

# ASYLUM in Hungary

## A guide for foreigners who need protection

- How to apply for asylum?
- What happens during the asylum procedure?
- What legal status can you get in Hungary if you need protection?
- Where can you go for help?



# 1. Basic facts

You are now in the Republic of **Hungary** (*Magyarország*) – population: 10 million, official language: Hungarian (*magyar*). Hungary is a member state of the European Union (EU), situated in Central-Eastern Europe. See a map of Hungary at the end of this document.

**Every foreigner has the right to apply for asylum here, based on Hungarian and international law. If you would face persecution, torture or serious human rights violations in your home country, Hungarian authorities cannot send you back there.**

This document includes basic information to guide you through the asylum procedure. If you need more advice or you don't understand something, ask for the free-of-charge help of a lawyer or a social worker (contact information on pages 13 and 15).

Some important words will also be mentioned in Hungarian language (*in italics*). There is a Questions and Answers section at the end of each section of this document to help you answer some of the typical questions related to the asylum procedure.

## 2. Who has the right to protection in Hungary?

If your situation is similar to one of these categories, you will have the right to get protection and to lawfully stay in Hungary:

- **Refugee (*menekült*):** A person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted in his/her country of origin because of his/her race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a “particular social group”.
  - “Persecution” usually means a serious human rights violation, such as for example torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, physical or sexual violence or very serious discrimination.
  - If you have problems or you do not have protection by your state because you are a woman, a homosexual or for having any other special characteristic that cannot be changed (or you do not want to hide it), you can fall under the “particular social group” category. Your lawyer can give you more information about this.
- **Subsidiary protection (*oltalmazott*):** A person who is at a real risk of suffering any of the following harms in his/her country of origin, but NOT because of his/her race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a “particular social group”:
  - Death penalty
  - Torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
  - Serious threat to a civilian's life or person because of indiscriminate violence in an armed conflict (for example there is a civil war in your home country)
- **Tolerated stay (*befogadott*):** A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or death penalty but who cannot benefit from refugee status or subsidiary protection (for example for having committed a serious crime).

- **Stateless (*hontalan*):** A person who does not have a nationality. This question is examined separately, NOT in the asylum procedure. If you want to apply for this status, ask for the help of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (contact information on pages 13 and 15).

? **I would not be persecuted or threatened by my state, but by another group/person (for example my family, a political group, a terrorist organisation, etc.). Does this change anything?**

No, you may still be a refugee, it is not necessary to be persecuted by the state.

? **Can I get protection in Hungary if I left my country because I was poor or did not have any chance to get a job?**

No, if there is no other more specific reason. Bad economic, financial or environmental conditions in your country of origin do not usually make you entitled to international protection.

### 3. Where and how can I ask for asylum?

- **Where: As soon as possible,** you should contact the **Office of Immigration and Nationality** (*Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal, BÁH*) – later referred to as “Immigration Office” – and ask for asylum, if you are afraid of a serious human rights violation if you return or if you are sent back to your home country. You can contact the Immigration Office for example at these addresses:

- **Office of Immigration and Nationality, Directorate of Refugee Affairs**

Address: 1117 Budapest, Budafoki út 60.

Tel: 06 1 463 9170 • Fax: 06 1 463 9108

Website: [www.bm-bah.hu](http://www.bm-bah.hu) • E-mail: [menekult@bah.b-m.hu](mailto:menekult@bah.b-m.hu)

- **Békéscsaba refugee camp**

Address: 5601 Békéscsaba, Kétegyházi út 10.

Tel: 06 66 452 507, 06 66 452 617 • Fax: 06 66 445 462

- **Debrecen refugee camp**

Address: 4033 Debrecen, Sámsoni út 149.

Tel/fax: 06 52 413 517

You can submit your asylum claim to the **Police** (*Rendőrség*), as well, if you are in jail, or in a criminal or expulsion procedure, or if for any other reason you cannot contact the Immigration Office.

- **How:** There are no formal requirements, you can ask for asylum from the Immigration Office both in written and oral form and **in any language**. This means that it is very important to communicate your asylum application in an understandable way for the officer you are talking to. Usually, if you ask for asylum only by saying it, you will be later asked to write it down. Note that in Hungary most police officers do not speak any foreign language!

**If you are afraid that the officer will not understand your asylum application, clearly say the word “MENEKÜLT” (refugee) or “MENEDÉK” (asylum) in Hungarian and also submit a written application in your language. You have to sign the written application yourself.**

? **Can I ask for asylum if I came to Hungary or stay here illegally?**

Yes. Many refugees have no other way to find protection than to enter a safe country illegally (with fake documents or without passport/visa). Regardless of your illegal entry, if the Immigration Office finds that you are indeed entitled to refugee status, subsidiary protection or tolerated stay, your stay will become legal in Hungary.

**If you arrive in Hungary illegally (with fake documents or without passport/visa) and you want to apply for asylum, it is very important that you voluntarily contact the Immigration Office or the Police as soon as possible. You should immediately tell them that you apply for asylum and that your documents are fake. If possible, show your real documents to the police or immigration officer as soon as possible, even if you entered Hungary with a fake travel document.**

? **Can I ask for asylum if I am in detention (in jail)?**

Yes. In this case you can submit your application for asylum to the prison guards or the Police.

? **Can the Police or the prison guards refuse to register my asylum claim?**

No. They are obliged to forward your application for asylum to the Immigration Office. If they refuse, immediately get in touch with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (contact information on pages 13 and 15).

? **How many times can I ask for asylum in Hungary?**

If your asylum application was refused, you can, in specific cases, still submit a new application. But you should be aware that:

- Your new application will only be accepted if you refer to important new facts or circumstances that were not considered in your previous asylum procedure (for example, the situation in your country of origin or your personal situation has changed since the previous asylum procedure).
- If you arrived or stayed in Hungary illegally, and have already had two unsuccessful asylum procedures, the third asylum application will not be an obstacle to your expulsion from Hungary.

? **Can I ask for asylum at the airport?**

Yes. If you arrive in Hungary through the Budapest International Airport, it is very important that you contact the police officers at the airport as soon as possible and ask for asylum. In this case, the Police will have to inform the Immigration Office about your asylum application, and in most cases, you will have to stay in a closed room in the airport transit zone for some days.

? **If I am with my family, should we apply for asylum together or separately?**

Adults (older than 18 years of age) can apply separately from their husband or wife, but it makes more sense to include the whole family in one asylum application. Children (under 18 years) who arrive together with their adult family members (parents, grand-parents, etc.) cannot apply separately; they should be included in the adult family members' application.

## 4. What are my rights during the asylum procedure?

During the whole asylum procedure you have the right to:

- Use your mother tongue or another language that you speak well (you will always have an interpreter if necessary)
- Have an interpreter of the same sex as you (if possible and if you want)
- Have an asylum officer of the same sex as you (if the problems you are afraid of are related to your sex or your sexual preferences and if you so request)
- Get a written copy of all decisions taken in your asylum procedure in Hungarian language
- Be informed about the content of the decision(s) considering the result of your asylum procedure in your mother tongue or another language that you understand well
- Get free legal assistance from a lawyer and/or from a non-governmental organisation (see contact information on pages 13 and 15)
- Contact the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Budapest (see contact information on page 15)

**Make sure that you and the interpreter understand each other without difficulty. It may happen that the interpreter speaks a different dialect of your language or that he/she speaks with a pronunciation that is difficult for you to understand. Interpreters must behave in a neutral way in the asylum procedure; they do not have the right to ask you their own questions or to try to get you to withdraw your asylum application.**

**If you have communication difficulties with the interpreter or you think that the interpreter is not neutral, tell these problems immediately to your officer and/or your lawyer and ask for another interpreter.**

Your lawyer (legal representative) can help you in the asylum procedure and also can:

- Be present, ask you questions and make remarks at all your hearings and interviews with asylum authorities or the Court
- Read and make photocopies of all the documents used in the asylum procedure
- Call you on the phone, write to you or visit you (even if you are in detention/jail)

**? Do I have the right to stay in Hungary during the asylum procedure, even if I arrived or stay here illegally?**

Yes. You can only be expelled (deported) from Hungary if your asylum application has been rejected with a final decision made by the Immigration Office or by the Court if you have appealed. However, if you have already submitted several asylum applications, this will only work in the first two asylum procedures. The third asylum application will no longer prevent your expulsion (deportation) from Hungary.

**? I realised that there were interpretation problems during my interviews (the interpreter translated something incorrectly, I did not understand something, etc.), but only days/weeks after the interview had taken place. What can I do?**

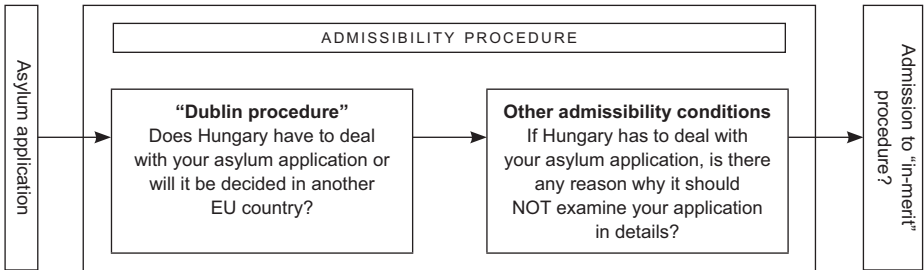
When you sign the interview records at the end of the interview, you also sign that you agree with its content. This means that it will be very difficult to prove afterwards that there was some misunderstanding or incorrect interpretation. So listen very carefully when the records are read out to you at the end of the interview. You should say it immediately if there are problems (even if only small ones).

## 5. The “admissibility procedure”

The asylum procedure has two parts. The first part is the “admissibility procedure”, which can be followed by the “in-merit procedure”.

If you ask for asylum in Hungary, you will first have to go through a so-called “**admissibility procedure**” (*előzetes vizsgálati eljárás*). In this first part of the asylum procedure, the Immigration Office will not yet examine whether you would be victim of persecution or other serious human rights violation if you had to return to your country of origin.

This chart can help explain how the admissibility procedure works:



The admissibility procedure usually takes maximum **15 days** after you applied for asylum. In some cases, it can take longer if the deadline is extended (see later on pages 7 and 9)

If you apply for asylum at the airport (see on page 4) the Immigration Office has to finish the admissibility procedure in **8 days**.

### A. “DUBLIN PROCEDURE”

In the European Union only one EU member state should deal with the case of an asylum-seeker. This country is usually the first country that the asylum-seeker entered. Therefore, in the admissibility procedure, the Immigration Office will first check which EU country is responsible for examining your asylum application. This is the so-called “**Dublin procedure**”.

This procedure only takes place if the Immigration Office thinks that you have already asked for asylum or that you travelled through any of the following countries:

Austria	Estonia	Iceland	Malta	Slovenia
Belgium	Finland	Ireland	Norway	Spain
Bulgaria	France	Italy	Poland	Sweden
Cyprus	Germany	Latvia	Portugal	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Greece	Lithuania	Romania	United Kingdom
Denmark	Holland	Luxemburg	Slovakia	

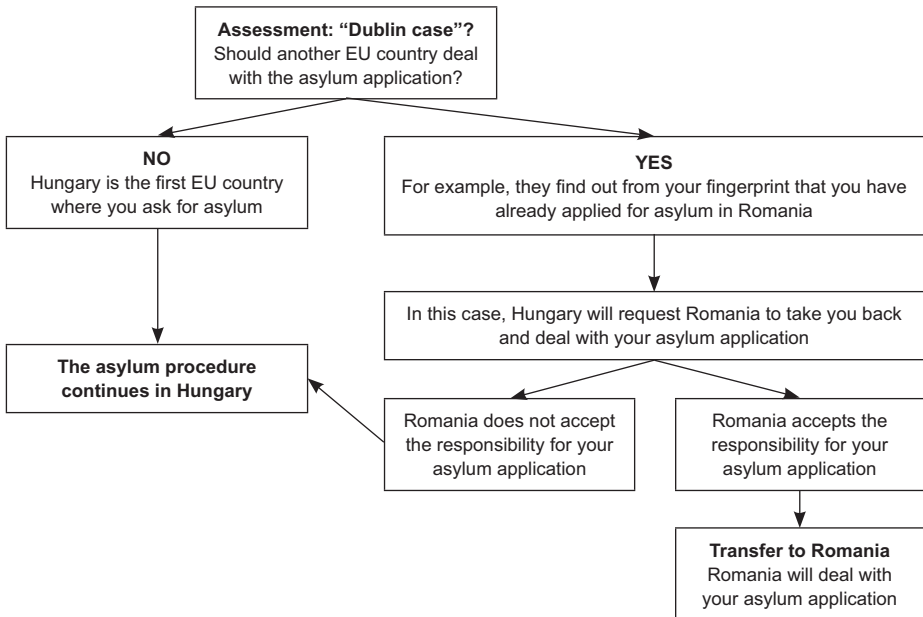
Note that Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are not EU member states, but they are still part of the “Dublin system”.

In practice this usually happens when:

- The authority finds out on the basis of your fingerprints (which are stored in a common European database called “**Eurodac**”), that you have already asked for asylum in any of these countries,

- You have a visa in your passport for any of these countries,
- You tell the authority that you crossed any of these countries on your way to Hungary,
- There are other signs: for example, they find some Swedish money or a Paris metro ticket in your pocket.

This chart explains how the Dublin procedure works in practice. Romania is only an example.



The “Dublin procedure” can take a long time, several weeks or even months. This is because it takes time to get an official answer from another EU state. Therefore, if the Immigration Office starts a Dublin procedure in your case, **your admissibility procedure will be suspended until the Dublin procedure is finished**. This means that in some cases, the time to finish the admissibility procedure can be much longer than the usual 15-day deadline.

If the Immigration Office decides that another EU country should deal with your asylum application, and you do not want to be sent back to that other country, **you can appeal this decision**. You should submit your appeal to the Immigration Office **within 3 days**. Your appeal will be decided by the **Metropolitan Court (Fővárosi Bíróság)** in Budapest. You should know that there is very little chance that your appeal will be successful, as

- the Court will only decide based on your case file and will not interview you, and
- your appeal will not stop the transfer itself. This means that the Immigration Office can transfer you to the other EU country responsible for dealing with your application even if a judge has not yet decided your appeal. Still, if you ask the Court to suspend your transfer, the judge can decide to stop the transfer until he/she takes a decision. Keep in mind that this may happen very rarely.

The official deadline for the Court to decide is **8 days** in this case. In practice it can take more time.

You can ask advice from the lawyer of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (see contact information on pages 13 and 15), if you do not understand what is happening in the Dublin procedure, or if you are afraid of being sent back to another EU member state.

## B. OTHER ADMISSIBILITY CONDITIONS

Once the Immigration Office decides that Hungary is the country to deal with your asylum application, you still have to fulfil some simple conditions before your application can be examined in details. Your application will not be admitted to the “in-merit procedure” (examination in details), and will be refused, if:

- you are a citizen of a member state of the European Union,
- you have already been recognised as a refugee by another European Union member state,
- you have already been recognised as a refugee by another country, this status is still valid and you can go back to this country, or
- you have applied for asylum again after having been rejected in a previous asylum procedure in Hungary, and your new application is based on the same facts and statements as the previous one (no new element).

**Keep in mind that if you submit a new asylum application (after a rejection), you will have to show that there are important new facts and circumstances, as compared to the previous procedure.**

If the Immigration Office decides that your asylum application is “inadmissible”, which means that any of the above statements are true in your case, **you have the right to appeal** this negative decision. You should submit your appeal to the Immigration Office **within 3 days**. In your appeal, you have to explain why you do not agree with the decision. For example, if this is not your first asylum application, you will have to explain what the new facts and circumstances are (something important has happened since your previous asylum procedure, there is new evidence available, etc.).

Your appeal will be examined by the **Metropolitan Court** (*Fővárosi Bíróság*) in Budapest:

- The Court will only decide based on your case file and will not interview you. You can request a personal interview with the Court (if you want to explain your arguments), but the judge does not have to accept your request.
- The deadline for the Court to take a decision is **8 days** according to the law. This **takes longer in practice** (1–2 months). If you ask for a personal interview with the Court, this can also make the procedure longer.

You can ask the lawyer of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee to help you to write your appeal (see contact information on pages 13 and 15).

**The admissibility procedure will be stopped and closed if you miss the interview with your officer or if you disappear!**

### ? **Where will I have to stay during the admissibility procedure?**

This mainly depends on where and when you applied for asylum:

- In most cases, you will have to stay during the admissibility procedure in the refugee camp in Békéscsaba.



- If at the time of applying for asylum you were in “alien policing detention” (jail for foreigners in Győr, Kiskunhalas, Nyírbátor and at the Budapest Airport), you will stay in jail during the admissibility procedure, too. If you are at the airport and the decision is not taken within 8 days, you will be transferred to the refugee camp in Békéscsaba after 8 days.
- If you are younger than 18 years and you have no adult family member to take care of you in Hungary, you will be sent to the shelter for unaccompanied children in Bicske. In this shelter you will have special attention and care.

**? Can I leave the Békéscsaba refugee camp during my admissibility procedure?**

This is a closed camp, so normally you have to stay there during the admissibility procedure. However, children are allowed to go to school and if you need to go to the hospital, you will be taken there. Contact the camp administration or the social workers of the Menedék Association with your questions (see contact information on page 15)

**? How long will the admissibility procedure take in reality? Why am I still staying in Békéscsaba when my friends have already left long ago?**

It depends on various different factors. In the best case, the admissibility procedure can be finished in less than 2 weeks. In the worst case, it can take even 3-6 months. The usual reasons for a long procedure are:

- A Dublin procedure, during which the admissibility procedure is suspended. There was no Dublin procedure in your friends' case; this is why they left Békéscsaba much earlier than you.
- Your application was rejected in the admissibility procedure and you submitted an appeal to the Court, which takes weeks to decide. The admissibility decision of your friends was positive; or it was negative, but they did not appeal.

**? My Dublin procedure takes very long, while in other cases it finished quickly. Why is that?**

Some EU countries answer quickly to Hungary's request, while others take much longer time. Unfortunately neither you, nor the Immigration Office can influence this.

**? I have already asked for asylum in another EU country and my asylum application was rejected there. Why does the Hungarian authority still want to send me back to the other EU country?**

For the Dublin procedure it does not matter that you were rejected. If the Immigration Office sees that you have already applied for asylum in another EU country, the Dublin procedure will start even if your application was rejected in that country. Keep in mind that the official answer from the other EU country can take a long time even in such cases.

**? What rights do I have while I am kept at the airport transit zone?**

You will receive meals 3 times a day (in accordance with your religion) and, if you have money, you can buy extra food at the airport shops. You can use your own mobile phone. You can also make phone calls from a public telephone at the airport, please ask the police officers to accompany you there. For security reasons, it is currently not possible to go out for a walk or for any outdoor activities.

## 6. The “in-merit procedure”

Once the admissibility procedure is closed with a positive result, you will enter the “in-merit procedure” (*érdemi eljárás*). In this part of the procedure, the Immigration Office examines if you are entitled to refugee status, subsidiary protection or tolerated stay (see on page 2).

In the in-merit procedure, the Immigration Office will **interview** you at least once (but maybe two or three times). At these interviews your officer will ask you

- your personal data,
- how you came to Hungary, and
- the reasons why you had to leave your country of origin.

The first interview usually takes place a few weeks after the start of the in-merit procedure. You should ask help from the lawyer of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee already before your first interview (see contact information on pages 13 and 15).

**Your “credibility” plays a very important role in this procedure, so it is very important that you give a detailed explanation during the interview(s) of why you had to leave your home country. Try to concentrate on the problems you had at home and those things that you are afraid of in your country. Try to make sure that you do not tell conflicting statements.**

If you cannot remember a name, place or date, don't panic and don't invent false details. Just try to give as much information as possible and explain to your officer why it is difficult to remember such details. For example, if you do not remember the exact date of something important, you can also try to connect it to another event (“it was at the end of the rainy season” or “right after the general elections”).

You have to give your passport and identity document to the Immigration Office as soon as possible. If you don't, this can have a negative effect on the consideration of your case. At the same time, it is not obligatory to submit any **documentary evidence** (certificates, judgments, articles, photos from home, etc.) to support your asylum application. But if you have these with you, they can help to show that what you are saying is true. If you have not yet submitted these documents, give them to your officer during the first interview.

A **written record** will be prepared during the interview, in Hungarian language. This record must have all the important elements of what you said during the interview. At the end of the interview, this written record will be read and translated to you.

**Make sure that everything in the written record is correct and it fully reflects what you said during the interview. If something is wrong or missing, tell it immediately to your officer, who can correct the records.**

In most cases, it is very hard to talk about the reasons for asking for asylum. But if you do not tell your real problems during the interview, the authority will not realise that you need protection. You can always ask for a short break if you feel tired during the interview. Also, you can ask help from a doctor/psychologist of the Cordelia Foundation (see contact information on page 15) about how to talk about painful things that you would prefer not to remember and talk about to your officer.

**Keep in mind that your officer, the interpreters, your lawyer, your social worker and the judge all have the strict obligation to keep everything what you say a secret. Nothing will be told to the authorities of your home country (not even the fact that you applied for asylum), if this could cause any danger for you or your family members.**

After your interview with your asylum officer, it is possible that the **National Security Service** (*Nemzetbiztonsági Hivatal*) will also interview you.

The **deadline** for the in-merit procedure is 60 days and this can be prolonged with an extra 30 days according to the law. The Immigration Office usually takes a decision **in 45 to 90 days**.

At the end of the in-merit procedure, the Immigration Office can take 5 different decisions:

- Recognition of refugee status (*menekült*)
- Recognition of subsidiary protection (*oltalmazott*)
- Recognition of tolerated stay (*befogadott*)
- Rejection
- If you disappear during the procedure (if you do not go to the interviews, the Immigration Office cannot contact you, etc.) the procedure will be stopped and closed.

You have to be present in person when the decision is given to you. An interpreter will help you to understand the decision and, if you are refused, he/she will explain the reasons for the negative decision.

You can **appeal** this decision if you do not agree with it. You have to submit your appeal to the Immigration Office **within 15 days** after you received the decision. In your appeal, you should explain why you think the decision is wrong. You should ask the advice of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee's lawyer if you want to appeal (see contact information on pages 13 and 15).

The **Metropolitan Court** (*Fővárosi Bíróság*) in Budapest will decide your appeal. The deadline for this is 60 days according to the law, but in practice the appeal procedure usually takes **several months**. The Court is obliged to **interview** you in person, which means that you will have the possibility to explain your story to the judge. This Court interview usually takes place a few months after submitting your appeal. Again, it is very useful to **consult a lawyer to help you** in this procedure.

At the end of the appeal procedure the Metropolitan Court can take 3 different decisions:

- Accept your appeal and recognise you as a refugee or grant you subsidiary protection or tolerated stay.
- Partly accept your appeal and cancel the decision of the Immigration Office, and order the Office to carry out a new procedure and re-consider your case. In this case, a new asylum procedure will start.
- Reject your appeal and accept the decision as it is.

The Metropolitan Court's decision will be final and you cannot appeal it.

## ? **Where will I have to stay during the in-merit procedure (including the appeal procedure)?**

There are different possibilities:

- In most cases, you will have to stay in the Debrecen refugee camp, where you will have shelter and get 3 meals per day.

- You can also arrange your own private accommodation (for example if you have a friend or family member who can host you or if you can afford renting an apartment). However, you have to first request the Immigration Office to allow you to stay in private accommodation. To do this, you will have to submit the copy of the certificate that proves who the owner is of the apartment (*tulajdoni lap*), plus the rent agreement (*lakásbérleti szerződés*) or a declaration from the owner that proves that he/she gives you shelter (*befogadó nyilatkozat*).
- If you are younger than 18 years and you are in Hungary without any adult family member to take care of you, you will stay at the shelter for unaccompanied children in the city of Bicske. In this shelter you will have special attention and care.
- For some asylum seekers who were in jail when they applied for asylum, because they crossed the border or stayed in the country unlawfully, it could happen they will have to stay in jail during the procedure.

**Keep in mind that if you chose to stay in private accommodation you must indeed be available at the address you give to the Immigration Office. Make sure, for example, that your name is clearly written on both the door and the mailbox of the house.**

**If you do not receive the letters that the Immigration Office sends you, they will think that you have disappeared and they will close your asylum procedure.**

**? Can I leave the Debrecen refugee camp during the in-merit procedure?**

Yes, this is an open camp, but if you want to leave for more than 24 hours you have to ask and get permission from the camp administration. If you leave the camp without permission for more than a day, the Immigration Office will think that you have disappeared and will close your asylum procedure.

**? How will I know about when and where the interviews will be?**

An official letter will be given to you with all the details concerning the interview, in Hungarian language. If you stay in the Debrecen camp, your officer will contact you and ask you to go to see him/her in his/her office, where he/she will inform you about the date and the place of the interview.

If you stay at a private house, the post officer will directly bring you a letter from the Immigration Office with the date and place of the interview. If you are not at home, he/she will only leave a notice for you and you will have to pick up the official letter at a nearby post office.

If you have a lawyer, the Immigration Office will also inform the lawyer about the date of your interview.

**? The Immigration Office closed my asylum procedure because they think that I have disappeared. What can I do?**

You can request the authority to continue the procedure but only within 3 days from the decision to close it, so do it as soon as possible.

**? The National Security Service wants to interview me. Does this mean that they think I am a terrorist?**

No. They have the right to interview asylum applicants and often do so. This does not mean that they think you are a threat.

## ? Do I have the right to work during the in-merit procedure?

You can work only if you stay in a refugee camp and only inside the camp. Contact the camp administration for more information.

However, if the asylum procedure takes longer than a year, after one year you will have the right to work even outside the camp, but only with a valid work permit (*munkavállalási engedély*). In this case, contact a social worker of the Menedék Association or the Immigration Office for help (see contact information on page 15).

## 7. Statuses and rights

At the end of the in-merit procedure, if your application is successful, the Immigration Office will grant you protection in Hungary. There are 3 kinds of protection status. When the officer tells you about the decision, he/she will also explain the kind of protection status you are granted.

The 3 statuses you can get in the asylum procedure give you a lot of different rights. On the next page, there is a short summary of the most important elements of these statuses. If you have more questions, contact a lawyer of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee or a social worker of the Menedék Association (see contact information as follows).

## 8. Where to go for help?

**All these services are free, you do not have to pay for any of them!**  
**All these organisations work with professional interpreters, you will surely be able to communicate in your mother tongue or another language that you speak well.**

Free-of-charge legal assistance (if you need help about the asylum application and procedure) – **Hungarian Helsinki Committee** (*Magyar Helsinki Bizottság*)

- **Budapest (central office)**  
Address: 1054 Budapest, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 36–38.  
Tel/fax: 06 1 321 4323, 06 1 321 4141  
Website: [www.helsinki.hu](http://www.helsinki.hu) • E-mail: [helsinki@helsinki.hu](mailto:helsinki@helsinki.hu)  
Languages: Hungarian, English, French, Spanish, Italian. Call first for an appointment!
- **Békéscsaba refugee camp** / Dr. Tímea Kovács, lawyer  
Tel: 06 20 496 7372  
Languages: Hungarian, English. Visits the Békéscsaba camp once a week
- **Debrecen refugee camp** / Dr. Orsolya Szántai-Vecsera, lawyer  
Location: C/5 "Integration House", at the entrance of the camp  
Tel/fax: 06 52 448 446  
Languages: Hungarian, English, French, Serbian.  
Consultation: Monday–Thursday afternoon, Friday morning
- **Bicske shelter for unaccompanied children** / Dr. Júlia Iván, lawyer  
Address: Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 1054 Budapest, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 36–38.  
Tel/fax: 06 1 321 4323  
Languages: Hungarian, English, French. Visits the shelter every second week.

	<b>Refugee (menekült)</b>	<b>Subsidiary protection (oltalmazott)</b>	<b>Tolerated stay (befogadott)</b>
How many years is this status valid?	For indefinite time, but in some special cases the authority can withdraw this status.	For 5 years usually, but the authority can review or withdraw your status earlier too. This status can be renewed after the review.	For 1 year, but the authority can review or withdraw your status earlier, too. This status can be renewed after the review.
Do I get a Hungarian identity card (személyi igazolvány)?	Yes	Yes	No, but you will get a humanitarian residence permit ( <i>humanitárius tartózkodási engedély</i> )
Do I get a passport if I don't have any?	Yes (refugee travel document)	Yes	No
Do I have the right to work?	Yes, without any restrictions, just like Hungarian citizens		Yes, but first you have to get a work permit ( <i>munkavállalási engedély</i> )
Can I freely travel to other European Union member states?	No, in most cases you will have to get a visa first. For more information, contact the embassy of the country you want to travel to.		No, only if you have a valid passport, and even in this case you will have to get a visa first. For more information, contact the embassy of the country you want to travel to.
Can I bring my family members to Hungary?	Yes. Family members: — wife/husband, — children if they are less than 18 years old, — parents (if you are a child without family in Hungary), otherwise only economically dependent parents (who cannot care for themselves) — other close family members if they cannot care for themselves because of health reasons They must have a valid travel document. If you start the family reunification within 6 months after you get the status, you will NOT have to prove that you can support your family, give them shelter and that they have health insurance in Hungary. If the procedure starts later, you will have to fulfil these conditions. In family reunification, ask for the help of a social worker or a lawyer, and start the procedure as soon as possible.	Yes. Family members: — wife/husband, — children if they are less than 18 years old, — economically dependent parents (who cannot care for themselves) — other close family members if they cannot care for themselves because of health reasons They must have a valid travel document. You have to prove that you are able to maintain your family, give them shelter and that they have health insurance in Hungary. In family reunification, ask for the help of a social worker or a lawyer.	Yes. Family members: — wife/husband, — children if they are less than 18 years old, — economically dependent parents (who cannot care for themselves) — other close family members if they cannot care for themselves because of health reasons They must have a valid travel document. You have to prove that you are able to maintain your family, give them shelter and that they have health insurance in Hungary. In family reunification, ask for the help of a social worker or a lawyer.
Can I get Hungarian citizenship?	Yes, after 3 years of continuous stay in Hungary you can apply for Hungarian citizenship, but you will have to fulfil many different conditions in order to get it. When the time comes, ask a lawyer.	Yes, after 3 years of continuous stay in Hungary you can apply for Hungarian citizenship, but you will have to fulfil many different conditions in order to get it. When the time comes, ask a lawyer.	Yes, after 8 years of continuous stay in Hungary you can apply for Hungarian citizenship, but you will have to fulfil many different conditions in order to get it. When the time comes, ask a lawyer.

- **Budapest International Airport, jail for illegal migrants** / Dr. Gábor Győző, lawyer  
Address: Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 1054 Budapest, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 36-38.  
Tel/fax: 06 1 321 4323  
Languages: Hungarian, English. Visits the airport every second week.
- **Nyírbátor jail for illegal migrants, community shelter** / Dr. József Dobos, lawyer  
Address: 4400 Nyíregyháza, Ószőlő u. 108., III./10.  
Tel: 06 70 774 8116  
Languages: Hungarian, English, Russian. Visits the jail every week.
- **Győr jail for illegal migrants** / Dr. András Hajas, lawyer  
Address: Böröcz Ügyvédi Iroda, 9021 Győr, Szent István u. 10.  
Tel: 06 96 314 115  
Languages: Hungarian, English, German. Visits the jail every week.

Free-of-charge social assistance (if you need help for example in finding a job, a place to sleep, you have questions or problems concerning your life in a refugee camp, etc.) – **Menedék Association** (*Menedék Egyesület*)

- **Budapest (central office)**  
Address: 1090 Budapest, Erkel utca 13/A, földszint 5.  
Tel: 06 1 411 1710, 06 1 411 1711, 06 20 430 9919 • Fax: 06 1 411 1711  
Website: [www.menedek.hu](http://www.menedek.hu) • E-mail: [menedek@menedek.hu](mailto:menedek@menedek.hu)  
Languages: Hungarian, English, French, Serbian. Call first for an appointment!
- **Békéscsaba refugee camp** / Zsuzsa Perák, social worker  
Location: Inside the refugee camp  
Tel: 06 66 452 617  
Languages: Hungarian, English, Serbian  
Consultation: Monday–Thursday morning and afternoon, Friday morning
- **Debrecen refugee camp** / Éva Adóba, Anna Kerek, social workers  
Location: B/5 “Integration House”, at the entrance of the camp  
Tel: 06 52 428 537, 06 70 331 9568 • Fax: 06 52 428 537  
Languages: Hungarian, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Italian  
Consultation: Monday–Thursday afternoon, Friday morning

Free-of-charge psychological assistance (if you do not feel well, if you cannot sleep at night, if you feel worried or anxious all the time, if it is too difficult to talk about what happened to you in your country, if you have nightmares, etc.) – **Cordelia Foundation** (*Cordelia Alapítvány*)

- **Budapest (central office)**  
Address: 1133 Budapest, Kárpát u. I./B, 6. em. 24.  
Tel: 06 1 349 1450 • Fax: 06 1 239 1332  
Website: [www.cordelia.hu](http://www.cordelia.hu) • E-mail: [cordelia@chello.hu](mailto:cordelia@chello.hu)  
No consultation in this office, but you can call to get an appointment  
The psychiatrists of the Cordelia Foundation visit the Békéscsaba, Debrecen and Bicske refugee camps once a week (usually on Thursdays).  
Languages: Hungarian, English, Russian

#### **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

- **UNHCR Regional Representation for Central Europe**  
Address: 1022 Budapest, Felvinci utca 27.  
Tel: 06 1 3363 060 • Fax: 06 1 3363 080  
Website: [www.unhcr-budapest.org](http://www.unhcr-budapest.org) • E-mail: [hunbu@unhcr.org](mailto:hunbu@unhcr.org)

Assistance for voluntary return (if you would like to go back to your country of origin) – **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**

➤ **IOM Regional Mission for Central and South Eastern Europe**

Address: 1065 Budapest, Révay utca 12.

Tel: 06 1 472 2500 • Fax: 06 1 374 0532

Website: [www.iom.hu](http://www.iom.hu) • E-mail: [mrfbudapest@iom.int](mailto:mrfbudapest@iom.int)



© Hungarian Helsinki Committee • 2008

*Funded by*

European Refugee Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

*Written by*

Gábor Gyulai