Asylum: new rules for safe third countries and EU safe countries of origin list

Press Releases PLENARY SESSION LIBE Yesterday

- Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Kosovo, India, Morocco and Tunisia to be considered safe for their own nationals
- EU candidate countries will also be presumed safe
- New conditions for EU member states to decide whether a country is safe for applicants who are not nationals of that given country
- EU countries will be able to conclude agreements with third countries where requests for protection would be examined

On Tuesday, Parliament adopted changes to the EU asylum procedure regulations to enable faster processing of asylum requests.

With 408 in favour, 184 against and 60 abstentions, Parliament endorsed the creation of an EU list of safe countries of origin. MEPs also approved the deal on the regulation on application of the safe third country concept, with 396 in favour, 226 against and 30 abstentions.

Safe countries of origin

The new EU-wide list of safe countries of origin will enable the fast-tracking of asylum requests by nationals of the listed countries - Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Kosovo, India, Morocco and Tunisia. Under the new rules, it will be up to the individual applicant to prove that this provision should not apply in their case because of a well-founded fear of persecution or the risk of serious harm if sent back to their country.

Candidate countries

EU accession candidate countries will also be considered safe countries of origin unless relevant circumstances, such as indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, if their citizens have EU-wide asylum recognition rate of above 20%, or economic sanctions due to actions affecting fundamental rights and freedoms indicate otherwise.

Suspension and national lists

The Commission will monitor the situation in the countries on the list and in the candidate countries and react if circumstances change. It could temporarily decide that a country is not safe or propose its permanent removal from the list. Member states will be able to designate additional safe countries of origin at national level.

Application of the safe third country concept

EU countries will be able to apply the safe third country concept with respect to an asylum applicant who is not a national of a certain country - and therefore declare their application inadmissible - where one of three conditions is met: the existence of a connection between the applicant and the third country, such as the presence of members of their family in the country, the previous presence in the country of the applicant, or if there are linguistic, cultural or similar links; the applicant has transited through the third country on the way to the EU and they could have requested effective protection there; an agreement or arrangement exists with the third country at a bilateral, multilateral or EU level for the admission of asylum seekers, with the exception of unaccompanied minors.

These agreements concluded by the EU or its member states with a third country to apply the safe third country concept must include a provision obliging the third country to examine on merit any requests for effective protection made by the persons concerned.

Early application of certain provisions

The designation of a third country as safe at both EU and national levels may be made with exceptions for specific parts of its territory or clearly identifiable categories of persons. Both this provision and the accelerated border procedures for applicants whose nationality has an asylum recognition rate of under 20% can apply before the EU asylum legislation enters into application from June 2026.

Quote(s)

Rapporteur Alessandro Ciriani (ECR, Italy) said: “The list of safe countries of origin is a political turning point in the EU’s management of migration. This legislation brings the period of ambiguity to an end and sets out a clear course: common rules, faster and more effective procedures, protection of the right to asylum for those entitled to it, and a firm approach to tackling abuse. The EU is equipping itself with clear, enforceable rules based on shared responsibility.”

Rapporteur Lena Düpont (EPP, Germany) said: “With today's vote on the concept of safe third countries, we are delivering another key building block for a functioning, credible asylum system. By enabling manifestly unfounded asylum applications to be rejected more quickly and efficiently in the future, we are speeding up asylum procedures, relieving the burden on member state systems,

and helping people avoid being stuck in legal limbo for years."

Next steps

The agreements still need to be formally adopted by the Council.

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Further information

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- Adopted text will be available here
- Press release on provisional agreement safe countries of origin (18.12.2025)
- Press release on provisional agreement safe third countries (18.12.2025)
- Procedure file (EU list of safe countries of origin)
- Procedure file (application of the safe third country concept)
- Free photos, videos and audio material

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