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2026.3 Member States' practices regarding age assessment of third country nationals

**European Migration Network
Ad-hoc query**

March, 2026

AD-HOC QUERY ON 2026.3 MEMBER STATES' PRACTICES REGARDING AGE ASSESSMENT OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

REQUESTED BY EMN NCP POLAND ON 20 JANUARY 2026

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Responses from: EMN NCP Austria, EMN NCP Belgium, EMN NCP Bulgaria, EMN NCP Croatia, EMN NCP Cyprus, EMN NCP Czech Republic, EMN NCP Estonia, EMN NCP Finland, EMN NCP France, EMN NCP Germany, EMN NCP Greece, EMN NCP Hungary, EMN NCP Italy, EMN NCP Latvia, EMN NCP Lithuania, EMN NCP Luxembourg, EMN NCP Netherlands, EMN NCP Poland, EMN NCP Serbia, EMN NCP Slovakia, EMN NCP Slovenia, EMN NCP Spain, EMN NCP Sweden, EMN NCP Ukraine **(24 in total)**

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This query examines how and by what means the age of a third-country national claiming to be a minor is established, which is an issue of key importance for administrative actions taken by migration authorities in both asylum and return procedures. In Poland age assessment is regulated by the following legal framework: Article 397(4) of the Act of 12 December 2013 on Foreigners which states that "In the event of doubts as to the age of a foreigner being admitted to a guarded centre or a detention centre for foreigners who claims to be a minor, the foreigner shall, with his or her consent or with the consent of his or her legal representative, be subjected to medical examinations for the purpose of determining the foreigner's actual age. The results of the

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medical examinations should indicate the margin of error. (5) In the absence of consent to carry out medical examinations, a foreigner claiming to be a minor shall be deemed to be an adult.”

Furthermore, Article 32 of the Act of 13 June 2003 on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the Territory of the Republic of Poland empowers the Border Guard to arrange medical examinations to establish an applicant’s actual age where, based on the applicant’s statement that he or she is an unaccompanied minor or on other circumstances, doubts arise as to the applicant’s age. The examination requires the consent of the applicant or his or her legal representative. The applicant must be informed that an examination will be carried out, how it will be conducted, the significance of the results for the international protection procedure, and the consequences of refusing to undergo it. The examination result should indicate whether the applicant is an adult; where no clear result can be obtained, the applicant is treated as a minor. Refusal to consent triggers a legal presumption that an applicant claiming to be a minor is an adult.

The purpose of this AHQ is to provide a better understanding of how other EMN Member States and observers countries adapt their processes in return and asylum procedures and how they carry out the age assessment.

WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:


We would very much appreciate your responses by **18 February 2026**.

1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.
2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.
3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?

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4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?
5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO
6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.
7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.
8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.
9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.

RESPONSES

		Unrestricted Dissemination ?	
	EMN NCP Austria	Yes	1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO. Yes.

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			<p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Age assessments are an important tool in cases of justified doubt regarding an applicant's claimed minority, in order to ensure that actual minors are afforded the procedural guarantees to which they are entitled. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to ensure that adult applicants are identified and accommodated separately from minor asylum seekers.</p> <p>According to Art. 13 para. 3 Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum or the Federal Administrative Court may, as part of a multifactorial investigation methodology for age diagnosis, also order radiological examinations, in particular X-ray examinations if a foreigner is unable to prove, by means of reliable documents or other suitable and equivalent means of certification, the alleged minority that is doubtful on the basis of the results of the investigation proceedings available to date and which they invoke in proceedings before the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum or the Federal Administrative Court.</p> <p>The multifactorial examination methodology is defined in Art. 2 para. 1 subpara. 25 Asylum Act 2005 as a model for age assessment based on three individual medical examinations (in particular physical, dental and X-ray examinations) in accordance with the latest scientific findings.</p> <p>Each examination method must be carried out with the least possible intervention. The participation of the foreigner in a radiological examination cannot be enforced by coercive means. If there are still reasonable doubts after the age diagnosis, the foreigner's minority</p>
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			<p>must be assumed in their favor (Art. 13 para. 3 Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedures Act).</p> <p>Based on the results of the multifactorial age assessments, approximately 60% of the cases examined were determined to be of age of majority.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>In Austria, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum or the Federal Administrative Court may order an age assessment to be carried out.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>N/a</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p>
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			<p>No. However, the fundamental problem remains – as has also been raised by other Member States in various EU bodies – the potential for abuse with regard to the special rules for unaccompanied minors. In addition, procedures for determining the age of majority can delay proceedings. --- Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered. N/a --- Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain. N/a --- Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain. N/a ---</p>
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			<p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>Yes. Based on the implementation and application of Art. 25 of the Asylum Procedure Regulation, a minor adjustment will need to be made to the process for assessing the age of majority. The plan is to supplement the process with a psychosocial assessment (Art. 25 Asylum Procedure Regulation) as an intermediate step prior to a medical age diagnosis.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Source: Ministry of the Interior</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Belgium</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes, in case of unaccompanied minors.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>When an unaccompanied minor lodges an application for international protection or is reported by an authority, the police, a private individual or a lawyer, the Guardianship Service ensures that they receive appropriate care. The Guardianship Service is also responsible for formally determining whether the individual is a minor.</p>

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			<p>In case of any doubt about the concerned person's minority, for example related to the minor's physical appearance, behavior or way of speaking, or when no identity documents are presented or when the authenticity of these documents cannot be confirmed, an age assessment can be ordered.</p> <p>Before 6 March 2025, the age assessment was done by means of a medical test (see question 4). The Guardianship Service makes sure that the specific aspects of the test are explained to the minor, with the help of an interpreter.</p> <p>When there is a doubt about on the outcome of the medical test, the lowest age must be taken into consideration. The person concerned can launch an appeal within 60 days at the Council of State, which can only review if the public authority had the legal right to conduct an age assessment and which will not examine the reliability of the results.</p> <p>However, on 6 March 2025, in the case of F.B. v. Belgium, the European Court of Human Rights found the Belgian state guilty of violating the respect for private life. The violation stemmed from insufficient safeguards in the age assessment process of a foreign national claiming to be a minor. The Court highlighted that, given the invasive nature of bone test, medical examinations should only be carried out as a last resort when other methods of determining age have not produced conclusive results.</p> <p>Following this judgement, Belgium reformed its age assessment procedure. The Guardianship Service initially conducts an interview with the young person. This interview covers, in particular, the family situation, schooling, professional experience, social network, migration route, and the existence or possibility of obtaining identity documents. Declarations and identity documents must now be examined first. The Guardianship Service may also take into consideration observation reports from the guardian, the reception center (educators, social workers, psychologists,...) the school, or other relevant institutions. Medical tests can only be used as a last resort, and the young person must give consent before undergoing a medical</p>
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			<p>test. They are informed that doubts have been raised regarding their minority. The procedure of the test is explained to them, and they are given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. They are also informed of the possibility to refuse to undergo the medical examination and of the consequences of such refusal (in that case, a decision will be taken on the basis of the elements in the file).</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Guardianship Service, part of Federal Public Service of Justice (as of 12 June 2026, the Guardianship Service will no longer be responsible for carrying out age assessments of applicants for international protection - see question 9).</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>Medical tests are carried out in hospitals that work in collaboration with the Guardianship Service. All hospitals that the Guardianship Service works with have endorsed the recommendations of the interdisciplinary German "Study Group on Forensic Age Diagnostics" (Schmeling et al., 2008) to standardize age assessment methods and ensure their consistency with scientific evidence in the field. In addition, age assessment practices have also been informed by ample research expertise in the field of dental age estimation, acquired by experts from the University of Leuven (Belgium) and the University of Ghent (Belgium). Assessments are performed by physicians specialized in radiology, forensic odontology and pediatrics.</p> <p>The test is composed of:</p>
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			<p>A clinical examination by a dentist; A radiological examination of the dentition, the hand and the wrist (both of the non-dominant hand) and medial ends of both collarbones. A combination of different methods allows to increase the accuracy of the age estimation and to identify potential development disorders that may affect age assessment.</p> <p>In order to assess the stage of development of the different bone structures, the radiographies are compared to data from reference studies which include populations of known chronological age. For each anatomical structure, different reference tables exist, which are based on a specific staging technique and methodology. For each test, a point prediction as well as an uncertainty interval are reported (De Tobel J., 2019).</p> <p>The results of the three tests are interpreted individually and an overall conclusion is formulated. Given that the medical examinations do not provide a precise estimation of chronological age, a margin of error is always taken into account. In case of doubt or conflicting results between the three examinations, the lowest age limit will be taken into consideration.</p> <p>On the basis of the results of the different tests, the responsible physician compiles a medical report, which is send to the Guardianship Service.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>No.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p>
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			<p>N/A.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>Yes. As part of the entry into force of the Pact on Asylum and Migration on 12 June 2026, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons will become responsible for carrying out age assessments of applicants for international protection. The Guardianship Service will remain responsible for carrying out age assessments of persons who have not applied for international protection.</p> <p>The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons will establish a multidisciplinary age assessment procedure in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024, establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU. The</p>
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			Guardianship Service will also amend its age assessment procedure for non-applicants for international protection in order to align it with the procedure established for applicants for international protection and to avoid discrimination between these categories.
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Regarding the return procedure: No. Currently, there is no single method by which a person's exact age can be determined. Information by the person is assessed by interviewing officers in each individual case.</p> <p>With regard to the asylum procedure: Yes. An age assessment procedure in case there are doubts that a third-country national is a minor, is set out in the Law on Asylum and Refugees (Art. 61a).</p> <p>In December 2023 a bilateral Age Assessment Instruction was formally adopted by the State Agency for Refugees and State Agency for Child Protection. The Instruction, entered into force on 1 March 2024, introduced a structured multi-disciplinary age assessment rules and procedures.</p> <p>Under the Age Assessment Instruction, the medical assessment ought to be conducted only when the non-medical ones failed to reach a conclusion about the age of the applicant.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Concerning the asylum procedure, when there is reasonable doubt that the foreigner is not a</p>

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			<p>minor, the interviewing authority assigns an expertise to establish his age upon preliminary consent of the foreigner or of his representative.</p> <p>The applicant is provided with information on the method of conducting the expertise and the possible consequences of the result for the consideration of the application for international protection, including in the event of refusal to conduct such an expert examination.</p> <p>The refusal of the foreigner to have an expert examination performed cannot be an independent ground for rejecting his application for international protection. If, after the expert examination, there are still doubts about the age of the applicant, it shall be assumed that the same is a minor.</p> <p>The expert examination is performed with full respect for human dignity, by choosing the least invasive methods of examination and is conducted by a qualified medical person, which allows for the most reliable result.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>In the return cases, as indicated in Q1, the identification and initial age assessment of third-country nationals are carried out on the basis of available documentation, interviews and information obtained during the procedure. The formal confirmation of the age and identity of the returnee is provided by the embassy or the diplomatic representation of the relevant third country.</p> <p>With regard to the asylum procedure, the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum cases is the State Agency for Refugees.</p>
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			<p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>Concerning the return procedure, no external service providers for the age assessment procedure have been used. Regarding the asylum procedure, the law does not state the method of age assessment which should be applied. As a rule, the wrist X-rays method is applied, based on the assumption that this method is more accurate than a psycho-social inquiry.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Regarding the asylum procedure: Yes.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The wrist X-ray examination currently used as a method in administrative proceedings for age assessment is not entirely accurate, as it gives a deviation from the actual age of up to two calendar years.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>In the best interest of the child – If, after the expert examination, there are still doubts about the age of the applicant, it is assumed that the applicant is a minor.</p>
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8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.


Concerning the return procedure, on the first working day following the detention, all migrants undergo an interview. That includes an assessment of the migrant's age based on physical appearance, available documents (e.g. copies or pictures of identity documents and any other documents relevant to the migrant's age) and checks in available databases. Where doubts arise as to whether the person is minor, the interviewing officer immediately reports the case to superior officer and the detention center authorities and proposes the redirection of the migrant (already treated as a minor). The latter is either the State Agency for Refugee where the migrant applies for asylum, or the Regional Social Services Office, where the minor is not an asylum seeker. In both cases, the transfer to the competent authority takes place as soon as possible.

The age range in question may be further narrowed by combining methods assessing the person's physical development, level of maturity, and psychological development. Where such a case is identified, the Child Protection Department of the territorial Social Assistance Directorate is notified immediately, with a copy to the Child Protection Agency, in order to enable appropriate action to be taken.

In the case of minors or persons presumed to be minors, particularly where they are unaccompanied, the level of expectation in terms of available evidence and consistency of explanation should be lowered.

In the absence of sufficient evidence on the presumed age of the minor, the principle of trust in his/her words is applied in the assessment. This is done to the biggest extent in cases of unaccompanied minors, who are less likely to possess documentary evidence.

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			<p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Croatia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The age assessment of unaccompanied minors is prescribed by the Aliens Act and the International and Temporary Protection Act, and the Protocol on the Treatment of Unaccompanied Children sets out in detail the responsibilities and obligations of all institutions/officials involved in working with unaccompanied children.</p> <p>If, in the process of making a decision regarding return or in the international protection procedure, there is doubt about the age of a third-country national unaccompanied minor, an age assessment procedure will be initiated.</p> <p>Age assessment is carried out when there is doubt about the age and involves an assessment of whether the person is an adult or a minor. The procedure is carried out on the basis of the opinions and observations of experts involved in the procedure, the manner of communication, reaction and behaviour of the child in relation to the declared age, understanding and</p>

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			<p>description of events and experiences, social relationships and circumstances, physical appearance and other available data about the person, or a medical examination.</p> <p>Observations useful for age assessment can begin during the identification procedure at the police administration/police office, and continue during the initial medical examination, or subsequent procedures for the child when there is doubt about the age. It is recommended that the assessment be carried out no later than 8 days after the unaccompanied child is placed in a specific institution.</p> <p>If the obtained expert opinions and collected data give rise to reasonable doubt about the age of the person presenting themselves as a minor, the Ministry of the Interior will request the Institute for Forensic Medicine and Criminalistics to conduct a medical examination, with the prior written consent of the unaccompanied child and his guardian.</p> <p>In the event of unjustified refusal of consent, the unaccompanied child will be considered an adult.</p> <p>The medical examination is carried out for up to 2 days, and the findings are issued within 14 days. The findings of the Institute for Forensic Medicine and Criminalistics are submitted to the Ministry of the Interior and the guardian and are considered relevant during the return procedure or the approval of international protection. The costs of the medical age examination are borne by the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>If the medical examination cannot unequivocally determine whether the person is an adult, the person will continue to be considered a minor.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p>
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			<p>The age assessment procedure is carried out on the basis of the opinions and observations of experts involved in the treatment of children (these may be police officers, guardians, doctors, officers conducting the international protection procedure, professional staff responsible for the placement of the child). If, despite the results of the age assessment, the person declares that he or she is a minor, he or she is informed about the possibility of conducting a medical examination. In such a case, the Ministry of Interior is the authorized body that may request the Institute for Forensic Medicine and Criminalistics, with the prior written consent of the unaccompanied child and the guardian, to conduct a medical examination.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>The medical examination shall be conducted by doctors through a physical examination, dental X-rays, and/or a hand scan, with full respect for the dignity of the unaccompanied minor.</p> <p>If necessary, during the medical examination, the unaccompanied minor shall be provided with an interpreter for the language that it is reasonably assumed that he/she understands and can communicate in.</p> <p>The costs of the medical examination shall be borne by the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>Medical expertise is not always precise enough to say whether a person is an adult or a minor, as the results are often +/- two years.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>If the medical examination conducted cannot unequivocally determine whether the person is an adult, the person shall continue to be considered a minor.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No.</p>
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 <p>EMN NCP Cyprus</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES. Cyprus has an age assessment procedure specifically under its asylum law for unaccompanied minors and other applicants when there are reasonable doubts about age.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Initial identification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The asylum applicant provides identity and age documents if available. If age documents are absent or there are reasonable doubts about the age (for example, due to inconsistent statements or appearance), authorities may initiate age assessment. • Interview and evidence: The Asylum Service may conduct an interview focusing on age-related information. • Medical examinations: Where there are doubts following documentation and interviews, the Asylum Service may use medical examinations to determine age. These medical exams must be carried out with respect for the person's dignity, using the least invasive methods and by trained health professionals. <p>Outcome evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If after medical assessment doubts remain regarding whether the person is under 18, the applicant is treated as a minor. • If the evidence and exams support that the person is an adult, they may be treated as such for the purposes of the asylum procedure.
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			<p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>Asylum cases: Age assessments are conducted by the Asylum Service of the Republic of Cyprus as part of the asylum determination procedure.</p> <p>Return cases: Age assessments in the context of unaccompanied minors or age disputes are generally handled through existing asylum age assessment processes when triggered during an asylum claim</p> <p>Medical examinations as part of age assessment are performed by appointed medical professionals, such as dental/medical services.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>Cyprus uses medical examinations as part of the age assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical exams may include skeletal or dental assessments — performed by qualified health professionals — using the least invasive procedures possible.• Reports from the Dental Services have been referenced in case decisions <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>Accuracy of medical examinations: Medical age assessment techniques (e.g., carpal wrist and dental analysis) have inherent accuracy limitations and are subject to margins of error, making precise age determination difficult.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Legal safeguards: Age assessment procedures are grounded in the Refugee Law with explicit requirements for respectful, least invasive examinations.</p> <p>Information provision: Authorities must explain the process, implications, and consequences of age assessment to applicants in an understandable language.</p> <p>Best interests of the child: If doubts remain after medical assessment, the law provides that the applicant should be treated as a minor, reflecting a child-rights-oriented approach</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A for Cyprus since there is an age assessment procedure</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of</p>
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			<p>changes.</p> <p>The Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in 2024 at EU level, will enter into application in June 2026. It introduces a new, comprehensive EU-wide legal framework for asylum and migration procedures, including revised procedural standards and common rules for Member States. This includes the Asylum Procedure Regulation and related pieces of legislation that set out harmonized standards for asylum processing, reception, screening and related safeguards, reinforcing and aligning national practices across the EU.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Czech Republic</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Although there is limited practical experience with such cases, when age determination is necessary, it is carried out using a combination of different methods. These include:</p> <p>An expert assessment conducted by social workers of the Refugee Facilities Administration. These social workers are trained on the basis of a manual prepared by an independent external expert. medical methods, such as a medical examination and, where appropriate, X-rays of the clavicle or wrist bones. Other relevant information is also taken into account where available, for example information on the person's age provided by another Member State.</p>

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			<p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>In the Czech Republic, there is no single authority specifically responsible for age assessment. The authority responsible for the respective procedure (e.g. the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy in asylum proceedings or the Police in return proceedings) must take into account all available assessment results and determine the age on that basis.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The main challenge concerns the limited reliability and accuracy of the available methods used to determine age.</p>
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			<p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Whenever possible, efforts are made to use the widest possible range of assessment methods in order to ensure a more reliable overall conclusion.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Estonia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes, the possibility to carry out age determination is provided for under the Estonian Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens (AGIPA).</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p>

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			<p>According to the AGIPA § 17, the age assessment procedure follows these principles: If an applicant for international protection claims to be a minor but there are reasoned doubts regarding their age, the competent authority may initiate an age assessment. The assessment is based on: the applicant's statements, available documents, and other relevant evidence. A medical age assessment may be used only with the consent of the applicant. If the age of an alien is unknown and there is good reason to believe that the person is less than 18 years of age, the alien is deemed to be a minor. The Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) shall decide on treating an alien as a minor or an adult.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The competent authority responsible for assessing the age of applicants in asylum and return procedures is the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB).</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>The medical examination will be carried out in the form of an x-ray of a wrist or a collar bone.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>One of the main challenges is that the result of a wrist or collar bone X-ray is presented within an approximate three-year age range. Therefore, it does not provide a precise determination of the person's age and cannot conclusively establish whether the individual is a minor or an adult.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>n/a</p>
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+	EMN NCP Finland	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>First, the Finnish Immigration Service attempts to determine the TCN's age on the basis of documents and an interview. If the TCN doesn't have any documents and there are well-founded reasons for suspecting that they have not told their real age, a medical age assessment may be performed.</p> <p>The performance of a medical age assessment requires that the person to be tested and their guardian or other legal representative both give a written consent. Before obtaining consent, the person to be tested will be given information on the importance of age assessment, the examination methods used, potential health effects, and the consequences of having and of refusing an assessment. If the age assessment is refused without an acceptable reason, the person will be treated as an adult.</p> <p>After obtaining the consent, the Finnish Immigration Service submits a request for the medical age assessment to the Finnish Institute for Health and Wellness (THL), who will carry out the testing. Once the age assessment statement arrives from the Finnish Institute for Health and Wellness (THL) to the Finnish Immigration Service, the person tested will be informed of the result and also be heard regarding it. If the person tested doesn't have any stronger documentary evidence of their age to provide in the hearing, the age determined in the age assessment will be used.</p>
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			<p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>A medical age assessment is carried out by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) at the request of the Finnish Immigration Service. Actions required for the assessment may also, at the request of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, be performed by central hospitals, municipal health centres or private healthcare units. Two experts shall draw up a joint statement on the assessment, and at least one of the experts shall be an employee of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>At present, the examination methods most commonly used include dental and carpal bone examinations by X-ray and clinical examination. First, a dentist with special qualifications in forensic dentistry or other medical practitioner defined in the Finnish Aliens Act interviews the person in order to find out about any previous illnesses and living conditions that may have affected the person's growth and development. In addition, person's weight and height are measured. Then X-rays are taken of the teeth as well as the hand and wrist and they are used to estimate bone and dental age based on their development. Finally, two experts draw up a joint statement on the assessment.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>YES.</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>One challenge is the absence of reliable identity documents. Another challenge is the accuracy of medical examinations as the age assessment methods involve margins of error and cannot establish chronological age with certainty.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Any margin of error in age assessment is interpreted in favour of the applicant, and while doubts remain the person is treated as a minor and afforded minor-specific safeguards.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>YES. Under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the assessment of the applicant's age will be carried out as a multidisciplinary age assessment, in which the use of medical methods is considered a measure of last resort. The age assessment will be conducted in multiple stages, beginning with a multidisciplinary evaluation that, in addition to document examination,</p>
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			includes non-medical methods such as interviews, assessment based on physical appearance, and psychosocial evaluation. Greater emphasis will be therefore placed on multidisciplinary and non-intrusive assessments methods (i.e., those not involving radiation).
	EMN NCP France	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>yes</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The president of the departmental council organizes the assessment of the minority and isolation of the person claiming to be a minor. The assessment is carried out by the departmental services or by a public body or association to which the president of the departmental council has delegated the assessment task. It takes place during the period of temporary emergency accommodation, following the mandatory respite period introduced by the law of February 7, 2022. This assessment carried out in a multidisciplinary manner by trained professionals, is based primarily on interviews conducted by the department's services or a body authorized by the president of the departmental council, such as an association (service authorized pursuant to Articles L. 312-1 and L. 313-3 of the French social action and family code - CASF).</p> <p>The interviews are conducted in a language understood by the person and focus on their migration journey, their state of health, and their living conditions since arriving in France. This responsibility for assessing and providing shelter for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) is</p>

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			<p>carried out with the operational support of the State, pursuant to Article L.221-2-4 of the CASF.</p> <p>This State operational contribution involves the implementation of an automated processing of personal data to assist in the assessment of minority status (called file "AEM" - aide à l'évaluation de la minorité), enabling better identification of individuals who claim to be unaccompanied minors during the assessment of their situation. As specified in the above mentioned Article L221-2-4, except where the person's minority is obvious, the president of the departmental council, in conjunction with the representative of the State in the department, shall arrange for the person to be presented to the State services so that this person can provide any information useful for their identification and for completing the AEM. The State representative in the department shall provide the president of the departmental council with information to help determine the identity and situation of the person. If necessary, additional expert opinions may be requested:</p> <p>The departmental council may ask the prefect to verify the authenticity of the civil status documents held by the minor :</p> <p>In case of doubt or difficulty, the prefect may in turn contact the border police, who are able to authenticate civil status documents.</p> <p>The judicial authority (via a forensic medical unit at a hospital) may also intervene by ordering bone X-rays. The use of bone scans is strictly regulated by article 388 of the Civil Code, as interpreted by the case of law of the Constitutional Council and the Court of Cassation. Bone scans (left hand and wrist) are used as a last resort, only when the migrant concerned does not have valid identity documents and the age claimed by him or her is not plausible, following a decision by the judicial authority and with the consent of the person concerned. All of these elements represent a set of indicators that can be used to assess whether the person is a minor or an adult and their situation of isolation. The departmental council rules on the person's minority and isolation status, based on interviews conducted with them, on relevant information provided by the State representative in the department, and any other</p>
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			<p>information that may be relevant.</p> <p>When the person is not assessed as a minor temporarily or permanently deprived of family protection, the president of the departmental council notifies the person concerned of a reasoned decision to refuse to take charge, mentioning the applicable appeal procedures and deadlines. He or she shall then inform the person concerned of the rights granted to adults, in particular with regard to emergency accommodation, medical assistance, protection against human trafficking, asylum, and residence. If the president of the departmental council concludes that the person is not a minor or isolated, the temporary emergency reception shall be terminated.</p> <p>The person has the option of lodging an informal appeal or referring the matter to the juvenile court judge pursuant to Article 375 of the Civil Code, as well as referring the matter to the administrative court in summary proceedings on the basis of Article L. 521-2 of the Code of Administrative Justice.</p> <p>When the person has been assessed as a minor and isolated, the case is referred to the public prosecutor so that a protective measure can be ordered. Then the minor is taken into care by the competent departmental child welfare service, in accordance with the guidance provided by the national mission for unaccompanied minors, in the best interests of the child and in compliance with the national distribution key.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The assessment of the minority and isolation of a person claiming to be a minor and temporarily or permanently deprived of family protection is carried out,, as the procedure currently stands, by the departmental services, including in the context of asylum and return procedures. In cases where the president of the departmental council delegates the</p>
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			<p>assessment task to a public body or association, the departmental services ensure regular monitoring of the assessment conditions by the delegated body.</p> <p>In accordance with the law of February 7, 2022, the services providing social assessments constitute a 17th category of social and medico-social establishments and services, thereby subjecting these services to the rules of authorization, control, and operation defined in the Social Action and Families Code.</p> <p>France provides for age assessment of persons claiming to be minors at any stage, including during the asylum application or the return procedure. The age assessment is carried out within the specific framework described above, which aims to determine minority and isolation in order to enable the person to benefit from child protection. The president of the departmental council, through the services of the children's social welfare (ASE), therefore remains the authority in charge of this assessment.</p> <p>The French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Ofpra), the French authority responsible for determining asylum and statelessness cases in the first instance, takes into account the decisions of the competent authority in matters of age assessment and isolation when it receives applications for international protection from persons presenting themselves as unaccompanied minors. In the absence of a legal representative (guardian or, failing that, an ad hoc administrator appointed on the basis of Article L.521-9 of the Code on the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (CESEDA)), the asylum application cannot be examined.</p> <p>Once these two criteria have been verified (minority and isolation), minors recognized as unaccompanied are subject to protective measures. To this end, the judicial authority (public prosecutor, juvenile court judge, court of appeal) makes a placement decision and the minors are then taken into care by the ASE services.</p>
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			<p>Within the Ministry of Justice, the Directorate for Judicial Protection of Young People (DPJJ), through the National Mission for Unaccompanied Minors (MMNA), coordinates the national system and ensures the equal distribution of minors throughout the country (excluding overseas departments).</p> <p>When a person declares themselves to be a minor and unaccompanied, they are protected from removal and must be taken into care by the departmental council's child welfare services once their minority and isolation have been confirmed.</p> <p>However, the claim of minority must be substantiated, particularly in the context of the arrest of a foreign national for verification of their conditions of stay and movement on French territory.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>yes</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>1. The use of bone radiological examinations</p>
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			<p>2. The best interests of the child, their vulnerability, and the need to care for them during the assessment period</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Radiological bone examinations used to assess the age of individuals presenting themselves as minors and unaccompanied are regularly questioned by national and international institutions, representatives of the medical community and civil society. However, the law of 14 March 2016 on child protection, as well as the case law of the Constitutional Council and the Court of Cassation, have strictly regulated bone radiological examinations for assessing minority from a legal perspective, specifying that they are a last resort, in the absence of legal documents and when the alleged age is not plausible (as already recommended in the circular of May 31, 2013). It also prohibited the use of clinical examinations based on primary and secondary signs of puberty.</p> <p>Under French law, the legal regime applicable to bone radiological examinations for the purpose of determining age takes into account international treaty requirements. Article 388 of the Civil Code provides that "The conclusions of these examinations, which must specify the margin of error, cannot alone determine whether the person concerned is a minor" and that "The benefit of the doubt shall be given to the person concerned.</p> <p>The Constitutional Council (decision no. 2018-768 on priority preliminary ruling on constitutionality (QPC) of March 21, 2019) ruled that this provision was consistent with the requirement to protect the best interests of the child, given the following safeguards: Only the judicial authority may decide to resort to such an examination. This examination is subsidiary in nature, as it may only be ordered if the person in question does not have valid identity documents and if the age they claim is not plausible. This examination may only be</p>
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			<p>carried out after the informed consent of the person concerned has been obtained, in a language they understand, and the person's majority cannot be inferred solely from their refusal to undergo this examination. The legislature has taken into account the margin of error surrounding the conclusions of radiological examinations: (i) it has required that this margin be mentioned in the results of these examinations; (ii) it ruled out the possibility of these findings being the sole basis for determining the person's age; (iii) if the findings of the radiological examinations contradict the other elements of assessment mentioned above and doubt remains in view of all the evidence gathered, this doubt must be resolved in favor of the person concerned being a minor. The Court of Cassation ruled that the use of bone radiological examinations for the purpose of determining age does not violate the best interests of the child as set out in Article 3, § 1, of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child or Article 3 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, given the safeguards provided for in Article 388 of the Civil Code (Cass, 1st Civil division, February 12, 2020, No. 18-24264). It reiterated that bone X-rays must be carried out, as a secondary measure, in the absence of valid identity documents and when the alleged age is not plausible (Court of Cassation, 1st Civil Division, October 15, 2020, No. 20-14.993), and that the conclusions of bone radiological examinations cannot, on their own, determine whether the person concerned is a minor, as the benefit of the doubt must be given to the latter (Court of Cassation, 1st Civil Division, January 12, 2022, No. 20-17.343). With regard to taking into account the best interests of the child, their vulnerability, and the need to care for them during the assessment period, the law of February 7, 2022, on child protection, introduced additional safeguards. To prevent attempts by isolated adults to use the child protection system, the law prohibits the reassessment of the minority status of foreign minors, unlike previously. All departments must therefore use the minor assessment support file (AEM) and, except in cases of obvious minority, persons presenting themselves as unaccompanied minors must be registered in order to avoid reassessments and to guarantee the effectiveness of the protection system for young people recognized as minors.</p>
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			<p>Furthermore, the procedure is conducted in a uniform manner throughout the country in order to ensure equal treatment for all minors, based on the implementation of a national reference framework.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>YES. Discussions are underway: on December 11, 2025, the National Assembly adopted a bill aimed at recognizing the presumption of minority for unaccompanied foreign minors and combating homelessness. This presumption would allow unaccompanied minors who were not recognized as minors after an initial assessment to continue to receive support from child protection services when they appear before a juvenile court judge. This bill is based in particular on the investigation report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, published in October 2025, which reaffirms that these young people must be considered as children in need of protection until the juvenile court judge has made a decision. The aim is therefore to guarantee the principle of the best interests of the child.</p> <p>Furthermore, this bill aims to prohibit the use of bone, dental, or pubertal development X-rays to assess the age of a foreign national claiming to be a minor. The reliability of these tests is regularly questioned by several institutions, health authorities, professionals, and international organizations.</p>
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			This text must still be put to a vote in the Senate and then adopted by Parliament.
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The primary responsibility for determining the age of a supposed (unaccompanied) minor lies with the local youth welfare office (Jugendamt) in accordance with Section 88a of Book VIII of the German Social Code (SGB VIII – https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/index.html#BJNR111630990BJNE017800119). After the registration of a minor the youth welfare office is informed immediately, so it can fulfill its obligations to (temporarily) take the minor into care (Section 42 paragraph 1 number 3 in conjunction with Section 42a Paragraph 1 of Book VIII of the German Social Code). This also includes determining the age of the young person (Section 42f of Book VIII of the German Social Code).</p> <p>There are three (potential) steps for the assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inspection of the unaccompanied minor's identification documents 2. Qualified visual inspection as part of an intensive educational or psychological assessment 3. Only in cases of doubt, the youth welfare office must arrange for a medical examination (Section 42f paragraphs 1 and 2 of Book VIII of the German Social Code). Various methods can be used. For example, the physical maturity or dental maturity of the unaccompanied


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			<p>minor can be analysed. Another possibility is to measure the hands or collarbone.</p> <p>Respect for human dignity as well as physical integrity are seen as essential. Therefore, medical age assessment is only utilised as the final stage of a graduated procedure to determine the age.</p> <p>In Germany, the age assessment process conducted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees is closely aligned with the insights gained from the age assessment procedures carried out by youth welfare authorities. The expert appraisal ordered by the Federal Office must apply a staged procedure to determine the minimum age in accordance with the principles of proportionality. In line with the recommendations of the Study Group on Forensic Age Diagnostics (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forensische Altersdiagnostik – AGFAD), the procedure combines the various methods of age assessment. The final decision on the method used for age determination lies with the relevant medical professionals.</p> <p>The Federal Office does not place any special requirements on the choice of method as long as the AGFAD recommendations are followed. Please note that due to this, the Federal Office is unable to provide additional information regarding the conduction of age assessment.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees is responsible for the asylum procedure while the relevant state-level agencies are responsible for return cases. It is however unlikely that the latter will conduct their own age assessment in light of the two previous rounds of assessment already performed by the local youth welfare offices and the Federal Office.</p>
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			<p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>See answer to question 1.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>NO. (See answer to Q1).</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>n.a.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>n.a.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>n.a.</p>
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			<p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>YES. Under the new CEAS legislation, the procedure in asylum cases – as outlined in answer 1 – will be modified as follows:</p> <p>The provision in Article 25, in conjunction with recitals (36) and (37) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348, expands the age determination procedure already implemented at the Federal Office.</p> <p>The Federal Office will also be responsible for conducting a psychosocial assessment as part of the multi-disciplinary assessment (which includes further documents, statements by the applicant). This psychosocial assessment will henceforth be carried out in the form of a psychosocial interview conducted by qualified professionals. The position of Psychosocial Specialist will be created within the Federal Office to carry out this new task.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Greece</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The age assessment procedure was established with the Joint Ministerial Decision of the</p>

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			<p>Minster of Migration and Asylum and the Ministry of Health, No 147627/2025.</p> <p>In accordance with this decision, the age assessment process is initiated when any of the authorities/stakeholders involved in the reception and identification process, raises doubt on an applicant's minority and is comprised of all three of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A medical examination which assesses the applicant's general physical development.• A psychosocial evaluation by a psychologist or social worker assessing maturity and life history.• X-ray of the left hand/wrist which is used to estimate the skeletal maturity. For cases of applicants for international protection registered as minors, the appointment of a representative is made as a matter of priority, and the age 3 verification procedure does not start prior to the appointment. Authorities must inform the minor's representative and ensure their participation at every stage. <p>Before any medical examination, the individual – and/or their representative/guardian must be informed— in a language they understand—about the procedure, methods, possible health and legal consequences, the requirement for consent, and the implications of refusing consent.</p> <p>Throughout the process, authorities must prioritize the best interests of the minor and respect human dignity.</p> <p>After the end of the procedure, the applicant's file with the results is forwarded to the authority which made the referral who, by means of a relevant act, ascertains the age, registers the age in the Reception and Asylum information system and notifies all competent authorities.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p>
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			<p>The authority responsible for referral to the age assessment procedure is the RIS, unless doubts on the age of the applicant is raised during their asylum interview, in which case the responsible authority for referral to the procedure is the Asylum Service. The authority which makes the referral is responsible for the coordination of the process.</p> <p>The actual age assessment process is carried out by the Medical Screening and Psychosocial Support Unit of RIS or the competent public health facility nearest to their residence, if the person does not reside in a RIS facility.</p> <p>In case none of the abovementioned actors are able to carry out the process, it can be conducted by a specialized doctor, pediatrician or generalist, and a trained psychologist or social worker, provided that carrying out the procedure is part of a relevant funded program. Age doubts in relation to reception and identification procedures may arise at any stage of the reception and identification process, during registration, or during the examination of an application for international protection. At the return stage, the competent authorities are the return authorities, not the Reception and Identification Service.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>Some main challenges may include: delays in the appointment of a representative; occasional delays in the implementation of the process due to long waiting lists for the required examinations (including the x-ray) in some hospitals; shortage of qualified medical staff to assess the x-ray results, in some hospitals.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>The Reception and Identification Service (RIS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- cooperates with the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection) for the speedy designation of a representative;- is in contact and close cooperation with local public health units, so as to prioritize such cases, to the extent possible. In such cases, applicants are treated in full respect of their rights and are accommodated in accordance with special reception and identification frameworks, until the completion of the procedure.- tries to find solutions to overcome the shortages of personnel qualified to assess the results of the x-ray, such as referring the case to another public health unit. Otherwise, in cases where the skeletal maturity assessment through the x-ray cannot be made the conclusion of the other two processes (medical examination which assesses the applicant's general physical development and the psychosocial evaluation by a psychologist or social worker assessing maturity and life history) are taken into account to reach a final decision, in line with the European legal framework.
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			<p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>Following the issuance of the Decision, the Reception and Identification Service (RIS), issued an internal procedure to further analyze and set out the steps of the process. The aforementioned internal procedure clarifies that the same steps are applied to this case as well.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>At this time, there is no official information available indicating any intention to maintain or amend the existing legal framework governing the age assessment procedure.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Hungary</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>With respect to the scope of aliens policing In Hungary, by law – two authorities have competence in aliens policing matters : the National Police Headquarters (hereinafter referred to as NPH) and the National Directorate-General for</p>

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			<p>Aliens Policing (NDGAP - the Hungarian immigration authority); and duties are shared accordingly. Age assessment can be carried out both in aliens policing procedures and in asylum procedures. In aliens policing procedures, NPH is the competent authority to assess the age of a foreigner being unaccompanied and holding no identification document whatsoever as well as claiming himself/ herself to be a minor. In such cases, NPH reaches out to the regionally competent and assigned medical service provider without delay seeking a preliminary medical examination and medical opinion about the age of the presumably minor foreigner. The medical staff giving medical opinion on age should be qualified to conduct age assessment. At the Airport Police (under NPH) there is a hybrid solution: during working hours a police doctor based at the Airport Police conducts age assessment, but beyond regular working hours it is an external medical service provider at the Budapest Airport who carries out age assessment under a MoU.</p> <p>If medical staff conducting the age assessment cannot – without any doubt – determine - the age of the foreigner, - if the foreigner is underage or not, the declared age of the foreigner will be considered the age of the foreigner.</p> <p>As per Section 131 (1) of Government Decree no. 35/2024 on the implementation of Act XC of 2023 on General Rules for the Admission and Residence of Third-country Nationals: if, following the pronouncement of the decision ordering detention, the third-country national declares that they are younger than the age determined during the detention procedure, the alien policing authority ordering the detention shall, as a matter of priority, contact the medical service provider competent according to its registered office for the purpose of establishing the person's age.</p> <p>Furthermore, an expert must be consulted or an expert opinion must be sought, with a deadline of at least fifteen days, if special expertise is required to establish a significant fact or other circumstance in the case and the authority conducting the proceedings does not have the relevant expertise.</p>
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			<p>With respect to the scope of asylum According to the law in force, if there is doubt regarding the age of minority of a person claiming to be a minor, a medical examination may be initiated to determine their age. The examination may only be carried out with the consent of the person seeking recognition or, if the person seeking recognition is unable to make a statement, with the consent of their legal representative or guardian.</p> <p>An application for recognition may not be rejected solely on the grounds that the applicant, legal representative, or guardian did not consent to the examination. If the person seeking recognition, his/her legal representative or guardian does not consent to the expert examination to determine minority, the provisions applicable to minors shall not apply to the person seeking recognition, with the exception of the provisions on the involvement of the legal representative or the appointment of a guardian.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>During aliens policing procedures, age assessment is carried out by the regionally competent department of NPH, whereas in asylum procedures requesting age assessment is the responsibility of the asylum authority (i.e., NDGAP).</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>With respect to the scope of aliens policing Medical examiner as an expert, who measured bone density, and evaluated general physical development of the foreigner.</p>
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			<p>With respect to the scope of asylum When initiating the age assessment procedure, the asylum authority submits a request to the Medical Expert Institute of the National Center for Expertise and Research.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes, with respect to the scope of aliens policing. No, with respect to the scope of asylum.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>With respect to the scope of aliens policing NDGAP does not have its own doctors, the doctors' availability is limited, and a conclusive diagnosis can only be made after a time-consuming medical examination.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>See answer to Question 2 with respect to the scope of aliens policing.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p>
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			<p>N/A.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Italy</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Where there is doubt as to the declared age, verification is carried out primarily by means of a civil-status document, including with the cooperation of the diplomatic or consular authorities. The involvement of the diplomatic or consular representation is not required where the presumed minor has expressed the intention to apply for international protection, where possible international-protection needs emerge, or where the minor states that he or she does not wish to avail himself/herself of the intervention of the diplomatic or consular authority. In this respect, the legislative developments set out in Article 19-bis of Legislative Decree No. 142/2015 are relevant.</p> <p>For the purpose of obtaining the civil-status document or elements concerning identity,</p>

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			<p>nationality and the countries in which the minor has stayed or transited, access to the minor's electronic/digital devices is permitted - where necessary- in accordance with Article 10-ter(2-ter) of Legislative Decree No. 286/1998. The data thus obtained may be used for the purposes of the age assessment, subject to validation by the Juvenile Court (sitting as a single judge); the operations are also conducted in the presence of the guardian, where appointed. Where well-founded doubts regarding age persist, the assessment may be ordered by the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court and carried out in accordance with the "Multidisciplinary Protocol for the determination of the age of unaccompanied minors" (Conferenza Unificata, 9 July 2020), designed to ensure national uniformity. The assessment is conducted by a multidisciplinary and multi-professional team within the National Health Service (SSN) - a paediatrician with expertise in auxology, a developmental psychologist or child neuropsychiatrist, and a social worker- with the presence of a cultural mediator.</p> <p>The procedure is progressive and as minimally invasive as possible, structured in three stages of increasing invasiveness: (i) a social interview; (ii) a psychological or neuropsychiatric evaluation; (iii) a paediatric auxological examination with any necessary medical tests. If at any stage elements reasonably establishing minority emerge, no further steps are taken.</p> <p>The presumed minor and the guardian are informed in advance, in an understandable manner, of the content and implications of the procedure and of the possibility to refuse; the outcome is communicated in a language that can be understood, in a way consistent with the person's age, maturity and level of literacy. The final report must always indicate the margin of error.</p> <p>If, even after the assessment, doubts remain, minority is presumed for all legal purposes; until completion of the assessment, this presumption also applies for the purposes of access to reception and guardianship services.</p> <p>At the end of the procedure a report is drawn up containing the outcome and the margin of error; it is notified to the person and to the guardian, where appointed, and transmitted to the</p>
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			<p>Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court. The measure may be challenged: a complaint may be lodged on which the judge decides urgently within ten days; an appeal to the Juvenile Court is also available within five days of notification of the measure and, where a request for suspension is filed, the judge (sitting as a single judge) decides urgently within five days.</p> <p>In the event of substantial, multiple and closely timed arrivals (following search and rescue - SAR - operations at sea or apprehension after irregular entry by evading border controls), Decree-Law No. 133/2023, converted into Law No. 176/2023, introduces a derogation: while carrying out fingerprinting and photographing, the public security authority may immediately order anthropometric measurements or other medical examinations, including radiographic tests, for the purpose of determining age, with immediate notice to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court for written authorisation; in particularly urgent cases, authorisation may be given orally and subsequently confirmed in writing.</p> <p>Regulatory framework and implementation: Law No. 47/2017 (Art. 5, "Legge Zampa") introduced Article 19-bis into Legislative Decree No. 142/2015, placing the multidisciplinary approach at the centre of age determination; the Multidisciplinary Protocol was approved on 9 July 2020 (with technical input from INMP, based on a 2016–2017 pilot at the Trapani Milo and Lampedusa hotspots). Decree-Law No. 133/2023 (Law No. 176/2023) inserted paragraph 6-bis into Article 19-bis (establishment of multidisciplinary teams within 90 days) and provided for a derogation from paragraph 6-ter to ensure continuity of identification and reception in the event of mass arrivals. Interventions are under way, coordinated by the Ministry of Health and the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, to harmonise regional practices.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>Public security authority.</p>
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			<p>Article 19-bis of Legislative Decree No. 142/2015 provides in paragraph 3 that “the identity of an unaccompanied minor is established by the public security authority, assisted by cultural mediators, in the presence of the guardian or the provisional guardian, if already appointed, only after the minor has been guaranteed immediate humanitarian assistance. Where there is a doubt as to the declared age, this shall be established primarily on the basis of a civil-status document, including with the cooperation of the diplomatic or consular authorities.”</p> <p>Socio-medical examinations aimed at the age assessment of an unaccompanied minor may be ordered by the Public Prosecutor’s Office at the Juvenile Court “where well-founded doubts remain as to the age declared by an unaccompanied minor” (paragraph 4).</p> <p>Paragraph 6 then provides that “the socio-medical age assessment shall be concluded within sixty days from the date of the order referred to in paragraph 4 and must be carried out in an appropriate environment with a multidisciplinary approach by suitably trained professionals and, where necessary, in the presence of a cultural mediator.”</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>The Multidisciplinary Protocol for the determination of the age of unaccompanied minors provides, in Section 1.2, that the procedure shall be carried out by multidisciplinary and multi-professional teams within the National Health Service (SSN), composed of the following professionals: a paediatrician with expertise in auxology, a developmental psychologist/child neuropsychiatrist, a social worker, and a cultural mediator. The developmental psychologist/child neuropsychiatrist and the paediatrician must serve within the SSN, while the social worker must serve within the SSN or other local public entities operating in the relevant sectors. Even where the other figures provided for (e.g. the cultural mediator) are not embedded in public services, they must comply with the procedure set out in the Protocol.</p>
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			<p>Invasive or radiological medical examinations (e.g. wrist or clavicle X-ray) are no longer provided as routine and may be considered only on an exceptional basis, upon a specific order of the judicial authority and always subject to prior informed consent.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>YES</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>Difficulties in obtaining a conclusive result from the individual's medical examination, and difficulties in activating the procedures given the large number of minors disembarking or otherwise arriving on the national territory.</p> <p>Moreover, from a procedural standpoint, there is an inevitable margin of error due to biological variability and to the methods employed, and the final report must always indicate the presumptive age range and the minimum and maximum values attributable. However, the multidisciplinary approach is recognised as the method that - without subjecting the minor to invasive medical procedures - can reduce the margin of error in the age assessment and safeguard the best interests of the child. Other operational criticalities identified include: territorial disparities in the application of the Protocol and in the training of teams; time needed to constitute the teams and resource shortages in certain regions; difficulties in recruiting specialised cultural mediators; and the complexity of managing cross-border cases or cases with ambiguous civil-status documentation.</p>
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			<p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Decree-Law No. 133/2023, converted into Law No. 176/2023, has also introduced a derogation from the procedure described above in the event of substantial, multiple and closely timed arrivals following search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea or the apprehension of persons within the national territory after irregular entry by evading border controls. In such cases, the public security authority, when carrying out fingerprinting and photographing, may immediately order anthropometric measurements or other medical examinations, including radiographic (X-ray) tests, for the purpose of age assessment, giving immediate notice to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court, which authorises their execution in writing. In particularly urgent cases, authorisation may be given orally and subsequently confirmed in writing.</p> <p>At the end of the procedure, a report of the activities carried out is drawn up, which also includes the outcome of the operations and the margin of error; the report is served on the person and, where appointed, on the guardian, and is transmitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Juvenile Court. An appeal against the decision may be lodged with the Juvenile Court within five days of notification of the order. Where an application for suspension is filed, the judge, sitting as a single judge, decides on an urgent basis within five days.</p> <p>Initiatives are under way, including those financed through AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) projects, to standardise nationwide implementation of the Protocol and to ensure its wide dissemination to the territorially competent local health authorities, as well as to strengthen training and the exchange of experience among members of the multidisciplinary teams.</p> <p>Continuous training initiatives are also in progress, funded in part by AMIF projects, to harmonise application of the Protocol at national level, enhance practitioners' skills (cultural</p>
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			<p>anthropology; physical and psychological developmental markers correlated with age; etc.), and facilitate the exchange of good practices among multidisciplinary teams. In addition, the Ministry of Health, with the support of INMP, is developing a national monitoring platform for the collection of data on age assessment procedures.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>Not applicable (question reserved for countries without an age assessment procedure).</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>At present, no proposals for new procedures are under way, save for any adjustments linked to the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which may require technical updates to national age assessment procedures, particularly for integration into border centres and crisis points.</p>
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p>

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			<p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>According to Immigration Law an official of the State Border Guard or State Police shall establish the identity of the detainee, take his or her fingerprints and his or her photograph, inspect the TCN and his or her property, as well as, if necessary, ensure a medical examination of the TCN and draw up a report thereon. The aforementioned activities with a minor foreigner who is at the age of 14 to 18 years shall be performed by an official of the State Border Guard or State Police trained for work with minors. The detainee has the obligation to co-operate with the State Border Guard and State Police in establishing his or her identity.</p> <p>Asylum Law stipulates that when identifying an asylum seeker and determining his or her nationality, the State Border Guard has the right to order document, object, language, medical and other expert examinations and checks.</p> <p>At any stage of the identification process (regardless of the procedure), the State Border Guard may, upon receiving the consent of the representative of the unaccompanied minor, order a medical expert examination, including to determine the age of this person, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the person does not have documents confirming his or her age;• there are reasonable suspicions that the person is impersonating a minor in order to avoid the expulsion procedure;• there are doubts about the age of the person impersonating a minor. <p>When ordering an age assessment, the State Border Guard shall immediately inform the unaccompanied minor, in the presence of a representative, in a language that he or she understands or in a language that there is reason to believe that he or she understands, of the reasons for the age assessment, of the possible consequences of the age assessment, as well as of the consequences that could arise if the representative of the unaccompanied minor refuses to undergo a medical assessment. If the age of the person being assessed is not</p>
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			<p>clearly established during the age assessment procedure, this will be assessed in favour of the person being assessed – the person is considered to be a minor.</p> <p>The fact that the representative of the unaccompanied minor has refused the medical assessment referred to the Asylum Law cannot be the sole basis for making a decision to leave the application of the unaccompanied minor for refugee or alternative status without examination or a decision to refuse to grant refugee or alternative status. The costs of age verification are covered by Latvia, except in cases where a TCN requests the verification on his or her own initiative.</p> <p>The regulation on age determination is set out in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation, which regulates the procedure for forensic medical expertise and provides that age determination is carried out by the State Forensic Medical Expertise Centre (hereinafter – SFMEC).</p> <p>The State Border Guard sends a request for forensic medical expertise to SFMEC, which uses the method “Age Determination Method” (hereinafter – the method) registered in accordance with the procedures specified in regulatory enactments in its activities. The method provides that age determination is carried out on the basis of a decision of the person directing the proceedings. The commission carries out an age determination expert examination; the commission consists of radiologists and dentists. It conducts interviews with the person, conducts an examination of the person’s naked body, as well as an X-ray examination of the skeleton. It should be noted that the method has the following positive aspects: 1) interviews with a person should not be conducted in an interrogation style, 2) examination of minors is carried out in the presence of parents, guardians, psychologists, social workers, 3) all results are drawn up in writing, 4) the examination is carried out by highly qualified medical specialists, 5) experts must undergo internal skills testing and regular qualification improvement measures. In addition, the method has the caveat that age can only be determined approximately – for children and adolescents with an accuracy of up to 1 – 2 years, for young people – 2 – 3 years and for older persons – up to 5 – 10 years.</p>
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			<p>The State Border Guard shall attach the received expert opinion to the case file of the detained foreigner or asylum seeker. In addition, the received expert opinion may be sent to the court for assessment in accordance with Administrative Procedure Law. In accordance with Law "Assessment of Expert Opinion", the court shall assess the expert opinion. If the expert opinion is not sufficiently clear or incomplete, the court may order an additional expert opinion, assigning it to the same expert. If the expert opinion is not justified or motivated, as well as if the opinions of several experts are contradictory, the court may order a repeated expert opinion, assigning it to another expert or several experts at once.</p> <p>All procedural actions with a minor shall be carried out by a State Border Guard official specially trained for this work. The State Border Guard College's professional further education, qualification improvement, as well as professional development programs include topics on the constitutional rights and freedoms of people and citizens, entry and residence of minor foreigners in the Republic of Latvia, rights and obligations of asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, protection of children's rights and observance of interests, as well as combating human trafficking, trends, routes, identification of victims of human trafficking, etc.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>In Latvia, age determination is carried out by the State Forensic Medical Expertise Centre. As part of the asylum and return procedure, age determination may be requested by the State Border Guard or the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p>
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			<p>Please see answer to Q2</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The main problems in age verification of minors are the lack of reliable identity documents or the inability to verify the authenticity of the submitted documents (there are no sample documents, or the person can only present copies/photocopies of documents). There are methodological limitations to the age determination method, as the medical tests used in age determination provide only an approximate age estimate and do not allow for a reliable determination of chronological age (see answer to question 2). Additional complications are caused by differences in the individual physical development and psychosocial maturity of a foreigner, as well as cultural and socio-economic factors that can affect a person's appearance, behavior and communication.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>A comprehensive approach is used in Latvia to establish the identity, including the age, of a detained foreigner and asylum seeker, based on all available methods, including document authentication and content analysis, linguistic analysis, comparison of fingerprints in</p>
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			<p>databases, comparison of photographs, age assessment, as well as obtaining information from third countries where the person has resided for a long time before entering the European Union. A combination of all these methods is used to the extent possible.</p> <p>First, all available information is assessed, including the explanations provided by the person, behavioral indicators, physical appearance, health data, as well as information from state registers and other information systems. If the person does not have documents confirming their age and there are reasonable suspicions that the person is impersonating a minor, for example, in order to avoid deportation proceedings, the State Border Guard may, at any stage of the identification process, upon receiving the consent of the representative of the unaccompanied minor, order a medical examination to assess the age. The person, in the presence of an unaccompanied minor's representative, shall be immediately informed in a language he or she understands about the conduct of the age assessment examination, the impact of the possible results, the consequences of refusal and the right to challenge the decision in court, ensuring procedural fairness and legal guarantees.</p> <p>If doubts about the person's age persist even after the medical examination, it shall be assumed that the person is a minor and the guarantees provided for minors shall be provided to him or her. In addition, the received expert opinion may be sent to the court for assessment in accordance with Administrative Procedure Law. In accordance with Administrative Procedure Law "Assessment of Expert Opinion", the court shall assess the expert opinion in accordance with the provisions of Article 154 of the Administrative Procedure Law "Assessment of Evidence". If the expert opinion is not sufficiently clear or is incomplete, the court may order an additional expert examination, instructing the same expert to carry it out. If the expert opinion is not justified or motivated, as well as if the opinions of several experts are contradictory, the court may order a repeated expert examination, assigning it to another expert or several experts at once.</p>
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			<p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/a</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>In order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, Latvia is planning to introduce changes to the age assessment procedure. It is envisaged that an interdisciplinary age assessment will be carried out in accordance with Article 25 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348.</p> <p>Namely, if, based on the statements of the TCN, available documentary evidence or other relevant indications, there are doubts as to whether person is a minor, the responsible authority may carry out an multidisciplinary age assessment, including a psychosocial assessment, carried out by qualified specialists, during the screening, asylum or return procedure.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Lithuania</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes</p>

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2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.

In Lithuania, age assessment is regulated by Article 123 of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners. An age determination examination is carried out where there are justified doubts regarding the age declared by a third-country national. The age determination examination may be carried out only with the consent of the foreigner concerned. In the case of a minor, the examination may be conducted only with the consent of the legal representative or appointed representative. Before the examination is carried out, the foreigner must be informed, in a language he or she understands, about the procedure, the methods used and the possible consequences of the results. The examination must respect human dignity and be based on the least invasive methods available. If a foreigner who claims to be a minor refuses to undergo an age determination examination without justified reasons, the legal safeguards and special treatment applicable to minors are not applied to that person. As a result, the foreigner is considered not to meet the conditions for lawful stay linked to minor status and is treated as an adult under general immigration rules. The costs of the age determination examination are covered by the Republic of Lithuania, except in cases where the foreigner requests the examination on his or her own initiative.

According to Order No. A1-229/1V-289/V-491 of 23 April 2014 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Health approving the Description of the Procedure for Determining the Age, Accommodation and Other Procedural Actions and Services for Unaccompanied Minor Foreigners Who Are Not Asylum Applicants, the age determination procedure in non-asylum cases is organised and carried out by the Reception and Integration Agency and may be initiated by the Agency itself or at the request of the State Border Guard Service or the Migration Department where there are justified doubts about the foreigner's declared age after all available information has been assessed. The procedure is carried out only with the consents required under Article 123 of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, and while such doubts persist the foreigner is treated as a

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			<p>minor, accommodated separately from adults and afforded minor-specific safeguards, unless statutory exceptions apply.</p> <p>The age determination examination follows a sequential, multidisciplinary approach consisting of a psychosocial interview by trained social workers, a psychological assessment where doubts remain, and, as a last resort, a medical examination, starting with a non-invasive physical examination and, where necessary, limited medical imaging. Any margin of error is interpreted in favour of the foreigner. An Age Determination Commission prepares a reasoned recommendation, and the final decision on the foreigner's age is taken by the Director of the Reception and Integration Agency within 20 calendar days, with the decision subject to judicial appeal and all costs covered by the Agency.</p> <p>For asylum applicants, age assessment is regulated by the Description of the Procedure for Granting and Withdrawing Asylum in the Republic of Lithuania, adopted by Order No. 1V-131 of the Minister of the Interior, and is applied by the Migration Department acting in accordance with Article 123 of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners. Where there are justified doubts regarding an asylum applicant's declared age, the Migration Department may propose an age determination examination, which is carried out with the involvement of the Reception and Integration Agency. If, after the examination, doubts regarding the applicant's age remain, the applicant is treated as a minor. Unlike in non-asylum cases, refusal to undergo an age determination examination does not prevent the Migration Department from taking a decision on the granting or refusal of asylum.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Reception and Integration Agency is the authority responsible for carrying out the age assessment procedure.</p>
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			<p>The procedure can be requested by the Migration Department, the State Border Guard Service, or initiated by the Reception and Integration Agency itself.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>Lithuania uses external service providers only for specific medical examinations, not for the overall age assessment decision.</p> <p>Where medical examinations are necessary as a last resort, the foreigner may be referred to a healthcare institution to carry out either an X-ray of both hands and wrists and the anterior chest area (including the right or left shoulder and the sternal end of the clavicle), or a panoramic dental X-ray (orthopantomogram). The healthcare institution performs only the medical imaging, while the foreigner is accompanied by staff of the Reception and Integration Agency or, in the case of a detained foreigner, by officers of the State Border Guard Service. The results of these medical examinations are then transmitted to the State Forensic Medicine Service, which provides an expert conclusion on age, including the margin of error. Any margin of error is interpreted in favour of the foreigner, using the lowest age indicated. The medical findings and expert conclusions are subsequently assessed together with psychosocial and psychological findings by the Age Determination Commission within the Reception and Integration Agency, which continues or concludes the age assessment procedure accordingly.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The main challenges in confirming the age of minors include the absence of reliable identity documents or the inability to verify the authenticity of documents presented. There are also methodological limitations of age assessment techniques, as medical examinations used as a last resort involve margins of error and cannot establish chronological age with certainty. Additional challenges arise from individual variations in physical development and psychosocial maturity, as well as cultural and socio-economic differences that may affect appearance, behaviour and communication, making age determination particularly complex in borderline cases.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>Lithuania addresses these challenges through a multidisciplinary and sequential age assessment procedure that prioritises non-medical methods and uses medical examinations only as a last resort. All available information is assessed first, including the foreigner's statements, behavioural and psychosocial indicators, physical appearance, health data and information from state registers and other information systems.</p> <p>Where doubts persist, the procedure is carried out in clearly defined stages involving trained social workers, psychologists and medical professionals, with decisions taken collectively and without giving automatic priority to any single element of evidence. Any margin of error in age assessment is interpreted in favour of the foreigner, and while doubts remain the person is treated as a minor and afforded minor-specific safeguards. The procedure includes clear time limits, mandatory information to the foreigner in a language they understand, the right to representation and interpretation, and the possibility to challenge the age determination</p>
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			<p>decision before a court, thereby ensuring procedural fairness and legal safeguards.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Luxembourg</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES. The Asylum Law (article 20 (4) of the law of 18 December 2015 on international protection and temporary protection) explicitly provides that the Minister can order medical examinations to determine the age of the UAM when they have doubts on this subject.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>In this context, the National Health Laboratory (LNS) has developed such medical expertise. This examination is not carried out on all UAMs, but only on minors who are not in possession</p>


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			<p>of an identity document and for whom a serious doubt about the indicated age exists.</p> <p>The examination is based on a two-step exam, first an x-ray of the wrist and hand. If subsequently a minority can be assumed, a medical report is drawn up without carrying out additional examinations. Thus, doubt benefits the minor. On the other hand, if a serious suspicion on the majority of the person persists, a full physical examination will be carried out. This examination is completed by an x-ray of the collarbone and a dental panoramic.</p> <p>The photographs taken during this examination are strictly confidential and are only used for the report by the expert doctor. They therefore do not appear in the LNS expert report or in the administrative file of the applicant for international protection kept in the Directorate of Immigration.</p> <p>At the beginning of 2019, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs announced that the authorities will stop with the inspection of genitals as a valid age assessment practice. A physical examination is conducted, excluding the genital areas.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>See answer to Q.2. The competent authority to carry out the age assessment procedure is the Luxembourg National Health Laboratory at the request of the Minister in charge of immigration and asylum.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p>
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			<p>N/A.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>NO.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of</p>
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			<p>changes.</p> <p>NO.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Netherlands</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>In principle, if a foreign national claims to be a minor but the IND has doubts about his or her minority, the IND must assume that the foreign national is a minor and treat him or her as such. It is up to the IND to refute the presumption of minority.</p> <p>Every unaccompanied minor foreign national who cannot prove his or her alleged minority with evidence will be examined upon arrival. This examination also takes place when the identity documents submitted have not yet been examined for authenticity.</p> <p>Shortly after arrival, the Asylum Seekers Identification and Screening Service (DISA)/Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar) will conduct an identification interview with the unaccompanied minor foreign national. The examination will take place during the first interview. At the IND, the examination takes place during the registration interview for unaccompanied minor foreign nationals aged 12 and above.</p> <p>A separate conclusion is drawn for each session. In order to guarantee the independence between the DISA/KMar and the IND, it is not possible for the registration interviewer to view</p>

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			<p>the DISA/KMar report before conducting their own examination. The report is only released after the IND examination.</p> <p>The IND provides Nidos (Youth Protection for Refugees) with daily access to the schedule of all registration and assessment interviews held on that day. This gives Nidos, as the legal representative of the minor, the opportunity to be present at the registration and assessment interview.</p> <p>In addition to appearance, behaviour and statements are also assessed. There is therefore a discussion about age-related topics. If previous statements from family members of the foreign nationals concerned are available, the foreign national may be confronted with these and given the opportunity to respond.</p> <p>The registration interview report will include who was present at the interview, a brief summary of what was discussed and what behaviour was observed. The employee will also include physical characteristics in the interview report, such as the presence or absence of: Wrinkles, receding hairline, excessive facial/body hair, grey hair, visible Adam's apple. This list is not exhaustive. The employee notes all remarkable relevant characteristics that are actually observed.</p> <p>The conclusions of the inspections carried out by DISA/KMar and IND staff are included in the foreign national's file. DISA/KMar record this in an official report, while the IND does so in the registration interview report.</p> <p>It may be that one of the three elements – appearance, behaviour and statements – is sufficient to reach a conclusion. However, it may also be a combination of these elements. In the conclusion of the assessment, the employee specifically states which physical characteristics, behaviour or statements, or combination thereof, lead to a particular conclusion.</p>
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			<p>Three conclusions are possible following the assessment session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can be unanimously concluded that the foreign national is clearly of legal age.• It can be unanimously concluded that the foreign national is clearly a minor.• It can be unanimously concluded that there is doubt about the stated age.(1^) <p>^</p> <p>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), 'WI 2025/1 Leeftijdsbepaling', https://ind.pucoverheid.nl/doc/PUC_1359801_1/, last accessed at 18-2-2026.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) may offer an age assessment in accordance with the provisions of the Aliens Circular if the foreign national cannot prove his/her alleged minority with evidence or otherwise make it plausible, and if the age assessment does not show that he/she is clearly a minor or an adult.</p> <p>The age assessment consists of two sessions(1^):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- one session with one DISA/KMar employee and one session with two IND employees; or- one session with two DISA/KMar employees and one session with one IND employee. <p>Some of the authorities who carry out the age assessment procedure are(2^):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND)2. Referring doctor3. Radiologists4. Diagnostic centre5. Dutch Forensic Institute <p>In the event of a "hit" in Eurodac/EUVIS or in the event of direct or indirect evidence of registered residence in another Member State, the IND will, where appropriate, initiate an</p>
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			<p>investigation during the notification phase on the basis of Article 34 of the Dublin Regulation. It is important to obtain as much information as possible regarding the registration in the other Member State and the reasons for it(3^). The IND may take the age registration in another Member State into account when assessing the credibility of a foreign national's age and may attach weight to it.</p> <p>In some cases, the IND offers a medical age assessment, for example when it is very difficult to make an accurate age assessment.</p> <p>^</p> <p>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), 'WI 2025/1 Leeftijdsbepaling', https://ind.pucoverheid.nl/doc/PUC_1359801_1/, last accessed at 18-2-2026.</p> <p>^</p> <p>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), 'Protocol leeftijdsonderzoek', https://www.forensischinstituut.nl/site/binaries/site-content/collections/documents/2020/01/22/protocol-leeftijdsonderzoek/FAA-LTO_Protocol-leeftijdsonderzoek-bij-lewenden.pdf, last accessed at 18-2-2026.</p> <p>^</p> <p>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), 'WI 2025/1 Leeftijdsbepaling', https://ind.pucoverheid.nl/doc/PUC_1359801_1/, last accessed at 18-2-2026.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>1. The referring doctor. The referring doctor determines whether the foreign national has signed a request for an age assessment. It must also be determined whether informed consent has been given. The referring doctor checks whether there are any medical contraindications. If the foreign national is a woman, a check is made to see whether she is</p>
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			<p>possibly pregnant. If this is the case, it is explained that the X-ray examination cannot be performed. The foreign national may be referred again at a later date. A referring doctor may also decide that an age assessment is not justified and will not issue a referral, in which case no age assessment will take place. If a referral is issued, the doctor will provide the foreign national with a referral letter to a qualified radiologist via the IND.</p> <p>3. The diagnostic centre. The diagnostic centre, together with the IND, verifies whether the foreign national who has registered is the person who requested an age assessment. Four X-rays are taken at the diagnostic centre. Of the left hand-wrist area (PA projection). However, if these do not give cause for further investigation, the other three X-rays are not taken. If they do, an additional X-ray is taken of both sterno-clavicular joints, a rotated X-ray of the left sterno-clavicular joint and a rotated X-ray of the right sterno-clavicular joint. The diagnostic centre then makes the X-rays available to the radiologists and the Netherlands Forensic Institute.</p> <p>4. Radiologists. Each image is then assessed independently by two radiologists. They check for any pathological abnormalities that could indicate that the age assessment will produce unreliable results. The radiologists assess whether the growth plates are fully mature.</p> <p>5. The Netherlands Forensic Institute. The Netherlands Forensic Institute monitors various steps in the age determination process, such as the taking of X-rays. The Netherlands Forensic Institute informs radiologists when images need to be assessed and provides them with assessment forms. The NFI checks whether the assessments are unambiguous. The NFI also provides a physical anthropological interpretation of the radiological findings and reports on the probability of these findings given the stated age of a foreign national. In addition, the NFI monitors the process and validates the methods used during the age assessment (1[^]).</p> <p>^</p> <p>Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), 'Protocol leeftijdsonderzoek', https://www.forensischinstituut.nl/site/binaries/site-content/collections/documents/2020/01/22/protocol-leeftijdsonderzoek/FAA-LTO_Protocol-leeftijdsonderzoek-bij-levenden.pdf, last accessed at 18-2-2026.</p>
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			<p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>YES.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The specific age is in quite some cases difficult to be determined, but it is a matter of minority and majority within a margin. There is currently no method of age determination that can completely accurately determine whether someone is a minor or an adult. Currently, we apply the principle of the benefit of the doubt and accept in those cases of margin some adults as minors.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>We continue to seek ways to improve the method of age assessment, taking into account the requirements set out in the Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR).</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A.</p>
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			<p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>YES. The Netherlands is currently considering the consequences of the Procedural Regulation for the way in which age determination is currently carried out.</p>
	EMN NCP Poland	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The foreigner is undergoing the medical examination, with his/her consent (or the consent of his/her legal reoresentative), in purpose of examining his real chronical age. The results should cointain the information of possible error limit. In case of foreigner's refusal to undergo the medical examination, he is treated as an adult.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Border Guard is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in both mentioned procedures.</p>

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			<p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>The age assessment procedures are realised as medical examination.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>NO</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>no answer</p>
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			<p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>NO</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Serbia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Serbia has not developed procedure for age assessment to be used within asylum system.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>Since there is no age assessment procedure, there is no authority formally responsible for conducting it. However, the Centre for Social Work, acting as the guardianship authority, is mandatorily involved in asylum and return procedures concerning unaccompanied minors, for the purpose of assessing and safeguarding the best interests of the child.</p>

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			<p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>YES</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The lack of an age assessment procedure, and consequently of a responsible authority, represents a key problem.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>In the absence of an age-assessment procedure, age is determined on the basis of a personal statement. However, the Centre for Social Work is involved, as it has qualified staff capable of assessing and safeguarding the best interests of the child.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p>
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		<p>All applicants who state that they are minors are treated as such, in accordance with the principle of the benefit of the doubt.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>YES. An analysis of the legal and institutional framework is currently underway to determine the scope of necessary legislative changes and to propose an age-assessment procedure aligned with international and EU standards.</p>
 EMN NCP Slovakia	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>In the Slovak Republic, the possibility of performing a medical examination to determine age is mentioned in two legal regulations: the Act on the Residence of Foreigners and the Asylum Act (in connection with the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, a draft of a new law on international protection is in the legislative process). For unaccompanied minors who are not asylum seekers, the Article 111 (6) of the Act on the Residence of Foreigners applies. Based on this legislation, a third-country national who declares himself to be a minor</p>

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			<p>is required to undergo a medical examination to determine his age. This does not apply when it is clear that the third-country national is a minor. A third-country national who undergoes a medical examination is considered to be of legal age under the Act on the Residence of Foreign Nationals (Article 127(1)), unless proven otherwise. If it is not possible to determine whether the person is an adult or a minor on the basis of a medical examination, he or she is considered a minor.</p> <p>In case of the asylum procedure, based on the Act on Asylum, Article 23, the applicant is obliged to undergo a medical examination if, after evaluating all available information, the Ministry of Interior has doubts about his age; In the case of a minor, the consent of the legal representative or guardian must be granted. If, on the basis of a medical examination, it is established that the person is an adult, the Ministry of Interior treats him or her as an adult and immediately informs his or her legal representative or guardian and the competent court of the result of the medical examination. If a foreigner refuses to undergo a medical examination or if the legal representative or guardian does not give consent to its performance, he or she is considered to be an adult to act under this Act. If it is not possible to determine whether the person is an adult or a minor on the basis of a medical examination, he or she is considered a minor for the purposes of proceedings under this Act, of which the Ministry of Interior shall immediately inform his/her legal representative or guardian. The Ministry of Interior shall inform the applicant, as part of the instruction, of the possibility of carrying out a medical examination to determine his or her age, the manner of its performance and the consequences of the examination for the assessment of the application for asylum, as well as of the consequences of refusing the examination.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>There is no single authority exclusively responsible for carrying out age assessment</p>
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			<p>procedures. It involves experts registered by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic, as well as medical professionals under the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>NA</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>No.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>NA</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>NA</p>
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			<p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>NA</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>Article 25 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 has been implemented in the Act on International Protection and says that "if the Ministry of the Interior has doubts as to whether an applicant for international protection is a minor, it shall ensure that age is assessed according to a special regulation". The Act on International Protection is currently in the legislative process. It is expected to take effect in June 2026. The need for age assessment in the conditions of the Slovak Republic is also based on the National Implementation Plan of the Slovak Republic on the reform of asylum and migration policy. As part of the upcoming EU-funded projects, it is planned to create and implement a new process for assessing the age of applicants for international protection in the territory of the Slovak Republic. This process will be used to determine the age of applicants in cases where the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, as the body responsible for the asylum procedure, has doubts about their age, while following the applicable legislation and taking into account the best interests of the child. In the first step, age assessment is carried out through a multidisciplinary assessment, which includes an interview to determine the age, as well as a psychosocial assessment carried out by qualified professionals with relevant knowledge in the field. If doubts about the applicant's age remain after the first step, a second step is carried out in the form of a medical examination by professional medical personnel. Various methods are used in the medical examination, ranging from less invasive procedures to more invasive methods if necessary. The mechanism in place is to establish a specific procedure in case of</p>
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			doubts about the age of applicants for international protection and to ensure effective cooperation between the Migration Office and specialists from different/selected fields in order to ensure an expert and comprehensive assessment of the age assessment in compliance with the set deadlines for the processing of expert opinions.
	EMN NCP Slovenia	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>YES</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>In return procedures the Foreigners Act stipulates in paragraph 5 of Article 82 that where the identity of a minor foreign national has not been established and there is doubt as to whether the person is a minor, the police may determine the person's age with the assistance of expert witnesses. Based on the expert opinion, the Police shall issue a declaratory decision regarding the person's age. The foreign national may appeal the declaratory decision within eight days of its service. The appeal shall be decided by the ministry responsible for internal affairs. However, in practice an age assessment for the purpose of return has never been carried out. In international protection procedures, age assessment is divided into two methods: the interview method and the medical method. A legal representative is also present throughout the entire procedure.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p>

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			<p>In return procedures, the competent authority is the police, whereas in international protection procedures it is the International Protection Procedures Sector of the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>In international protection procedures – for the medical method of age assessment, the external service provider is used - University in Ljubljana, Institute for Forensic Medicine. The Interview method is done by experienced officials at the Migration Directorate. In the area of returns, an appropriate expert would be appointed in accordance with the practice of the International Protection Procedures Sector (available at: https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/slovenia/asylum-procedure/guarantees-vulnerable-groups/identification/#_ftnref38.)</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>YES in international protection procedures. In return procedures there has been no need to exercise this power yet.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The main challenge is the length of the procedure in the case of medical methods.</p>
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			<p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>A formal request has been sent to The external service provider, the Institute of Forensic Medicine, to increase the number of experts who would perform medical age assessments. Due to the changes we are planning as a result of the implementation of the Pact on Asylum and Migration, we will reassess the need for additional experts to perform medical assessments.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>The main changes will ensure a multidisciplinary approach in accordance with the Pact. To this end, we will add a new method to age assessment in Slovenia, namely psychosocial assessment.</p>
	EMN NCP Spain	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes</p>

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			<p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>Age determination tests are carried out on foreign persons who have been located by the State Security Forces and Corps or upon communication from any local or regional authority, institution or entity that has located, welcomed or received an undocumented foreigner whose minority cannot be established with certainty, and who are undocumented.</p> <p>The files will be initiated ex officio when the Public Prosecutor's Office becomes aware of the existence of a foreign minor whose age cannot be determined with certainty, lacks the necessary documentation, and it is necessary for the defense of their interests in accordance with the Organic Statute of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Circulars and Instructions of the Attorney General.</p> <p>Requests to initiate proceedings must be accompanied by a reasoned statement relating to the circumstances of the location of the affected person, reasons that cast doubt on his minority, and, if there is genuine documentation of the minor issued by foreign authorities, the specific indications of suspicion about its reliability and veracity.</p> <p>Medical examinations ordered by the Public Prosecutor's Office will be conducted expeditiously, with the utmost respect for the dignity of the individual and with the prior consent of the person concerned. The minor will be brought before the Public Prosecutor's Office before any medical examinations are ordered, when so determined by the Prosecutor after assessing the information received from the police.</p> <p>The medical report determining age must be issued as soon as possible. It must include the identity of the reporting physician, the date and time of issuance, and clearly and with justification explain the technique or techniques used to determine age. It must provide a reasoned justification for the result of each test performed and contain a conclusion that</p>
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			<p>precisely establishes a minimum and, if possible, maximum age range for the individual examined, corresponding to the margin of error, percentage of uncertainty, or standard deviation of the result.</p> <p>The age determination proceedings will conclude after the Public Prosecutor's decree, which will contain the basis of the facts, the legal basis and the operative part where it will pronounce on their minority or majority.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>Article 35 of Organic Law 4/2000 on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration (LOEX) attributes to the Public Prosecutor's Office the responsibility of ordering the practice of medical tests to determine age.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>No information.</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes</p>
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			<p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>The main problem observed is the discrepancy between the results of age verification tests and the documentation subsequently provided by these individuals. In the vast majority of cases, this documentation is obtained after their entry into Spain and contains information of dubious credibility. This leaves many prosecutors unsure of how to determine whether the majority or minority opinion prevails.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>No information.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No information.</p>
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	EMN NCP Sweden	Yes	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>In Sweden, age assessments are conducted where there is a reasonable doubt regarding an applicant's stated age. The procedure is coordinated by the Swedish Migration Agency. If an applicant claims to be under 18 years and documentary evidence is missing or considered unreliable, the SMA initially conducts an oral age assessment as part of the asylum interview. During this interview, questions are asked in order to assess the applicant's background, life history and maturity in relation to the claimed age.</p> <p>In addition, the Agency requests an opinion from the municipal Social Welfare Board (Social Services), which is given the opportunity to submit observations regarding the applicant's age.</p> <p>Only after these steps have been taken, and if the applicant has still not made it probable that he or she is under 18 years, the Agency may request a medical age assessment. The medical assessment is carried out by the National Board of Forensic Medicine (RMV). The medical assessment includes a MRI of the knee joint and an X-ray of the lower wisdom teeth.</p> <p>The results are evaluated using established medical reference studies. The final age determination is based on an overall assessment, where medical findings are considered</p>
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			<p>together with other available information in the case. The burden of proof and the principle of the benefit of the doubt are applied in accordance with Swedish law and international obligations.</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p> <p>The Swedish Migration Agency is responsible for the age assessment procedure, but it may request assistance from other authorities or actors, for example National Board of Forensic Medicine RMV or the Social Services.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>Medical age assessments are conducted by RMV. The medical methods applied are developed by RMV within its field of forensic medical expertise. The SMA does not define or regulate the specific medical methodology but relies on RMV's professional competence and scientific standards. RMV is responsible for selecting appropriate reference studies, evaluating the medical findings, and issuing a written opinion on whether the results indicate that the individual is likely above or below 18 years old.</p> <p>In addition, the Agency request an opinion from the Social Services. They provide observations based on its contact with the applicant. The methods and professional assessments applied in this context fall within the competence and responsibility of the Social Welfare Board. The SMA relies on the information provided in the written opinion. In all cases, the SMA remains responsible for the overall assessment of the evidence and for making the final determination regarding the applicant's age.</p>
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			<p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>Age assessment is based on an individual and overall evaluation of the available evidence. One challenge lies in the assessment and weighing of different types of information, such as the applicant's own statements, documentary evidence, observations from the Social Welfare Board, and, where applicable, medical opinions. These different sources of information may vary in nature, methodology and evidentiary value, and must be carefully assessed in relation to one another. Ensuring a consistent and legally secure evaluation of evidence in complex cases can therefore be demanding in operational practices.</p> <p>Another challenge concerns the time required to complete the process. Since several actors may be involved, the procedure can take a considerable amount of time. Prolonged processing times may create uncertainty for the applicant and can be challenging from a child-rights perspective, as well as in terms of overall case management efficiency.</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>The SMA has implemented several measures aimed at ensuring legal certainty, consistency and operational support. The SMA provides continuous training to its staff, including case-based training focused on age assessment and evidentiary evaluation. These trainings aim to</p>
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			<p>strengthen competence in conducting individual age assessments and in weighing different types of evidence in a structured and legally sound manner.</p> <p>In addition, the Agency has established internal legal guidance, policy documents and procedural routines to support case officers in their daily work. These materials clarify applicable legislation, standards of proof and principles such as the best interest of the child and the benefit of the doubt.</p> <p>For more complex or sensitive cases, there are mechanisms that allow case officers to escalate matters to senior decision-makers or legal experts within the Agency for consultation and support. This ensures that particularly difficult assessments can be discussed at a higher level and handled in a consistent and legally secure way.</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>Not applicable.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>At present, Sweden has established procedures in place for conducting age assessments in asylum cases, and there is no formally adopted new procedure.</p> <p>However, in light of ongoing developments at EU level, including the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the SMA is currently reviewing its existing processes to ensure</p>
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			<p>that they remain legally sound, effective and aligned with forthcoming EU requirements. This work is currently in a preparatory and analytical phase. Certain aspects of the potential adjustments concern actors outside SMA's direct mandate, and may require coordination with external authorities. As a result, no concrete changes have yet been adopted.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Ukraine</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. Does your country have age assessment procedure in place in case there are doubts that third-country national is a minor ? YES/NO.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>2. If you answered YES to Q.1, how does your Member State carry on the age assessment procedure? Please explain.</p> <p>The age assessment procedure is carried out in relation to persons who have applied for recognition as refugees or persons in need of subsidiary protection, where there are reasonable doubts about the person's claimed minority. The examination involves a psychological age assessment through interviews and a physiological age assessment conducted by doctors based on markers that have the highest degree of correlation with biological maturation, such as: - the timing of the eruption of milk teeth and their replacement by permanent teeth (dental maturity); - anthropometric data (physical maturity); - signs of sexual maturation (sexual maturity); - if necessary, the number of ossification centers and nuclei is determined by X-ray (skeletal maturity).</p> <p>3. Which is the authority responsible to carry out the age assessment procedure in asylum and return cases?</p>

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			<p>Ministry of Health of Ukraine, healthcare departments of local executive authorities and local self-government bodies.</p> <p>4. If you have used the external service providers for the age assessment procedure, can you provide information on the methods used to determine the age of the third-country national?</p> <p>-</p> <p>5. Has your country identified any challenges/problems in confirming the age of minors? YES/NO</p> <p>-</p> <p>6. If you answered YES to question 5, please specify the main challenges/problems encountered.</p> <p>-</p> <p>7. If you answered YES to question 5, how does your Member State address these challenges? Please explain.</p> <p>-</p> <p>8. If you answered NO, to Q.1, how does your country deal with cases where the applicant</p>
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			<p>claims to be a minor, but the authorities have doubts about his/her age? Please explain.</p> <p>In the event that an applicant for refugee status or subsidiary protection claims to be a minor, and an employee of the territorial migration service has reasonable doubts about the applicant's age, the applicant shall be referred for an age assessment. The person referred for examination to determine their age and their legal representative shall be informed of the reasons for such examination and the consequences of refusing to undergo it. If a person refuses to undergo an examination to determine their age, a corresponding note shall be made on the application and in the applicant's personal file. Refusal by the person or their legal representative to undergo an examination to determine their age shall be grounds for considering the materials in that person's personal file as an adult.</p> <p>9. Does your country plans to introduce a new procedure or amend the age assessment procedure? YES/NO. If your answer is YES, please explain what will be the aim/ direction of changes.</p> <p>No.</p>
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