

YOU COULD BE A REFUGEE!

INFO LEAFLET FOR YOUNG ASYLUM SEEKERS



1. INTRODUCTION

You are in Hungary now. Hungary is in Europe and is part of the European Union which joins several European countries. In this country we believe that children should not be hurt but it is important to give them protection. Every child is considered to be a minor until the age of 18. Here, you have rights; you can go to school, practice your religion and keep in touch with your family. You can preserve the customs you had at home, but please do not forget that different people live here and therefore you also have to respect their rules.

This is a country where written communication is important. You have to put everything in writing especially if you are turning to the authorities with a request. Therefore, if you have any problems please always try to express that in writing as well. You can do that in your mother language, or in any other language that you speak.

It is good to know that not every European country is the same.



2. ASYLUM – REFUGEE STATUS

If you left your home because you were afraid that you would be hurt or you would be in trouble because there is a war going on, or you lost your parents and there is nobody to take care of you, then you can ask the Immigration Office to examine whether you can get refugee status. You can say this or make this request in writing in your mother language, but it might be better to do this in English, if you can, since more people would understand that. Refugee status is given to those people who have had big problems at home, were hurt or injured in war.



3. CASE GUARDIAN

There will be an adult helping you during your procedure, who is called the 'case guardian'. S/he will support you as a parent and will help you in making important decisions. S/he will assist you with your asylum application and will be present at your interview. Please feel free to ask for her/his help!

IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, PLEASE ASK AND INSIST ON RECEIVING AN ANSWER AS WELL!



4. INTERPRETER, CASE-WORKER

If there is no interpreter, or if you do not understand the interpreter or if you feel that the interpreter does not translate exactly what you say or if you are not satisfied with your case-worker, you can request another interpreter or another case-worker. Please share this with your case guardian or social worker. You should not be afraid to mention any problem you may have in relation to your asylum procedure.



5. INTERVIEW

First, there will be a short interview where you will be asked from where and how you came to Hungary. They will also ask whether you have already been to other European Union countries and will take your fingerprints. If you know that your parents are in another European country, please do not forget to mention this to the case-worker. If you have already asked for asylum in another European country, then the Immigration Office can decide that your asylum procedure will have to take place there (this is called the Dublin procedure).

If you do not agree with the decision of the Immigration Office and would not like to return to this European country, then within 3 days (!) of that decision you can request the court to examine which country is responsible for your asylum application. In this case, you can turn to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (a human rights organization) and ask for free legal assistance.

If you do not have to go to another country to have your asylum application examined, then you will have a longer interview where you can say what happened to you, why and how you had to leave your home country. If you are not feeling well, then you can say that you are not ready for the interview yet. Then the interview will be held at a later time when you feel that you can talk about what happened.

Before the interview, it is a good idea to carefully think over what you will say: where, when and what happened to you and who you were with. Why did you decide to leave your home? Say everything you can remember, but if you are asked about something that you cannot remember well, you should not be afraid to say that you can no longer remember this. It is possible that you would prefer to forget everything that happened to you, but because of the interview, it is important to recall these past events.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO WORRY AS YOU CAN MAKE NO MISTAKE. THIS IS YOUR STORY - THAT YOU WILL TELL - THAT YOU KNOW THE BEST.

You can prepare yourself for the interview: you will be sitting in a room with three people. One of them will be the case-worker who will be asking you questions about your past. The second one will be the interpreter who will be translating these questions. The third one will be your case guardian, who will be there to support you and to represent your interest. As a preparation you can make notes for yourself, or list what happened. If it is easier, you can also make drawings. You can take them to the interview and have a look at them if you feel that it helps.

IF THERE IS SOMETHING THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, YOU SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK AND INSIST ON GETTING AN ANSWER TOO!



It is possible that you are asked about a subject that people do not usually talk about or you feel ashamed of. If there is something that you would not like to talk about, you should tell the case-worker that you do not wish to tell this, because it is inconvenient for you and you feel bad recalling this memory.

However, inconvenient past events may provide important information for your case that could influence the decision. No matter what that happened to you, you do not need to feel ashamed as nobody will judge you by this. Neither the case-worker nor the case guardian, the lawyer, the social worker or the psychologist can share your story with anyone as they have to keep this confidential.

It is possible that you may not exactly remember an event, a place, a date or that you do not remember it at all. When this happens, feel free to say that you cannot remember this. It is absolutely fine to say 'no' for a question, but you should never say anything that is not true when you are uncertain.

If you have family pictures or any documents that can support your claim please show this to the case-worker but make sure that you get them back.

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU WOULD NEED HELP IN THIS COMPLICATED PROCEDURE, FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE HUNGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE BEFORE THE INTERVIEW.



6. AGE

You should definitely say if you are a child that is you are under 18! If you are younger than 18, then you are not an adult, but a minor. If you can get any document from home that shows your age, share this with your case-worker. You should not say that you are older than your actual age as this will not help you at all. Even as a child you can stand up for yourself, you will be safe and get the necessary protection.



Your age might be questioned and then a doctor will examine you to see if you are younger or older than 18. You have the right to know what will happen to you, so you should just ask how the examination will go.

IF YOU FEEL THAT THE RESULT OF THE EXAMINATION DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO REALITY (FOR EXAMPLE THE DOCTOR SAYS THAT YOU ARE AN ADULT, ALTHOUGH YOU ARE NOT), OR YOU THINK THAT THE EXAMINATION WAS NOT THOROUGH ENOUGH, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE HUNGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE.

7. PSYCHOLOGIST

If you have difficulties with sleeping, if you have nightmares and you cannot help thinking about all the bad things that happened to you, if you are scared or if you cannot concentrate you can ask the help of a psychologist. (A psychologist is an expert with whom you can discuss your emotions, your fears and who will help you organize your thoughts.) You can tell anything to a psychologist, s/he will not tell this to anyone. The fact that you tell your psychologist that you are suffering and feeling bad because of all the things that happened to you, can be important for your procedure. This can also explain why you are not able to take part at the interview yet.

You can also talk about your everyday problems with the psychologist. You can share your feelings and you will always be listened to and not judged by what you say. People turn to psychologists with everyday problems not only if they are ill. If you feel that you could benefit from this kind of assistance, please turn to Cordelia Foundation.

8. PRISON (IMMIGRATION JAIL)

Children cannot be imprisoned because they came to Hungary.

What can you do if you nevertheless find yourself in a prison? This can happen if they did not believe you when you said that you were below 18. You can ask to be examined by a doctor or a psychologist. If it turns out that you are younger than 18, you cannot be held in the prison.

When in prison you have the right to call your parents and friends. Every day you have the right to spend one hour outside and to take a shower. The lawyer of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee visits the prison once a week to provide legal assistance. Ask the guards when the lawyer visits and make a request to talk to him/her. Your request has to be in writing and you have to hand it over to the guards or policemen. If important papers or documents were taken away from you, you should tell this to the lawyer and s/he will help you get them back.



IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, YOU SHOULD SHARE THIS WITH THE SOCIAL WORKER, IF THERE IS ONE IN YOUR PRISON, AND S/HE WILL HELP YOU.

9. DECISION IN YOUR ASYLUM CLAIM

After the interview you will receive your decision from the Immigration Office. This can be a positive decision (your asylum application was accepted and you can stay here either with a refugee status (menekült) or with subsidiary protection (oltalmazott)) or a negative one (your application was rejected).

If your decision is negative, you can turn to the court and ask to be recognized as a refugee because you cannot return home as it would be dangerous for you. You have 15 days to let the Immigration Office know that you do not accept their decision. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee or your social worker can help you with this. Please pay attention to this 15-day deadline, as afterwards the Immigration Office will consider that you accepted the negative decision and your only possibility will be to file a new application if you cannot return home. In a new claim it will be even more difficult to convince the Immigration Office that you need protection.

YOU SHOULD NOT DESPAIR IF YOUR CLAIM WAS REJECTED (YOU RECEIVED A NEGATIVE DECISION) BECAUSE IT IS NOT OVER YET. YOU CAN TURN TO THE COURT, WHERE THE JUDGE CAN CHANGE THE DECISION OF THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE AND YOUR APPLICATION CAN BE ACCEPTED.



10. OPPORTUNITIES IN CASE OF A POSITIVE DECISION (STUDYING, TRAVELING, WORKING)

If the decision you receive from the Immigration Office or the court is positive then there are two options: either you receive refugee status or subsidiary protection. If you have refugee status then you get an ID card which is valid for 10 years, you can go to school and can take student work just like the Hungarian children. If you get subsidiary protection then your ID card will be valid for 5 years. You can try to locate your family members and bring them to Hungary, which is called

family-reunification. However, you should know that is a long and complicated process that has to be initiated by your family members at the Hungarian embassy of the country where they live. If you are not sure what to do, you should turn to your social worker or to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee as soon as possible.

If you have not turned 18 yet, you are going to live in a children's home. You will receive care until the age of 21 and if you go to school or university this will be extended until the age of 24. You will receive pocket-money every month so that you could keep in touch with your family on the phone. Your social worker can give you information on the exact amount of support you are entitled to receive.

Going to school is important because there you can learn Hungarian well and you can also learn a profession. While you are at school you can receive care and housing. Regarding schooling you should turn to your social worker.

You cannot travel until you receive a positive decision. If you receive refugee status, you will get a passport and you can travel abroad. If you decide to go somewhere, you have to inform the social worker or the home where you live. There is a possibility to become a Hungarian citizen. If you have refugee status, after 3 years you can apply for citizenship. If you get subsidiary protection before turning 18, then after 5 years of residence you can give in your application for citizenship. The staff of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee will be happy to help you with this.

This is the future that awaits you if you receive refugee status or subsidiary protection.

FINALLY

It is possible that not everything will happen exactly the same way this info leaflet told you and reality proves otherwise. You should not be angry, just stand up for your rights and discuss your situation with somebody you trust (social worker, lawyer, case-guardian, psychologist).

WHERE CAN YOU TURN FOR HELP?

HUNGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE (Magyar Helsinki Bizottság) - Free legal assistance by appointment.
1054 Budapest, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 36-38.
Tel/fax: 06 1 321 4323, 06 1 321 4141,
website: www.helsinki.hu, e-mail: helsinki@helsinki.hu

MENEDÉK ASSOCIATION (Menedék Egyesület) - Free social assistance by appointment.
1133 Budapest, Erkel utca 13/A, ground floor #5.
Tel/fax: 06 1 411 1710, 06 1 411 1711, 06 20 430 9919,
website: www.menedek.hu, e-mail: menedek@menedek.hu

CORDELIA FOUNDATION (Cordelia Alapítvány) - Free psychological assistance by appointment.
1133 Budapest, Kárpát utca 1./B, 6th floor #24.
Tel: 06 1 349 1450, fax: 06 1 239 1332,
website: www.cordelia.hu, e-mail: cordelia@chello.hu

HUNGARIAN INTERCHURCH AID (Magyar Ökumenikus Segélyszervezet)
Children's Home in Fót, Vörösmarty tér 2,
Tel: 06 30 749 2273

REFORMED CHURCH - REFUGEE MISSION (Református Missziói Központ - Menekültmisszió)
1151 Budapest, Alag u. 3, tel: 06 30 465 4796,
website: www.rmk.hu/menekultmisszio, email: menekult.misszio@zsinatiroda.hu

OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY
(Immigration office - Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal)
1117 Budapest, Budafoki út 60, tel: 06 1 463 9170,
Fax: 06 1 463 9108, website: www.bevandorlas.hu, e-mail: menekult@bah.b-m.hu

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)
1022 Budapest, Felvinci utca 2.
Tel: 06 1 33663 060, fax: 06 1 3763 080,
website: www.unhcr-centraleurope.org, e-mail: hunbu@unhcr.org



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