

BOOK II

European countries working together

ASYLUM, FINDING FAMILY & RELOCATION



WELCOME!



This story is about four young people — just like you.

They have arrived safely in Europe after a long journey.
Some of the young people arrived alone. Some of them arrived with family.
They have lots of questions — and they are helped by the people who work where they live.



This story can help you too!

You will learn:

- what **asylum, finding family & relocation** means
- what to expect
- why it is necessary for you to participate and work with the officers
- who can help you
- about your rights

You can read this story:

- alone
- with a friend
- with someone who works here



Take your time. It's OK to stop and come back to it later.

If something is hard to understand, **ask for someone to explain it to you.**
Your guardian, social worker or lawyer can help you.

AT THE END, YOU WILL FIND:

- a page with local information
- a fun quiz
- space to write your own questions and add useful contacts

For people **below 18 arriving alone**, a guardian will be appointed. In some countries, the guardian is also called a representative.

Also, in some countries, **asking for asylum** is called **asking for international protection**.



Lastly, be aware that all services offered at the reception facilities where you are staying are free. If a staff member asks you for money, talk to an officer you trust or your guardian.

MEET THE CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY

Mohamed

I am 17 years old. I am happy most of the time. I like helping my friends and family whenever I can.

I arrived alone some weeks ago and I am looking for my grandfather. I am eager to start working.



Ahmed

I am 15 years old. I arrived with my older sister Jasmine, who has been taking care of me since our mother died. I like to hang out and make new friends. I really want to go back to school as soon as I can. At the moment, I am learning the local language here.

Jasmine

I am 24 years old. I arrived together with my brother, Ahmed, who I take care of as best I can. We arrived recently and are trying to join our uncle who has been living in Europe for some time. I love sports and I am very good at playing football.



Adam

I am 9 years old. I am here on my own.
For now, I have decided not to speak.
I experienced many bad things before arriving here. I need some time before I will talk again.
But I am smart and I understand everything. I am a very good listener and want to go to school.
I like all the new friends I have made so far.



Ms Ines

I am a guardian working in this reception centre. I try to support all children and young people seeking asylum as best I can. I love cooking and it makes me happy when everyone is busy and active. Exercise keeps us all physically and mentally healthy.



Mr Fred

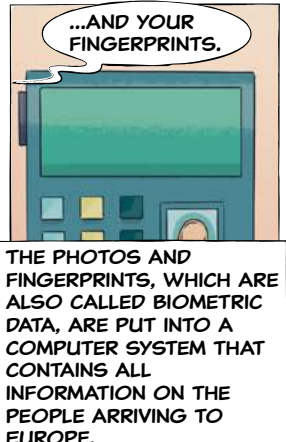
I am a legal counsellor, which is a type of lawyer. I work here together with many well-trained colleagues.
I give information and support to all asylum seekers on legal matters and on their asylum applications. I love wearing colourful t-shirts with a message.



A big thank you goes to all the young asylum seekers who read this story before it was published and helped to finish it so nicely.

They also helped choose the names of the main characters.

Thanks also goes to the authorities in Malta and the Netherlands who supported the discussions with the teenagers.



THIS HELPS ASYLUM AUTHORITIES IN ALL EU COUNTRIES TO FIND YOUR INFORMATION.





YES!



THIS INFORMATION HELPS THE AUTHORITIES TO TRACK WHO ARRIVES, WHERE AND WHEN, THEIR REASONS FOR TRAVELLING AND IF THE PERSON HAS BEEN IN EUROPE BEFORE.



ISN'T IT AMAZING THAT NO OTHER PERSON IN THE WHOLE WORLD HAS THE SAME FINGERPRINTS AS YOU?



YES! FINGERPRINTS ARE UNIQUE AND STAY THE SAME, EVEN AS WE GROW OLD...



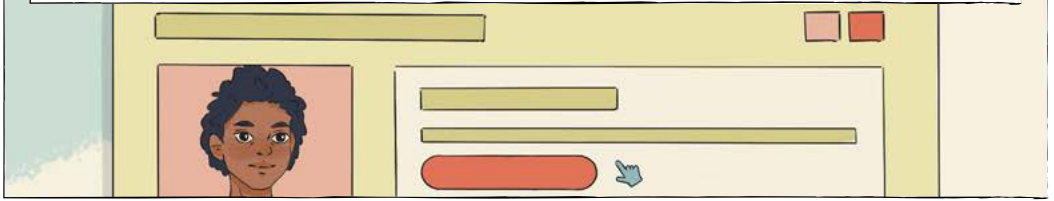
MR FRED, ONCE MY PHOTO AND FINGERPRINTS ARE IN THE COMPUTER SYSTEM, CAN THE GOVERNMENT OF MY HOME COUNTRY FIND THIS INFORMATION?



NO, IT'S KEPT PRIVATE AND IT WILL NOT BE SHARED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF YOUR HOME COUNTRY. ALWAYS WORK WITH THE OFFICERS AND ALLOW THEM TO TAKE YOUR PHOTO AND FINGERPRINTS. IF YOU REFUSE, IT CAN CAUSE DELAYS OR MAY LOOK LIKE YOU NO LONGER WANT TO ASK FOR ASYLUM.

YOUR PHOTO AND FINGERPRINTS CAN ALSO HELP TO FIND YOUR FAMILY IF YOU HAVE ANY HERE. IT CAN ALSO HELP TO SEE IF YOU ARE ALREADY REGISTERED FOR ASYLUM OR FOR SECURITY REASONS.

EVERYONE WHO ARRIVES AND WANTS TO APPLY FOR ASYLUM SHOULD DO SO IN THE FIRST COUNTRY THEY ARRIVE IN. IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY IN THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED.



SOME APPLICANTS TRY TO MOVE ON WITHOUT THE AUTHORITIES KNOWING.



ME TOO. I WANTED TO FIND MY GRANDFATHER. I WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM DURING THE JOURNEY. SINCE I AM UNDER 18, I HAVE A GUARDIAN SUPPORTING ME. WHO ADVISED ME TO STAY AND GET HELP.

THERE ARE ORGANISATIONS WHO CAN FIND MY GRANDFATHER SAFELY WITHOUT ME MOVING ON ALONE.

ALSO, IF I LEAVE, I RISK LOSING SOME SERVICES AND SUPPORT ELSEWHERE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

EXACTLY! YOUR GUARDIAN ALWAYS WANTS WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU. TOGETHER WITH THE AUTHORITIES, THEY TRY TO MAKE SURE CHILDREN ARRIVING ALONE ARE SAFE.



IF YOU MOVE ON AND ASK FOR ASYLUM IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, WHICH IS NOT THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU FIRST ARRIVED AND RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU THE AUTHORITIES THERE MIGHT SEND YOU BACK. YOU CAN APPEAL THIS DECISION.



WHAT IS AN APPEAL?



TO APPEAL MEANS TO DISAGREE. YOU HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU DISAGREE THOUGH. YOUR GUARDIAN AND LAWYER CAN ADVISE YOU.

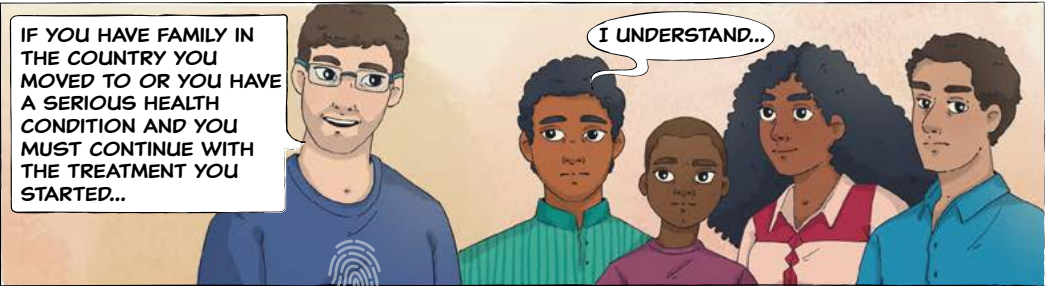


WHAT ARE THE REASONS NOT TO BE MOVED BACK?



IF YOU HAVE FAMILY IN THE COUNTRY YOU MOVED TO OR YOU HAVE A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION AND YOU MUST CONTINUE WITH THE TREATMENT YOU STARTED...

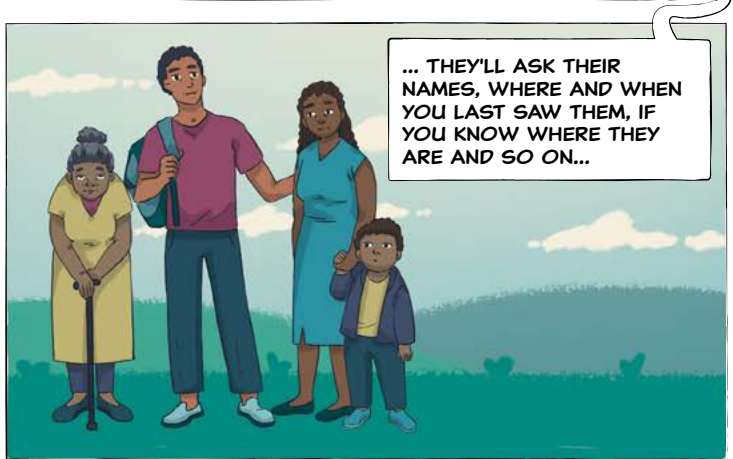
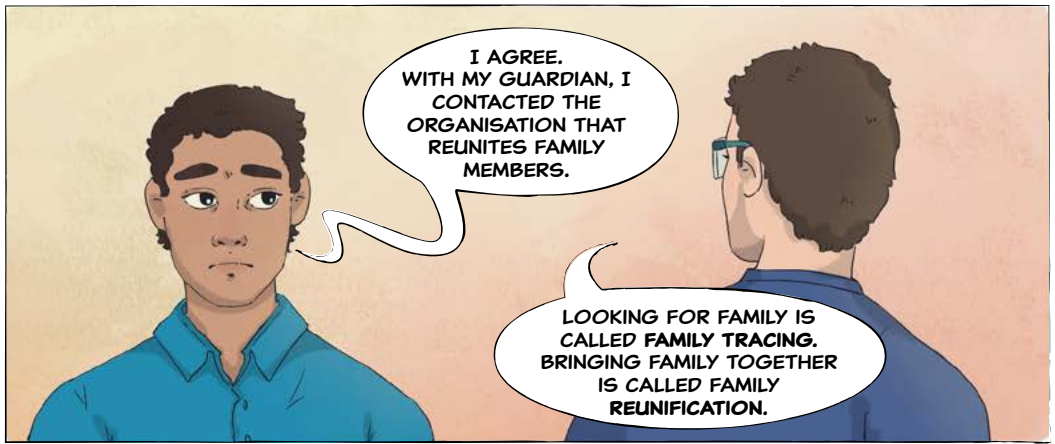
I UNDERSTAND...




GENERALLY, YOU SHOULD STAY WHERE YOU FIRST ARRIVED, ASKED FOR ASYLUM AND WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED. THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR YOU AND FOR THE AUTHORITIES.










YOUR ANSWERS ARE NOTED ON A FAMILY TRACING FORM, WHICH YOUR GUARDIAN CAN HELP YOU FILL IN. THE ORGANISATION HELPING WITH FAMILY TRACING WILL TELL YOU IF THEY FIND THEM.

IF YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR GUARDIAN ALL AGREE, YOU WILL BE REUNITED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE AUTHORITIES. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE REUNITED WITH YOUR FAMILY, YOU CAN DISAGREE.



WHY WOULD SOMEONE DISAGREE?



MAYBE A FAMILY MEMBER IS VIOLENT. THE AUTHORITIES MUST ALWAYS CONSIDER WHAT IS BEST AND SAFEST FOR YOU.



I UNDERSTAND. UHM... IS IT HARD TO FILL IN THE FAMILY TRACING FORM?



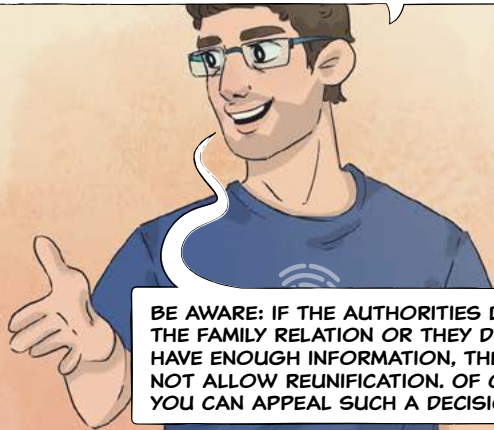
NOT IF YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS, LIKE A BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR A PHOTO OF IT TO PROVE FAMILY RELATIONS. SHARE IT WITH THE AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

SO, THE CHILD MUST PROVIDE THE DOCUMENTS?

YES. IN RARE CASES, SOME COUNTRIES WILL ASK FOR A MEDICAL TEST, LIKE A BLOOD OR SALIVA SAMPLE TO CHECK IF YOU ARE RELATED.



YOUR SALIVA CONTAINS LOTS OF INFORMATION. YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU WANT TO TAKE THIS TEST OR NOT. TALK TO YOUR GUARDIAN FOR ADVICE.



BE AWARE: IF THE AUTHORITIES DOUBT THE FAMILY RELATION OR THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION, THEY MIGHT NOT ALLOW REUNIFICATION. OF COURSE, YOU CAN APPEAL SUCH A DECISION.



MR FRED, HOW LONG DOES FAMILY REUNIFICATION NORMALLY TAKE?



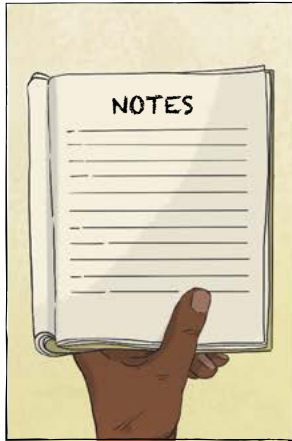
THE TIME VARIES. YOU NEED TO BE PATIENT. THE GUARDIAN WILL GIVE YOU UPDATES.

KEEP BUSY, LEARN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE, ASK YOUR GUARDIAN ABOUT ACTIVITIES YOU CAN JOIN.



SOMETIMES I WORRY PEOPLE THINK I'M STUPID ASKING ALL THESE QUESTIONS.





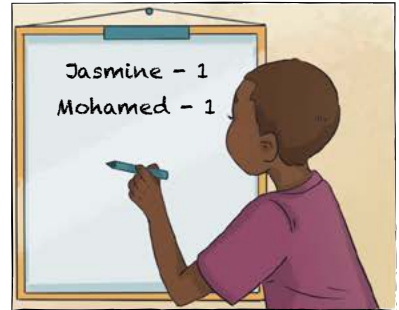
QUESTION 1

TELL ME ABOUT A SITUATION WHERE THE AUTHORITIES MIGHT MOVE OR RELOCATE APPLICANTS.



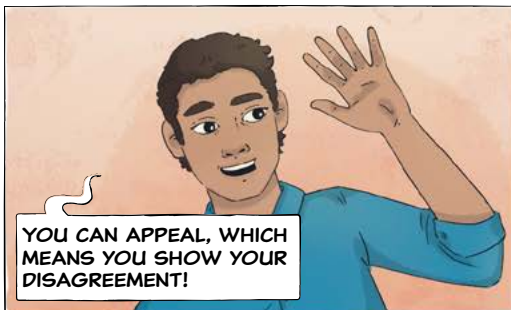
QUESTION 2

WHEN PEOPLE ARE RELOCATED, CAN THEY CHOOSE THE COUNTRY?



QUESTION 3

WHAT IF A PERSON DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE DECISION TO BE RELOCATED?



QUESTION 4
CAN YOU TAKE YOUR TIME TO APPEAL?

NO, DEADLINES ARE TIGHT. ASK A LEGAL COUNSELLOR OR YOUR GUARDIAN FOR SUPPORT. THEIR SUPPORT IS FOR FREE.

CORRECT AGAIN... AND THE WINNER IS... UHM... BOTH OF YOU!

MR FRED, SOMEONE MENTIONED THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

CAN I TRY TO EXPLAIN?

OF COURSE!

OH... WAIT, THERE IS MS INES. SHE WILL EXPLAIN MUCH BETTER... MS INES, CAN YOU JOIN US?

SURE. I WILL EXPLAIN AND AFTERSWARDS YOU CAN READ THIS...

GREAT.

IMPORTANT

In this country ...

The authority in charge of deciding which country is responsible for my asylum application is called:

To meet and talk to my guardian, I can contact: _____

I can contact a legal counsellor for free to learn more about the asylum procedure or to receive support if I want to appeal a decision made by the authorities.

For advice on the asylum procedure or how to appeal, I can contact: _____

If anyone working here, like the officers, legal counsellors, social workers or my guardian treat me badly, I can make a complaint and contact: _____

In case of an emergency, I can contact the ambulance at _____
or the police at _____

The authorities responsible to make sure I have a safe place to sleep, which is also called reception, is called: _____

The services provided where I stay are free of charge. If a staff member asks me for money, I can make a complaint by contacting: _____

IMPORTANT

In this country ...

The organisation(s) that can help me look for my family members are called: _____

The organisation responsible to help me reunite with family, if this is in my best interests, is:

Other important information: _____

QUIZ

I am checking my knowledge on the asylum procedure!

✓ Tick the correct answers.

- 1 Why will the authorities take my picture and fingerprints and put them in a computer system?
- a. To know who I am and when and where I arrived.
b. To take a closer look at my nice fingers.
-
- 2 The authorities check if I am really related to a person to make sure before reuniting me, I am safe.
- a. True
b. False
-
- 3 No matter what I want, the authorities will always send me to my family, if I have any in the European Union (EU).
- a. True
b. False (the authorities will always listen to me and the guardian to find the best solution for me in my current situation.)
-
- 4 I can move to another country without any problems whenever I want.
- a. True
b. False (it is better to first talk to my guardian to learn about the consequences and potential dangers involved.)
-
- 5 The first country where I asked for asylum and where I am registered is normally the country responsible for my asylum application.
- a. True
b. False

Answers to the quiz

Question 1: a; Question 2: a; Question 3: b; Question 4: b; Question 5: a.

This booklet is for information purposes only. It does not in itself create rights or obligations. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has provided the main body of this material, and reproduction of and alteration to this booklet is authorised by the EUAA only for EU Member States. The EUAA does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, content, completeness, legality or reliability of the information included in this booklet by EU Member States or by any other responsible third party. Neither the EUAA nor any person acting on behalf of the EUAA is responsible for the use that might be made of the information found in this booklet.

© European Union Agency for Asylum, 2025

