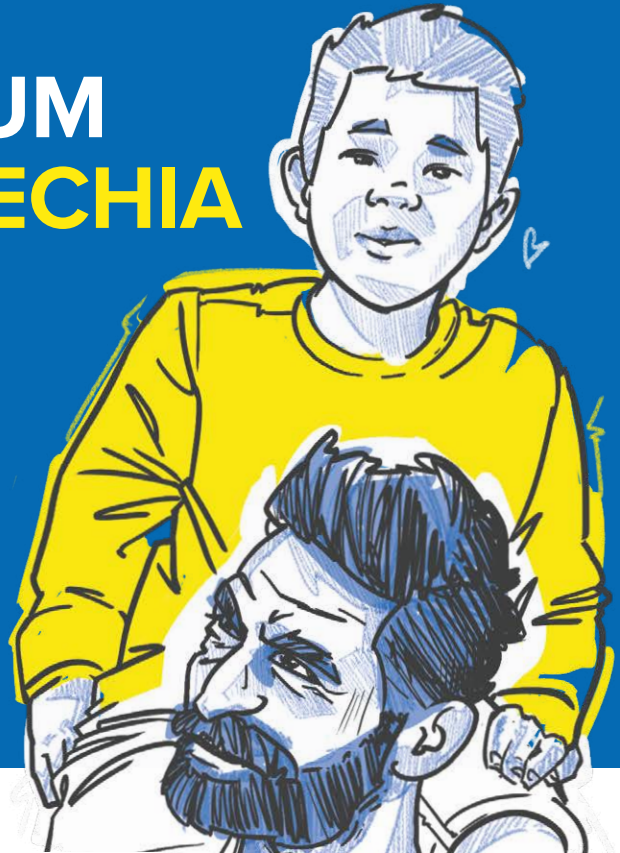




UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

APPLYING FOR ASYLUM IN CZECHIA



**Information leaflet
for asylum seekers**



Everyone has the right to **apply for asylum** when they have left their own country because of **fear of persecution, serious human rights violations, violence, or armed conflict**, and cannot return there.

In this case, you can apply for asylum to receive protection in another country (also called '**International Protection**'). As an asylum seeker, you cannot be expelled or returned to a country where your life or freedom would be in danger.

1. Where and how can I apply for Asylum in Czechia?

Depending on where you are in Czechia, you can make an asylum application at an international airport, or from within Czechia if you have already entered the country.

A. Applying for asylum at international airport in Czechia

If you have arrived at **international airport** (esp. **Václav Havel Airport Prague**) and want to apply for asylum, you should inform the Police officer at the passport control as soon as possible.

It is important that you make clear to the Police officials your intention to apply for **asylum** (or **refugee** status). It is essential to tell the truth about the reasons for seeking asylum and your personal circumstances.

The airport Police officer should provide you with the necessary information on the asylum procedure. You can ask for an interpreter, if you need one. After

you ask to apply for asylum at the airport, you will be transferred to the reception centre located in the airport transit area to complete your application.



B. Applying for asylum in Czechia (if you have already entered the country)

If you are **already in Czechia**, you can make an asylum application at the Foreign Police office of the **Reception Centre in Zastávka u Brna**, which is located at the address Haviřská 514, Zastávka, at the back entrance of the Centre.

You can also apply for asylum at one of the Foreign Police offices. In this case, you will be referred to the Reception Centre in Zastávka u Brna to complete the first steps of the asylum procedure.

In case you are apprehended by the Police without a valid visa or passport and placed in a detention facility for foreigners, you can apply for asylum **within 7 days after you were apprehended**.

Applying for asylum does not mean you will be automatically released from **detention**. The authorities will first determine if you have valid reasons for seeking asylum. Detention decision is separate from the asylum procedure. You have the right to contest the detention decision.

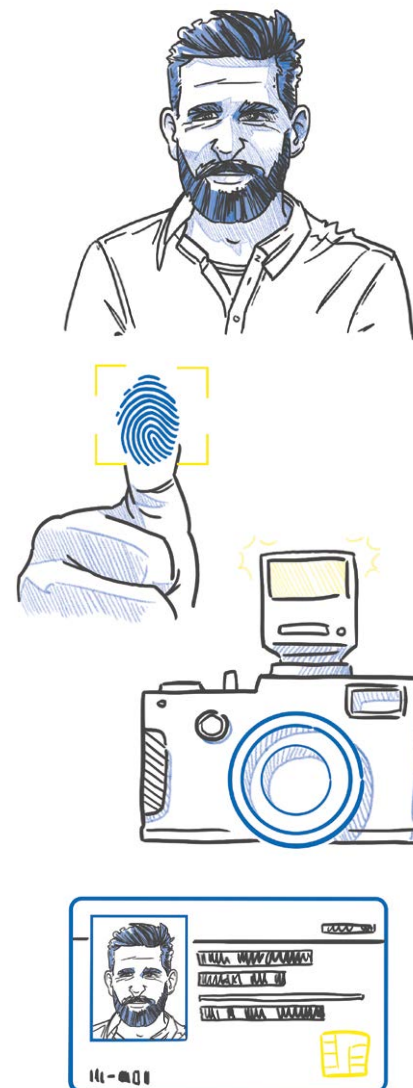
2. What if I do not apply for asylum in Czechia but want to apply in another country?

In the European Union (EU) you cannot choose the country of asylum. There are rules that identify a country in the EU responsible for deciding on your application.

Do not forget to tell the authorities if you have close family members in another EU country, which can be taken into consideration.

If you do not apply for asylum here, you will not be considered a refugee but any other foreigner. It means that in case you do not have a valid passport or visa, you may be returned to the country you arrived from.

3. What are the next steps in the asylum procedure?



- 1.** The authorities will first make some verifications, including but not limited to fingerprinting and picture taking.
- 2.** You will be then referred to a reception center to complete the first steps of the procedure, such as completing the application form, identification and medical examination. The authorities will make a copy of your passport, if you hold one.
- 3.** You will be given an international protection applicant's identification card.
- 4.** You will be invited for an asylum interview and to provide any documents that may support your asylum claim.

4. Can I receive help to apply for asylum in Czechia and/or during the asylum procedure?

You have the right to receive **free legal aid** at **any point of the asylum procedure**. Lawyers visit reception and accommodation facilities regularly. You can find contacts of UNHCR's partner organizations below.

Lawyers can provide you with information on the procedural steps, on your rights, and answer your questions. They can assist you at the first instance and appeal (to contest a negative decision). In some cases, they can also accompany you for your asylum interview or represent you at court.

5. How can UNHCR help me?

UNHCR is mandated to protect refugees and stateless persons around the world. Under its mandate, UNHCR monitors that asylum-seekers have their asylum claims heard fairly and efficiently in national asylum systems. In Czechia, UNHCR works with the government to provide information to asylum seekers and with partner organisations who provide **free legal aid** within the asylum procedure.

In some cases, UNHCR can be present during an asylum interview and look into the case file too see where the procedure stands (with the asylum-seeker's consent).

You can also contact UNHCR by e-mail (at the end of the leaflet) any time during the asylum procedure to raise any concerns or request UNHCR's presence.

6. How can I prepare for my asylum interview?



The standard procedure includes two interviews:

- 1.** The first interview is short and serves to register your asylum application. You will be asked to provide details about your journey to Czechia and the reasons for leaving your country.
- 2.** The second interview can last 2 to 3 hours or sometimes longer. You will be asked to describe your personal history and circumstances that led you to leave your country and why you cannot return. You may also be asked questions about your family, occupation, and other personal details.

The interview is very important. You can request the assistance of a lawyer to help you prepare. In some cases, the lawyer can be there with you. The interview will be conducted by an officer from the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of Interior.

It is important to give as many details as possible regarding the reasons and fears you have for leaving your country of origin and be ready to provide any proof and documentation you have which can support your claim, including a detailed account of your journey.

Everything you say is strictly confidential so don't be afraid of disclosing your personal history. The Czech authorities will not provide any information to your country of origin.

You have the right to have an interpreter during the interview. If you have difficulty understanding the interpreter, please say this immediately.

You have the right to have your interview recorded so that all your words are kept as you said them. You can ask for a break at any time during the interview.

At the end of the interview, you will be asked if you would like to review the interview transcript (written record). We recommend you do so, as it will allow you to clarify your answers. You also have the right to take a photo of the interview transcript. This may be helpful to you and your lawyer.

In some cases, there may be several interviews (for example, when the authorities need to verify some information).

7. Where can I stay during the asylum procedure?

Once you have been interviewed, you can decide whether you need to be provided accommodation or live elsewhere at your own expense (if you have financial means). If you need accommodation, you will be assigned to one of three Accommodation (Residential) Centres.

Zastávka u Brna Kostelec nad Orlicí Havířov

If you decide to live elsewhere, you will need to provide your address to the authorities for them to be able to contact you for the follow-up of your asylum procedure.

8. What are my rights and obligations during the asylum procedure?

YOUR RIGHTS:

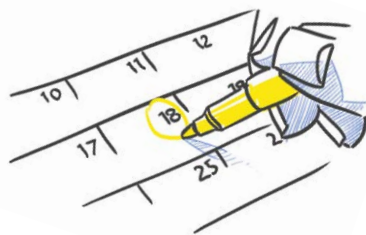
- stay in Czechia during the procedure
- receive basic accommodation, food and financial support, if needed
- receive medical care
- work after 6 months from submitting your application
- ask for an interpreter
- ask for free legal assistance
- communicate with UNHCR
- receive special support, if needed

YOUR OBLIGATIONS:

- cooperate fully with the authorities
- tell the truth as you remember it
- keep your appointments
- refrain from leaving Czechia during the asylum procedure
- provide correct contact details and inform the authorities about any changes (of place of residence etc.)
- present all documents to support your application
- follow the laws of Czechia
- ensure that children up to 15 years old attend school

9. How long do I have to wait for a decision on my application?

Your case will be decided by the Ministry of the Interior, Department for Asylum and Migration Policy **within 6 months**. However, the period can be extended for certain reasons. In such a case, you should be informed why and for how long the period is being extended.



10. What if I am granted international protection?

If the decision is positive, you will be granted either asylum or subsidiary protection.

➤ If you are granted **asylum (recognized as a refugee)**, you will obtain a permanent residence permit in Czechia.

If you are granted **subsidiary protection**, you will obtain a long-term residence permit in Czechia for the period during which subsidiary protection is granted, which is typically two years. Subsidiary protection can be renewed – you must apply for its renewal before it expires.

In both cases, you can benefit from integration assistance provided by Czechia. This includes accommodation in Integration Centers for 12 months, support to learn the Czech language, finding employment, and receiving support from a social worker to help you with your integration.

Your close family members have the right to apply for **family reunification** to be reunited with you in Czechia.

11. What if my application is rejected?

If your asylum application is rejected, you have the right to appeal the negative decision (before a court) **within 15 days** (in some cases, the deadline is longer). You can ask a lawyer to assist you throughout the process.

If you do not wish to appeal the negative decision, you will be given an exit visa to leave the country.

USEFUL CONTACTS



Organisation for Aid to Refugees (OPU)

Offices in Prague, Brno, Plzen, Hradec Kralove, Ostrava

e-mail: pravni@opu.cz

tel: +420 730 158 781

www.opu.cz/en



Association for Integration and Migration (SIMI)

Office in Prague

e-mail: poradna@migrace.com

tel: +420 224 224 379

www.migrace.com/en/



UNHCR in Czechia

e-mail: contact_czechia@unhcr.org

tel.: 800 050 832 (free of charge)

help.unhcr.org/czech/

