget constraints for development

Uneven accessibility and digital capacity

Technical issues/downtime

Limited interoperability and integration



Overall conclusion

- ✓ Digitalisation is progressing but uneven and fragmented
- ✓ Systems often developed in national and functional silos
- ✓ Strong Member State interest for action

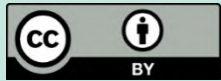
Next steps

- ✓ COM to establish **an expert group**: to consult Member States on the best way forward regarding the development of digital asylum case management systems, integrating screening, asylum, reception and transfer procedures and to explore opportunities to reduce administrative burden, simplify processes, and have high-quality asylum decisions
- ✓ Working on digitalizing asylum is one important step towards the overall objective to establish a comprehensive and integrated case management system on all migration processes

Next steps (2)

- ✓ **Priority direction:** minimum standards for CMS + transformation of DubliNet + interoperability + knowledge sharing
- ✓ poss. **legislative proposal** for digitalisation in the area of asylum, to complement and in coherence with (i) the upcoming legislative proposal to digitalise case management in the area of return, readmission and reintegration and (ii) EU Information Systems (e.g. Eurodac) and the interoperability framework.

Thank you



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