

Asylum procedure and waiting times

27 June 2023

For quite a long time, many asylum seekers have been coming to the Netherlands. The IND has to decide on more asylum applications than it is equipped for. Because of this, applicants have to wait long. It is not always clear to them [how long they have to wait](#) before their application is processed.

The legal decision period for asylum applications has temporarily been extended to 15 months. On average, applicants are currently waiting over a year for a decision. The number of applicants who have to wait longer than 15 months [has increased in recent months](#).

Organisational measures and political considerations have led to variation in the procedure. Because of this, the IND is not always able to process asylum applications in order of application. Within the different procedural variations, the IND aims apply the order of application.

Variations in the procedure

Safe countries

Applicants from [safe countries of origin](#) are unlikely to be granted asylum because they usually do not need protection. Their asylum applications are processed in a shorter procedure aimed at a decision rejecting them. Of course, there is attention for the individual reasons why protection may be necessary after all.

Dublin

If applicants were registered earlier in another European Member State, they will go to the Dublin procedure. The Member State where they submitted an asylum application first is responsible for their protection.

General Asylum Procedure

Within the general asylum procedure there are variations to work as efficiently as possible. Here, the focus is on applicants that are very likely to be allowed to remain, and applicants who, instead, are unlikely to be granted asylum, such as applicants with Algerian or Moldovan nationality.

In total, 18,000 applications by Syrians and Yemenis are being processed more efficiently. This is possible because many applications are eligible for being granted. As a result, careful processing is not at risk.

- Applicants with Syrian or Yemeni nationality often have a shorter interview with the IND than applicants with another nationality.
- A portion of them is eligible for the Paper and Ink Procedure (PIP), which the IND started in October 2022. They are invited at an IND office to share their account of their flight using a questionnaire. This written account replaces the further interview. Participation in this is voluntary. Based on the written information, an application can only be granted. If too much is unclear to do so, there will be an interview with a staff member after all.
- Another way to use the capacity of interview and decision staff efficiently is interviews on location. In consultation with the COA, IND staff go to a reception centre and conduct the interviews there. This prevents cancellations of interviews because applicants do not show up. This cannot be done at all reception centres because it requires a suitable room.

Nuisance-causing asylum seekers

In Ter Apel, nuisance-causing asylum seekers who are unlikely to be granted asylum (from safe countries, Algeria and Moldova) have an accelerated procedure aimed at quick rejection.

Capacity of the IND

Each year, policy makers give the IND a task and means. For 2023, the task is to take 22,000 decisions. So, this is a lot less than the number of applications that are currently being submitted. Just like in 2022, the IND took more decisions in the first months of this year than it was tasked to do, but the waiting times are increasing further for applicants.

It is impossible for the IND to keep up with the increase in the number of applications. Not even by continuing to hire new colleagues. Training and introducing new colleagues to the job takes a lot of time, because the work is complex and must be done carefully. Last year, many additional staff were hired to process applications and we are still doing this. In the coming period, the IND will grow in a responsible and controlled way.

What the IND needs is long-term agreements on realistic numbers of applications to decide on annually. And about the preconditions for this, such as enough staff and stable funding. This would not immediately reduce the long waiting times, but it would help to manage expectations more clearly. The IND would then have more clarity about how many people it can hire and that they can also stay. This way, applicants can also be given more clarity.

It is incredibly important that applicants know how long they have to wait. And that they notice the IND has not forgotten them. We must get better at this in the coming period.

Reaction to protests

Demonstrations or other forms of protest do not bring about that applicants are prioritised in the procedure. The IND is aware that longer waiting times and insecurity can lead to unrest and stress among applicants. This is awful. We are doing all we can to process applications carefully and as efficiently as possible. The order in which applications are processed is based on variations in the procedures and not on protest, demonstrations or media attention.