



## **AD HOC QUERY ON 2021.12 Situation and profile of unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan Part I**

**Requested by EMN NCP Belgium on 18 March 2021**

**Responses from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden (22 in Total)**

### **Disclaimer:**

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### **1. Background information**

Belgium is currently facing a remarkable influx of unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan. The Belgian government is interested in receiving information on the situation in other EU Member States and the profile and background of Afghan unaccompanied minors in their countries. The data requested in this ad-hoc query have not been published in previous EMN outputs, nor in reports by other organisations.

This ad-hoc query consists of two parts.

For each query, please indicate whether your national reply is for wider or closed dissemination.

### **2. Questions**

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1. How many of the Afghan UAMs who applied for asylum in your Member State in 2019-2020 previously applied for international protection elsewhere in the EU?
2. In which Member States (top 3) did these minors apply for international protection?
3. What are the top 3 regions of origin of Afghan UAMs registered in your Member State in 2019-2020?
4. Did your Member State detect any specific patterns in the travel routes and travel modes of UAMs from Afghanistan?
5. Does your Member State have experience with UAMs from Afghanistan leaving the territory before a final decision was taken on their application for asylum?  
*Available choices: Yes, No*
6. If yes, please explain the reasons for their departure.

We would very much appreciate your responses by **19 April 2021**.

### 3. Responses

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		Wider Dissemination <sup>2</sup>	
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<sup>1</sup> If possible at time of making the request, the Requesting EMN NCP should add their response(s) to the query. Otherwise, this should be done at the time of making the compilation.

<sup>2</sup> A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."

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	EMN NCP Austria	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Belgium	Yes	<p>1. Due to database limitations, data for Belgium are not available.</p> <p>2. Due to database limitations, data for Belgium are not available.</p> <p>3. 2019: Nangrahar (47,3%), Laghman (11,8%), Baghlan (9,8%) 2020: Nangrahar (48,2%), Laghman (9,5%), Baghlan (9,3%) Disclaimer: Please note that not for all UAMs who applied for asylum in Belgium, the region of origin is registered in the database, therefore these percentages should be considered as indicative and not as exact percentages.</p> <p>4. Protection officers in charge of conducting interviews with Afghan UAMs have observed in a majority of cases that from Afghanistan, UAMs travel together with other families or in small groups to Turkey. From Turkey on, UAMs, considerably more than adults, travel in direction of Bulgaria, follow the Balkan route and very often report a (short) stay in Austria.</p> <p>5. Yes</p> <p>6. Belgium has a very low number of implicit withdrawals. For 2019, the number was 14, for 2020 the number was 7. Judging by the high influx of UAMs applying for asylum in Belgium and the very limited number of implicit withdrawals, it leads to think that Afghan UAMs see Belgium as a destination country.</p>
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	Yes	1. During the period from 2019 to 2020, a total of 1323 applications were submitted by unaccompanied minors, of which 1,071 were submitted by citizens of Afghanistan. The State Agency

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			<p>for Refugees (SAR) does not have statistical information on how many of them have applied for international detention in other EU member states.</p> <p>2. See the answer of question 1.</p> <p>3. SAR does not have such data.</p> <p>4. The majority of applicants for international protection in the Republic of Bulgaria enter the country from the Republic of Turkey. In the course of the administrative proceedings, the persons state that they were transiting from Afghanistan to the Republic of Bulgaria through Pakistan, Iran, Greece and Turkey.</p> <p>5. Yes A large percentage of people of Afghan origin do not wait until the end of the procedure for granting international protection. As a result of their arbitrary departure from the territorial units of SAR, they obstruct the procedure, placing the administrative body in an objective impossibility to examine their application on the merits. As a result of their behavior, the proceedings of these foreigners are terminated. The statistics for 2019-2020 show that a significant percentage of all final decisions are for termination of proceedings for international protection of Afghan citizens, incl. and unaccompanied minors.</p> <p>6. When conducting an interview with the applicants for international protection in the course of the administrative proceedings, most of the persons indicated that they do not consider the Republic of Bulgaria as their final destination, but only as a transit zone on the way to Western Europe.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Croatia</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.</p>

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	EMN NCP Cyprus	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In 2019 and 2020, no UAM from Afghanistan arrived in Cyprus</li> <li>2. N/A</li> <li>3. N/A</li> <li>4. N/A</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6. N/A</li> </ol>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Estonia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There were no Afgan UAMs applying for asylum in Estonia in 2019-2020.</li> <li>2. N/A</li> <li>3. N/A</li> <li>4. N/A</li> <li>5. No</li> <li>6. N/A</li> </ol>

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	EMN NCP Finland	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP France	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Germany	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Due to database limitations, data are not available</li> <li>2. Due to database limitations, data are not available</li> <li>3. Due to database limitations, data are not available</li> <li>4. No special findings regarding Afghan UAMs</li> <li>5. No</li> <li>6. n/a</li> </ol>
	EMN NCP Hungary	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3</li> <li>2. Not available</li> <li>3. Kabul</li> <li>5. No</li> </ol>

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			6. N/A
	EMN NCP Ireland	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	EMN NCP Latvia	Yes	<p>1. No asylum applications from Afghan UAMs were received in 2019-2020 - accordingly there were no cases when UAMs previously applied for asylum in other EU countries.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. N/A</p> <p>4. No.</p> <p>5. No (the last time when applications from Afghan UAMs were received was in 2015 – there were 2 cases: in one case UAM received refugee status and the second one was a Dublin case - family reunification).</p> <p>6. No.</p>
	EMN NCP Lithuania	Yes	1. According to the information provided by the Migration Department, there was only one Afghan UAM who applied for asylum in Lithuania since 2017, therefore it is not possible to comprehensively answer to further questions and provide overview.

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			<p>2. N/A.</p> <p>3. N/A.</p> <p>4. N/A.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>6. N/A.</p>
	EMN NCP Luxembourg	Yes	<p>1. Of 257 Afghan nationals who applied for asylum in Luxembourg in 2019/2020, 29 were unaccompanied minors, 22 of which applied for international protection in another EU Member State</p> <p>2. Most of those minors (18) applied for international protection in Greece.</p> <p>3. The top 3 regions of origin of Afghan UAMs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghazni</li> <li>• Kaboul</li> <li>• Hérat</li> </ul> <p>4. Most of the Afghan UAMS either travelled to Iran- Turkey- Greece- Italie- Belgium/France- Luxembourg, or were born and raised in Iran and went from there to Turkey- Greece- unknown- Luxembourg.</p> <p>5. No none of the Afghan UAMs left the territory after lodging an application in 2019 or 2020 and before a final decision was taken.</p>

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			6. N/A.
	EMN NCP Netherlands	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Due to database limitations, data for the Netherlands are not available.</li> <li>2. Due to database limitations, data for the Netherlands are not available.</li> <li>3. Due to database limitations, data for the Netherlands are not available.</li> <li>4. In 2020 as compared to 2019, there was a substantive decrease of Afghan asylum seekers (not only UAMs) who took the East-Mediterranean route and an increase of Afghans asylum seekers who took the Western-Balkans route.</li> <li>5. Yes</li> <li>6. The reasons for their departure during the asylum procedure are not (yet) researched. The UAMs do not seem to be interested in a stay in the Netherlands, but travel throughout Europe or are in transit to another country.</li> </ol>
	EMN NCP Poland	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There were 12 unaccompanied minors in 2019 and 12 UAMs in 2020 who applied for international protection. Majority of them previously applied for international protection in the EU.</li> <li>2. Greece and Romania (2019) and Greece and Bulgaria (2020).</li> <li>3. Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar</li> <li>4. No</li> <li>5. Yes</li> </ol>

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			<p>6. Poland is only a transit country. Soon after lodging an application for international protection UAMs from Afghanistan head further to other EU countries.</p>
	EMN NCP Portugal	Yes	<p>1. Everyone. All those who applied for asylum in Portugal had previously applied for international protection elsewhere in the EU.</p> <p>2. Greece</p> <p>3. Gázni, Daikungi</p> <p>4. Yes, they all traveled illegally with the help of traffickers. The route they took, for the most part, was Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Greece.</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Slovakia	Yes	<p>1. During 2019 – 2020, there were 23 UAMs from Afghanistan applying for asylum in the Slovak Republic. Out of them, 8 applied for asylum along the route from Turkey through Greece and Western Balkans: 7 applied for asylum in Greece (2 of them also in Romania) and 1 applied for asylum in Bulgaria. (Source: Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police)</p> <p>It should be noted that they do not want to report where they have previously applied for asylum (they just inform us that they signed some papers but no interview was conducted with them) and</p>

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			<p>the information above regarding the countries where they applied for asylum is available through the database search. (Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic)</p> <p>2. See 1.</p> <p>3. UAMs from these region of origin have been detected in Slovakia: Nangarhar, Laghman, Baghlan, Kabul, Paktia. This information concerns UAMs who were placed in Foster Home in Slovakia. (Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic)</p> <p>4. The Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police has observed a similar modus operandi and routes as reported by Frontex or EUROPOL. Modus operandi and pathways of apprehended migrants: Migrants along the Western Balkans route are mainly transiting with the help of smugglers who transport them on the hinterland of the Western Balkan countries with different means of transport (passenger cars, vans) or transport them by car truck without the knowledge of the drivers. They tend to cross the borders of countries mainly on foot, but also in truck trailers, in their bogies or also in the freight trains. On their way to Western European destinations, they use asylum/reception camps only as stops in order to gain strength, possibly as a source of contacts for smugglers, or other information about further transit possibilities exchanged between migrants. Some migrants accommodate in countries along the route with the help of smugglers in private houses. Smugglers are organised at different levels, ranging from informal groups of occasional smugglers to sophisticated profit-oriented groups worth millions of Euros. Organised groups are known to actively offer their services in places of high incidence of migrants, such as reception centres or cities where migrants are more present during transit. It is difficult to estimate the profit as the money is mostly transferred through the so-called "hawala system" (a chain of intermediaries using personal accounts who hand over cash). Organised groups are also actively involved in recruiting migrants in their countries of origin through leaflets or social networks. Traditionally, the most frequently used routes from countries of origin are through Turkey to Greece, less to Bulgaria and further to the country of boarding trucks along the Western Balkans route in two main directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greece-Albania-Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Serbia-Romania,</li></ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greece-Macedonia-Serbia-Romania.</li> </ul> <p>The countries of destination are Western European countries. In order to enter Slovakia, the largest number of migrants on the Western Balkans route used truck trailer. Migrants are in most cases unable to influence the exact route to Western European countries, as they mainly use trucks for their illegal transport, for which they are not aware of the exact route of the next movement and the place of unloading of the goods. According to the statements of migrants, they entered the trailers of the trucks without the driver's knowledge, with or without the assistance of smugglers (hidden in the chassis), mostly on the territory of Romania or on the territory of Hungary after walking through the SRB-HUN or ROU-HUN border, or walking from Serbia to Romania, where they embarked on the trailers. Most often, migrants reported that they travelled through Serbia to Romania and subsequently to Hungary, while the second largest group of migrants entered Hungary directly from Serbia. According to the available information, an organised migrant smuggling centre has been set up in Romania in Timișoara for migrants coming mainly from the territory of Serbia. This transit migration is then detected in Slovakia mostly after the migrants themselves warn the driver about their presence, when the driver finds out himself or only on the premises of the companies when the goods are unloaded from the truck trailer. Smugglers from Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and nationals similar to those of smuggled migrants, but with residence permits in EU countries, transfer migrants in a personal car or a van. Migrants board vehicles in Hungary, Serbia, or Romania and cross the border with Hungary on foot. The last group of migrants entered Slovakia in a freight train or they walked through the border. Overall, the final part of the migrant route can be divided into two directions: SRB-HUN-SVK and SRB-ROU-HUN.</p> <p>Of course, migrants along the route use every means to facilitate further action. One of these is the abuse of the asylum procedure. In the case of unaccompanied minors, they are not interested in seeking asylum to the same extent as adult migrants, as they are placed in a foster home or other facilities for minors in which there is a free regime and from which they can leave any time on their way to the countries of destination - Western European countries. (Source: Bureau of the Border and Foreign Police)</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic under which responsibility is the care and guardianship also provided the following information regarding the routes:</p>
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			<p>Afghanistan – Iran (alternatively Pakistan – Iran) – Turkey – Greece – Macedonia – Serbia – Romania – Hungary – Slovakia                  Afghanistan – Iran – Turkey – Greece – Macedonia – Serbia – Romania – Hungary – Slovakia                  (Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic)</p> <p>5. Yes</p> <p>6. Slovak Republic is mostly a country of transit for these minors. They predominantly leave the territory during the first instance procedure (arbitrary departure/disappearance), before decision on their asylum application is issued. It is assumed they leave the territory to continue their journey towards the country of original destination. They also follow the expectations of their families.                  (Source: Migration Office of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic)</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Slovenia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1. No data available.                  2. No data available.                  3. No data available.                  4. No                  5. Yes                  6.                  We don't know the exact reasons behind their departure, however we speculate that they're continuing their journey towards countries that are their final destination.</p>

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	<p>EMN NCP Spain</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Around 50% of young Afghans applied for IP before in a MS. Nevertheless, most of them are not UAMs anymore, but where minors when they first applied in the other MS. Also, there is a significant group of Afghans who applied for asylum or lived for long periods of time in Iran and Pakistan, and left due to harsh living conditions.</li> <li>2. Mainly in Finland and Norway. Especially in the last five years. Most of them claimed that they could stay there as long as they were minors, even if their application had been rejected. Once they became adults, they were invited to leave the country, so they decided to try again in Spain.</li> <li>3. Ghazni, Baghlan, Nangharhar.</li> <li>4. Mainly through Iran and Turkey.</li> <li>5. No No, because when they arrive in Spain most of them are not minors anymore and Spain is their second option, after being rejected in another MS.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>
	<p>EMN NCP Sweden</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In 2019 262 UAMs from Afghanistan applied for asylum in Sweden out of which 34 were Dublin cases. In 2020 284 UAMs from Afghanistan applied for asylum in Sweden out of which 38 were Dublin cases.</li> <li>2. No information available</li> <li>3. No statistics available</li> <li>4. No statistics available</li> </ol>

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