

Info-Sheet: Family Reunification through Dublin III

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What is Dublin III?

Dublin III is a regulation established by the European Union which is used to decide which country is responsible for an asylum claim. If you, as a non-European citizen, arrive to the EU and apply for asylum, the Dublin III regulation is used to decide which country will examine your asylum claim (this does not always have to be the country which you arrived to). Dublin III is not about the asylum process itself, but only about which country will make a decision on your asylum claim.

The countries that are part of the Dublin III regulation are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

More information about Dublin III regulations can be found in our separate info-sheet “Dublin III”.

What is family reunification through Dublin III?

If one or several members of your family went first to a Dublin country (see list above) and other family member(s) arrived later in another Dublin country, you have the possibility to ask for family reunification. This means you ask if your asylum claim can be examined in the country where your family member is. If the family reunification is approved, you can move to the country where your family member is and continue your asylum case in that country.

Attention: This is only possible for Dublin countries (so it is not possible to ask for family reunification under Dublin III from countries like Turkey, FYROM, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia or Bosnia).

Who can apply for family reunification through Dublin III?

Every refugee who has close family members in another Dublin country. The family member must have applied for asylum (have official asylum seeker status) or have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Close family members are;

- Your husband or wife
- Your children if they are under 18 years old
- If you are an unaccompanied minor (under 18 years old): your parent(s), brother, sister, aunt, uncle or grandparent.

Can I also ask for family reunification if I depend on someone's care or someone depends on my care?

Yes, you can ask for family reunification with your mother, father, child, brother or sister if all of the following conditions apply:

- The other person is legally resident (holds refugee status or subsidiary protection, is an asylum seeker, is a citizen or holds any kind of residence permit) in one of the Dublin countries;
- One of you is pregnant, or has a new-born child, or is seriously ill, or has a severe disability, or is elderly, or is an unaccompanied minor;



- One of you depends on the assistance of the other, who is able to take care of him or her.

You have to be able to prove that your family ties already existed in your country of origin. You both have to express your wish to be reunified in writing to the responsible authorities in the country where you are. If you want to claim because of a health dependency, you must have medical proof of this, preferably from a hospital. If you can prove a dependency but are not allowed by the Asylum Service to apply for family reunification, you can seek legal advice from a lawyer.

How do I apply for family reunification through Dublin III?

- Your family member in the other Dublin country has to be registered as an asylum seeker or already have been granted asylum or subsidiary protection.
- The first step for you is to get an appointment with the Asylum Service and tell them that you have a family member who you want to be reunified with. Bring to this appointment all documents that you have to prove your identity, the identity of your family member and your family relationship (see next paragraph).

What do I have to bring to the appointment with the asylum service (how can I prove my family relationship)?

- All the documents with which you can identify yourself: always bring your asylum seeker card and your police note ("kharti"), and if possible your passport and/or identity card
- Copies of your family member's current documents from the other Dublin country; their asylum seeker card, residence permit, refugee passport or any other documents (ones which show their full name, birth date and current address)
- Your family book, marriage certificate, birth certificate or other papers from your country of origin
- If you don't have documents proving a family relationship, you can also provide evidence like family photos, letters or even witness statements of lawyers or social workers that can prove your family relationship (for example because they witnessed phone calls between you and your family members)
- Any contact data of your relative and his/her lawyers or other supporters
- If you are doing family reunification to Norway or Denmark you need a signed letter of consent of your family member, saying that he agrees to the family reunification. If your family member resides in any other country than Norway or Denmark, a letter of consent is not necessarily needed, but might sometimes simplify the procedure.

How long does the procedure take?

The maximum time for an entire Dublin procedure set by the law is 11 months. (From the moment of your appointment at the asylum service until you are allowed to travel to the other Dublin country).

At the moment the time frame of the procedure depends very much to which country you are making family reunification to. There is a limitation of family reunification transfers to Germany, which leads to significant delays, so the maximum time frame of 11 months is mostly exceeded. Family reunification to any other country is still working more or less normal.

If family reunification is approved, this does not mean you have asylum granted in the other Dublin country. It means the country where you go takes over your asylum claim and will assess it there.

What can I do in order to avoid delays in my case?

It might help to avoid delays in your procedure if you make copies of the documents you brought or will bring to your full registration with the Greek Asylum Service and send these copies to the responsible authorities in the other Dublin country. You can seek help with this from an NGO in the other Dublin country.



If you are very vulnerable, it is possible to make an application for acceleration of your case. You can be perceived vulnerable if you are either pregnant, disabled, severely sick, elderly, a single mother with at least 5 children or you have been subject to torture or sexual violence. To make an application to speed up your case, seek the help of an NGO or a lawyer.

What happens after I have been approved for family reunification?

After you have received a positive decision from the other Dublin country accepting responsibility for your asylum claim, Greece has six months' time to send you there. By law Greece is obliged to pay for the flights, in reality the vast majority of applicants have to pay for the flights themselves. If voluntarily paying for your flight is making the process faster is doubtful. There is only one special travel agency in Greece where you can book these "Dublin flights". The details of this travel agency will be given to you by the Greek authorities in the notification of acceptance.

Please note that the German authorities have asked Greece to restrict family reunification transfers. These restrictions may mean major delays in the overall length of the family reunification procedure from Greece to Germany. Please note that this only concerns flights to Germany and not to other countries.

Can family members in another European country be sent to Greece because I ask to be reunified with them?

According to the law it is possible, if your family member in the other country applied for asylum later than you in Greece. But so far the Mobile Info Team hasn't witnessed any family reunifications to Greece from another Dublin country.

Is family reunification possible under other laws or through other procedures?

Yes, it is also possible to apply for a visa for family reunification at the embassy of the country where your family member is.

What you have to know if you want to apply for family reunification through this "embassy procedure":

- Your family member needs to have been asylum granted (have a residence permit, for some countries your family member needs to have refugee status granted).
- It is almost always necessary to have a valid passport (an ID-card is normally not sufficient).
- The exact procedure differs depending on the country where you want to go to, but usually (in comparison to the Dublin III procedure) more official documents are demanded to prove your family relationship (such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc.).
- You have to cover all costs on your own.
- You can apply for the procedure from every country, so also from non-Dublin countries or countries outside of Europe.
- The procedure might in some cases be quicker than the Dublin procedure.

If you want to have more information about the procedure via the embassy, please contact an NGO or the Mobile Info Team.

To have access to this information online please visit our Facebook page: Mobile Info Team for refugees in Greece: <https://www.facebook.com/mobileinfoteam>

