



Identification Requirements in European Migration Policy

Authors

This report was written by Emmanuel Vassor.

Acknowledgments

This report received additional research, feedback, and editorial support from Thea Kirsch, Aaron Martin, Mariane Samaha, Emrys Schoemaker, Hanna Stoll, Keren Weitzberg, and Ana Werkstetter.

Recommended citation

Vassor, Emmanuel. "Identification Requirements in European Migration Policy: Contextualizing Debates on Digital Transformation in Identification Policy and Technology." Caribou Publishing, March 2025.
<https://www.cariboudigital.net/publication/identification-requirements-in-europe/>.

Caribou is a global consultancy working with ambitious foundations, companies, and governments to accelerate and deliver impact in a digital age. We apply deep technical expertise and rigor to strategy design, fund and program management, impact measurement, and actionable research. We work towards a world in which digital economies are inclusive and sustainable, driven by secure livelihoods, innovative business models, and bold climate action.

www.cariboudigital.net

This report was produced by Caribou Digital in partnership with the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH and in collaboration with researchers from the University of Virginia, Queen Mary University London, and Kings College London. The views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material from this project for their own publications, as long as they are not being sold commercially. We request due acknowledgment and, if possible, a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to check for updates and to link to the original resource on the project website.

Cover image © iStock / Sjo

Published March 2025

Contents

Glossary and acronyms	4
Background	5
Terminology and scope	7
Key takeaways and considerations from the EU's approach to the identification of migrants	9
Key considerations on access to services and the Wallets	12
Three migration scenarios	14
Methodology	15
Highly qualified applicant for residence	16
Asylum seeker pending decision in an EU host country	26
Undocumented, irregular migrant who lodges an asylum application after being apprehended at an EU external border	33
Final remarks	39
References	40

Glossary and acronyms

AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering/ Counter Financing of Terrorism	LMA card	Swedish document for asylum seekers
CAR	Central African Republic	MS(s)	Member State(s)
<i>carte de séjour</i>	French residence permit	NGO	nongovernmental organization
CDD	customer due diligence	PIN	Personal Identification Number
CIR	Common Identity Repository	<i>permesso di soggiorno</i>	Italian residence permit
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	<i>récépissé de demande d'asile</i>	French interim identification and proof of asylum seeker status
eAT	<i>elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel</i> , the German electronic residence permit	SIS	Schengen Information System
ECRIS-TCN	European Criminal Records Information System for Third-Country Nationals	SPID	Italian Public Digital Identity System
EEA	European Economic Area	<i>Steueridentifikationsnummer</i>	German tax identification number
EES	Entry/Exit System	TCN	third-country national
EFTA	European Free Trade Area	UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorization System	VIS	Visa Information System
EU	European Union		
EURODAC	European Asylum Dactyloscopy database		
FATF	Financial Action Task Force		
ID	identification/identity		

Background

This report was prepared within the context of a broader study focusing on the accessibility of the EU digital identification wallet or EUDI wallet(s) (hereafter referred to as “the Wallet(s)”) for third-country nationals (TCNs) and migrants within the European Economic Area (EEA).¹ This document describes the existing legal, regulatory, and policy context and presents an account of how these frameworks suggest migrants’ experience *should* be.

In other words, it is not a description of what migrants actually experience, but instead presents what the policy documentation implies ought to be happening through fictionalized scenarios. This description serves as a starting point from which the broader project is exploring how migrants’ *actual* experience maps against this legal, regulatory, and policy context and draws out the implications of migrants’ actual identification needs for the design of digital identity innovations, particularly digital identity wallets. In other words, this report is a necessary precursor to the broader analysis of digital identity policy and technology in the area of migration governance.

This study describes how migrants experience identification systems as they travel to and throughout Europe and the various challenges they may face when trying to acquire identification or to identify themselves. In doing so, it identifies key points of friction and provides insights into the intersection of digital identity management, migration policy, and human rights in the European context.

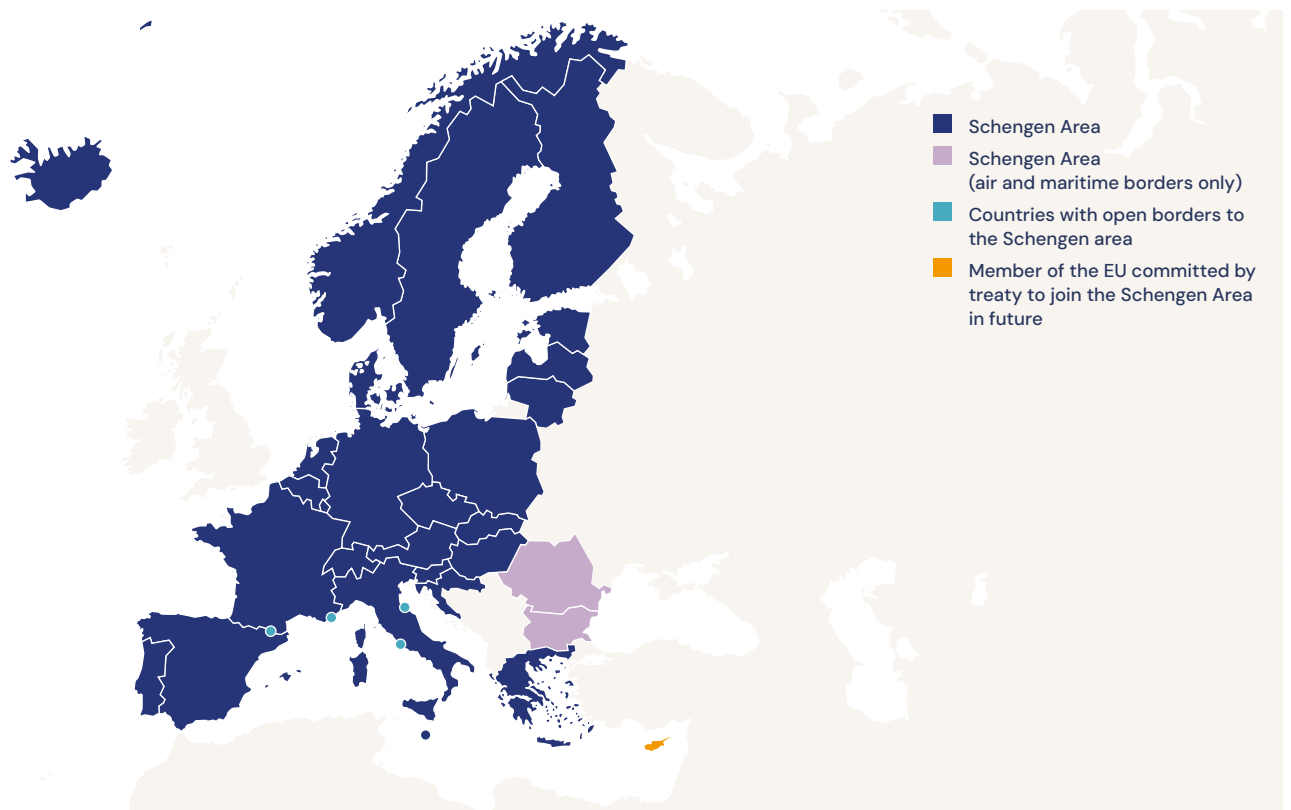
¹ See Caribou Digital, “Identity and Migration.”

Identification for asylum seekers and migrants in Europe is a complex and shifting landscape. There are discrepancies between national and European-level rules and regulations, all of which are subject to change. Much of the information regarding identification requirements is also siloed in different government and public databases and, in some cases, inaccessible. The goal of this report is to provide a very high-level overview of the identification “touchpoints” that migrants and asylum seekers may experience upon arrival in Europe. Some of the information contained in this report may no longer be up-to-date by the time of publication, and some of the granular, country-level complexity and detail may not be fully captured in the various scenarios. Nevertheless, we hope this high-level overview will provide insight into the broader challenges that migrants and asylum seekers face when having to prove their identities and credentials to authorities.

Terminology and scope

The geographic scope of this study is the European Economic Area. The EEA is composed of 27 EU Member States (MSs), including EU Schengen MSs, non-Schengen EU MSs, and Schengen non-member States (European Free Trade Area (EFTA) member states).

Figure 1 ▼
Schengen Area/states map
Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Migrant is:


“an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.”²



Third-country nationals (TCNs) are individuals who are nationals of countries outside of the EEA.



Guide to icons used in this report

 Accomodation	 Family members	 Passport
 Address	 Fee	 Personal interview
 Age assessment test	 Financial resources	 Photos
 Biometric data	 Friends and family	 Request for information
 Conditions of entry	 Health insurance details	 Tax identification number
 Embassy	 ID card	 Travel itinerary
 Employer documents	 Lawyer	 Qualifications
 Employment details	 Marital status	 Visa
 EURODAC system	 Non-criminal record certificate	 Work contract

² Sironi, Bauloz, and Emmanuel, eds., *Glossary on Migration*.

Key takeaways and considerations from the EU's approach to the identification of migrants

The EU has adopted a multifaceted approach to the biometric and alphanumeric identification and management of migrants and TCNs through a network of interlinked databases, or—as the EU has named them—“*information systems*.”

These information systems, managed by the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA) and operated in collaboration with national authorities, are governed by detailed legal and regulatory frameworks that dictate their operations and purposes. Three information systems are operational at the time of writing:

- EURODAC, which stores and processes the fingerprint data of asylum seekers and certain kinds of irregular migrants, mainly to determine state responsibility for asylum applications.³
- The Schengen Information System (SIS) shares (mainly security-related) alerts on individuals and objects.⁴
- The Visa Information System (VIS) processes visa applications and links decisions to specific biometric data.⁵

3 Regulation (EU) No 603/2013.

4 Regulation (EU) 2018/1860; Regulation (EU) 2018/1861; Regulation (EU) 2018/1862.

5 Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

Three additional information systems, for which the legal basis has been adopted but which are not yet operational, form part of this network:

- The Entry/Exit System (EES) will record the entries and exits of TCNs.⁶
- The European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) will carry out checks on visa-exempt travelers.⁷
- The European Criminal Records Information System for Third-Country Nationals (ECRIS-TCN) will serve as a criminal-records database for TCNs.⁸

The EU adopted two regulations in 2019 to create so-called “interoperability” between these information systems.⁹ The regulations introduce four instruments to enable the above-mentioned databases communicate with each other. A centralized database, called Common Identity Repository (CIR), creates an individual file for each person that is registered in one of the EU’s information systems, except SIS.¹⁰ In addition, a shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) stores biometric templates obtained from the biometric data stored in CIR and SIS, enabling querying with biometric data across several information systems.¹¹ A third tool, the multiple-identity detector (MID), is designed to detect multiple identities to facilitate identity checks and combat identity fraud.¹² The MID cross-checks data throughout the information systems whenever a new data file or alert is created or updated and flags them if it suspects identity fraud. All these instruments are accessible through one interface, the European Search Portal (ESP).¹³

Despite these advanced information systems and efforts to interlink them, the EU identification framework is not a monolithic or omnipresent surveillance system. Instead, it is a composite of connected databases and tools intended to facilitate state management of migrants while (at least according to proponents) respecting individual rights and privacy in accordance with the EU’s data protection framework. However, migration management is only one of the purposes of these systems; they are also intended to increase security within the EU, thus serving law enforcement and surveillance purposes.

6 Regulation (EU) 2017/2226.

7 Regulation (EU) 2018/1240.

8 Regulation (EU) 2019/816.

9 Regulation (EU) 2019/818; Regulation (EU) 2019/817.

10 Article 17, Regulation (EU) 2019/818; Regulation (EU) 2019/817.

11 Article 13, Regulation (EU) 2019/818; Regulation (EU) 2019/817.

12 Article 25, Regulation (EU) 2019/818; Regulation (EU) 2019/817.

13 Article 6, Regulation (EU) 2019/818; Regulation (EU) 2019/817.

To date, the implementation process of these systems faces technical and practical challenges at the Union and national levels.¹⁴ From a judicial perspective, the interoperability among systems and the intrinsic complexity of cross-border legal proceedings have the potential to impede the intended functioning of the identification policies. These limitations reflect systems in progress rather than a fully unified mechanism. The disjoint, and the lived experience of migrants within the context of these complex systems, are the focus of the broader research project.¹⁵

This broader research project, of which the current study is a part, aims to explore the implications of these developments for migrants, and what migrants' actual identification needs demonstrate about identification management and the design of new technologies, such as digital wallets. This study describes the context and environment that the broader project aims to interrogate.

Finally, it is worth noting that this report represents a snapshot in time. Some of the regulations and identification systems governing TCNs are currently undergoing significant changes. For example, in May 2024, after years of negotiation, the EU passed a new Pact on Migration and Asylum, a package of policies and regulations that will transform Europe's asylum regime.¹⁶ The pact has, among many other things, enlarged the scope and remit of EURODAC, developing it from a relatively reduced system serving the Dublin system into a comprehensive biometric database that collects countless biographical data items, fingerprints, and facial images of various categories of migrants, including children from the age of six, and uses them for law enforcement and broad migration law purposes.¹⁷ It has been widely criticized by human rights and civil society groups¹⁸ who point toward the risks within this new framework of reducing migrants' rights, increasing surveillance, and intertwining migration and law enforcement purposes in a legally questionable manner.¹⁹ Other changes may come from an even more security-oriented side. The EU announced that the Prüm framework, the Passenger Name Record (PNR) Directive, and the Advance Passenger Information Directive may later be linked to one or more of the interoperability components.²⁰ Given how much is in flux at the moment, one can expect many of the policies outlined in this report to change in the coming years.

14 See, for example, Calder, "EU to Water down Brexit Travel Checks for British Passengers as Border Plan Delayed"; ETIAS, "ETIAS Implementation Likely Delayed to 2025."

15 Caribou Digital, "Identity and Migration."

16 European Commission, "Pact on Migration and Asylum."

17 Regulation (EU) 2024/1358.

18 European Digital Rights, "Civil Society Calls for an End to the Expansion of EU's Eurodac Database."

19 Vavoula, "Interoperability of European Centralised Databases"; Amelung, "'Crimmigration Control' across Borders"; Amnesty International, "EU Migration Pact Agreement Will Lead to a Surge in Suffering."

20 "Amended proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems..."

Key considerations on access to services and the Wallets

In the EU, identification practices for accessing services vary significantly between public services and those offered by private legal entities. Legal and regulatory context shapes identification practices arguably more than any technological innovation.

Identification needs for accessing public services—ranging from healthcare to education—are shaped by a diverse set of factors, including the type of service, provider policies, and regional variations, where local jurisdictions might adjust access rules to better meet community needs or policy orientations. Consequently, the landscape of identification requirements to access public services across the EU is quite varied, reflecting differing standards across services, providers, and geographical areas. As a result, the level of access to public services that a migrant receives in the EU significantly depends on where they settle or arrive.

In contrast, many private legal entities, such as banks and private insurance companies, are bound by strict Customer Due Diligence (CDD) and Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML-CFT) regulations. In compliance with international standards set by intergovernmental bodies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), these regulations require that entities verify the identity of new customers using “*reliable, independent source documents, data, or information*” at the onboarding stage.²¹ These CDD and AML-CFT standards are typically implemented and enforced at the national level by specific regulatory bodies.²² These bodies oversee financial institutions and other private entities within their jurisdictions and monitor compliance with the necessary legal frameworks and standards.

21 FATF, “Guidance on Digital ID.”

22 For instance, this role is performed in Germany by the Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin); in France by the Financial Markets Regulator (AMF); in Italy by the Bank of Italy; in Sweden by the Financial Supervisory Authority (Finansinspektionen); and, in Estonia by the Financial Supervision Authority (Finantsinspektsioon).

However, on a day-to-day basis, it is the private service providers themselves that determine whether the documentation provided meets the standards set forth by national regulatory bodies. Despite increasingly standardized regional approaches to specifying identification requirements, there is still a wide diversity of ways that these requirements are interpreted and implemented, leading to divergence in migrant experiences and their local identification needs. This, too, can lead to people in a comparable situation ultimately having unequal access to private services.

However, unequal treatment with regard to access to services does not only exist among different migrants. Moreover, within the same country, migrants' access to rights and services is heavily dependent on their legal status, with policies making distinctions between various groups. For instance, in many contexts, asylum applicants may have limited access to healthcare, education, and employment. The rights and services offered to individuals holding subsidiary protection may be more restrictive than those offered to individuals who have been granted asylum, in relation to family reunification, for example. Those in possession of an EU Blue Card may enjoy enhanced access to permanent residence permits and citizenship compared to other groups. There are considerable differences between EU citizens and migrants in particular, often due to the design of some digital identity tools provided and adopted by the EU, which have EU citizens in mind, and not migrants.²³ The EUDI wallet(s) is one such example.²⁴ It is a core part of the EU's new identification regulation, eIDAS 2.0.²⁵ Central to its vision is an emphasis on individual control for EU citizens and residents. The EUDI wallet(s) is designed to facilitate identification and transaction processes while allowing individuals to better control their data when accessing public and private services. As its current operational framework indicates, recognizable proof of identity is required to onboard the EUDI wallet(s),²⁶ thus suggesting that it aligns with the principles governing access to private services. The eIDAS 2.0 Regulation stipulates that in order to be onboarded to the EUDI wallet(s), EU citizens and residents should be in possession of an electronic identification means issued by an EU Member state at level of assurance (LoA) high. Therefore, any obstacle to the acquisition of such a means risks excluding people from access to the EUDI wallet(s). As this report shows, for individuals who are citizens of non-EU countries the pathways to inclusion in MSs' electronic identification ecosystems can be of varying complexity, depending on their legal status and the extent to which they are considered 'desirable' additions to the MS in question. This means that, in particular, people without a valid passport or other internationally recognized proof of identity face numerous barriers to inclusion. This effect is by design and indicates that, when conceptualizing such a tool, the EU often has EU citizens in mind and does not take into account the diversity of individuals residing in the EU who are citizens/nationals of non-EU countries.

23 Cf. Regulation (EU) No 910/2014; Regulation (EU) 2024/1183. The framework mandates Member States to provide EUDI Wallet(s) to citizens within 24 months of Implementing Acts adoption, outlining technical specifications and certification.

24 Cf. European Commission, "European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation."

25 See Caribou Digital's recent report on the Wallet (s), "The European Digital Identity Wallet: Why it matters and to whom."

26 The available official information on the Wallet (s) states that providing legal identification issued by a national authority is a requirement for onboarding the Wallet (s). European Commission, "What Are EU Digital Identity Wallets."

Three migration scenarios

The examination of three distinct migration scenarios within the European Union provides insights into the multifaceted nature of migration, identification, asylum policies, and border security within the EU:

- 1 Resident applicants who are considered high-skilled workers;
- 2 Asylum seekers pending a decision; and
- 3 Undocumented migrants apprehended at EU borders who apply for asylum.

Each scenario serves a specific purpose in highlighting the challenges, procedural nuances, and policy implications associated with the EU's approach to the identification of migrants and their issuance of official identification documents. All scenarios were developed based on a thorough analysis of regional and national policy documents associated with the chosen situations; they do not necessarily reflect migrants' actual experiences of these procedures.

Methodology

These scenarios were developed through a broad literature review, which drew key conclusions from the 2023 IOM report *Access to Digital Identity for People on the Move in Europe*.²⁷ Each scenario was chosen to illustrate specific aspects of the procedural and identification challenges faced by migrants and migration authorities. The highly qualified resident applicant scenario, for example, underscores how even the most privileged and sought-after TCNs face differing procedures and barriers between countries when obtaining credentials that enable access to services within the EU. The asylum applicant scenario emphasizes the critical period during which individuals must be afforded rights and protections as their claims are verified. The undocumented migrant scenario explores the identification challenges at the intersection of border security and humanitarian obligations.

The individuals in these case studies are archetypical composites rather than profiles of real people. They are constructed based on extensive research from academic literature, official reports, and expert consultations, reflecting common experiences and procedural steps encountered by migrants in different EU countries. This approach ensures that the case studies provide representative and insightful analysis while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards.

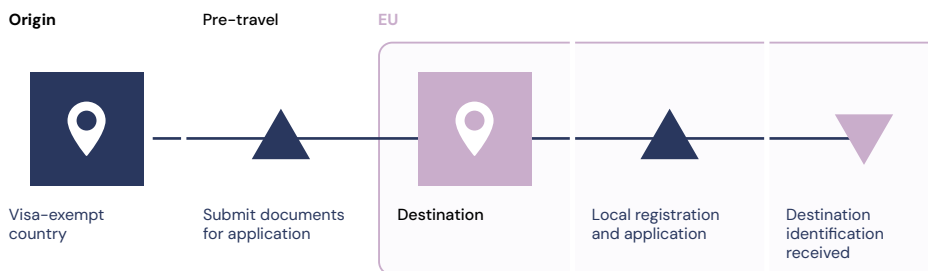
Countries of origin and reception were selected to represent a diverse spectrum of realities across the EU, reflecting various migration policies, levels of digital integration, and geographic contexts. This ensures a varied view of the different experiences and challenges faced by TCNs.

As a result, these scenarios represent fictionalized situations in which procedures and regulations are followed to the letter. In practice, however, authorities do not always comply with the stated procedures, and migrants (even highly privileged ones) often report encountering numerous problems when trying to access services, even with officially recognized IDs.

²⁷ For in-depth examination of TCNs' identification and access to services in the EU, refer to Vassor, *Access to Digital Identity for People on the Move in Europe*.

1 Highly qualified applicant for residence

The exploration of the highly qualified²⁸ resident applicant pathway is pivotal for understanding the nuanced interplay between migration policies and individual migrant experiences.



In the EU context, a “highly qualified” migrant is defined as: “a third-country national who seeks employment in an EU Member State and has the required adequate and specific competence, as proven by higher professional qualifications.”²⁹ As scholars Agnieszka Weinar and Amanda Klekowsi von Koppelnfels point out, those who fall into this category “often enjoy easier access to an entry visa and/or residence permit than their [ostensibly] lower-skilled brethren, but none of them is exempt from these requirements.”³⁰ In fact, anyone from a non-EU/EEA country must first apply for a work visa if they intend to move to the Schengen Area and start work immediately on arrival, whether or not they are a national of a country that is exempt from the Schengen visa requirement for short-term travel.

Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 lists the countries whose nationals must be in possession of a Schengen short-stay visa when entering an EU Member State (for travels of up to 90 days). Annex II lists the countries whose nationals are exempt from this requirement. Generally, either Schengen visa holders nor those exempt from visa requirements are allowed to take up employment within this period of maximum 90 days of short-term travel (country-specific exceptions may apply).

28 As defined in Directive (EU) 2021/1883.

29 European Commission, “Highly Qualified Migrant.” According to Article 2(7), Directive (EU) 2021/1883, “higher professional qualifications” means qualifications attested by evidence of higher education qualifications or higher professional skills.

30 Weinar and Klekowski von Koppenfels, “Highly Skilled Migration,” 9. The authors also discuss the inconsistencies of the use of the term “highly qualified.”

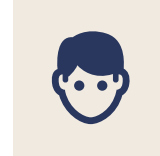
Visa exemptions are generally based on a combination of strong security cooperation, mutual visa-free travel reciprocity, and minimal immigration or security risks. They reflect a high level of trust in the travel documents issued by those countries and a high level of identity assurance of those nationals. However, visa waivers only facilitate short-term travel for tourism and limited business purposes.

The following examples show that even if migrants meet the requirements of the highly in-demand category of “high-skilled workers,” and come from countries that the EU considers “trustworthy” and has therefore exempted from visa requirements for short-term travel, they still face diverse experiences and must navigate distinct complexities for obtaining residency and accessing services within the EU. The journeys of such migrants—exemplified by the fictional accounts of Paulo, Irina, Diego, and Maria—offer critical insights into the distinct identification management systems in different countries, the digital authentication capabilities provided to migrants, and the subsequent impact on their access to services. This analysis not only highlights distinctions in identification governance across EU Member States but also underscores the importance of creating harmonized, efficient pathways that facilitate the integration of TCNs into European societies.³¹

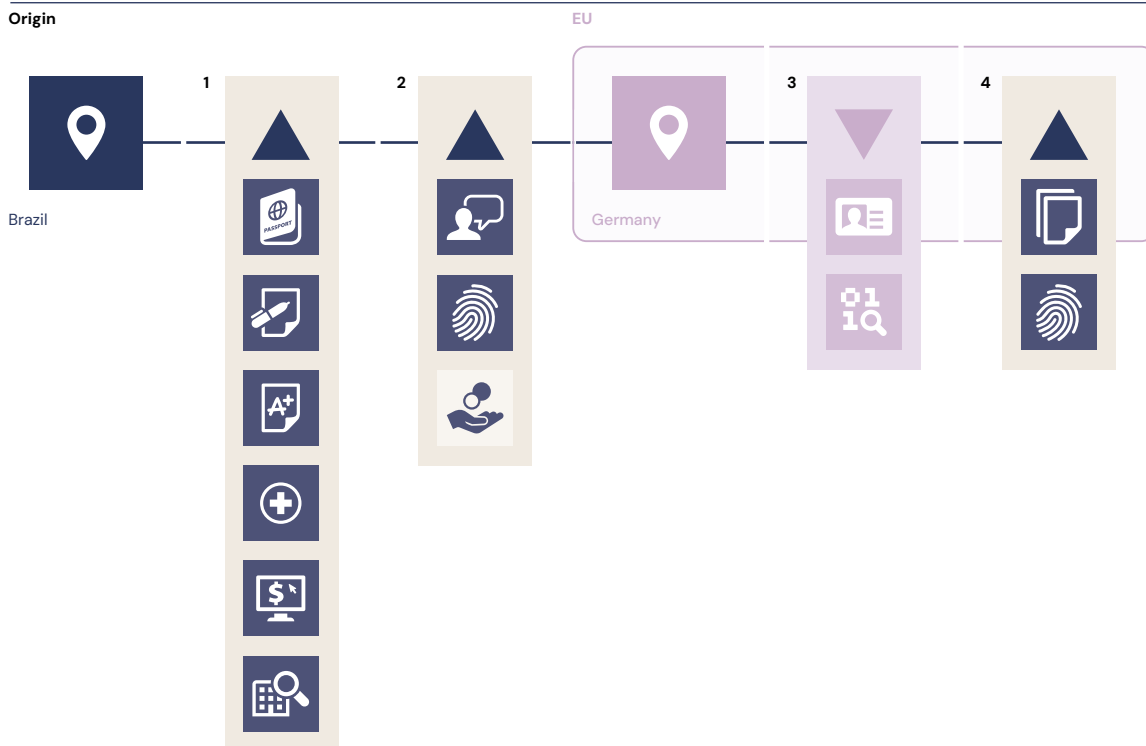
31 Because there is no harmonized ID governance between EU countries, different types of identification management coexist among countries (for both the general identification of the population, and specifically for the identification management of TCNs). This is coupled with a lack of harmonized requirements concerning the capacities of credentials issued to TCNs in each country, which results in a diversity of credentials with varying degrees of capacity for individuals to prove their identity—both face to face and online—which in turn impacts on the capacity of individuals to access (online) services, including onboarding the EUDI Wallet(s).

GERMANY

Paulo's process



Paulo is from 📍 **Brazil** and is considered a “highly qualified” migrant. After receiving a job offer from a 📍 **German** company, he applies for a national visa at the German embassy or consulate responsible for his current place of residence in Brazil. This visa allows him to travel to and stay in Germany for a fixed period of time, during which he must apply for a residence permit for the purpose of employment or an EU Blue Card at the local immigration authority at his new place of residence.³²




- 1 He submits a valid passport, his work contract, documents attesting to relevant higher professional qualifications, health insurance details,³³ and proof of sufficient financial resources and accommodation.³⁴



32 Section 6–7, Section 18–19, AufenthG. See also Directive (EU) 2021/1883.

33 Article 5, Directive (EU) 2021/1883; additional national requirements can be required.

34 European Commission, “Germany – Highly-Qualified Worker.”

- 2 ▲ Paulo's data and information he has provided about other people who are relevant to his visa application will be sent to the Federal Office of Administration for a security check and may be passed on to the German security and national intelligence services for further investigation.³⁵ Once the documents have been checked and found to be complete and credible, Paulo is invited for a personal interview to establish his identity, including the collection of biometric data (fingerprints and facial image data).³⁶ He has to pay an application fee of around €75.³⁷
- 3 ▲ When Paulo arrives in  Germany, he registers his new address with the local residents' registration office and receives a registration certificate (*Meldebescheinigung*).³⁸ This certificate is sometimes needed to access other public and private services (e.g. child benefits, opening a bank account, ...). Once Paulo's registration has been entered into the population register, the tax office is automatically notified and Paulo receives a tax identification number (*Steueridentifikationsnummer*).³⁹
- 4 ▼ While his visa is still valid, Paulo applies for a residence permit at the Foreigners' Office at his new place of residence. During this application process, he (re-)submits documents such as his passport, professional qualifications and statement of comparability, proof of health insurance, employment contract, registration certificate (*Meldebescheinigung*), etc. This includes the collection of biometric data (fingerprints and facial image).⁴⁰ He pays a fee which may not exceed the maximum amount of €140 for the initial issuance of a (temporary) residence permit.⁴¹



The issuing of the eAT may take different lengths of time, depending on the federal state (Bundesland) in which the application is made, but will likely take around five weeks.⁴² The eAT comes with a secure chip,⁴³ which includes advanced digital features that enable Paulo, using his PIN, to both authenticate online and perform legally binding signatures.⁴⁴ The eAT serves as a comprehensive ID for accessing healthcare, banking, and digital government services, facilitated by the unique identifier assigned to Paulo.



eAT

35 Sections 72–73, *AufenthG*.

36 German Federal Foreign Office, "Visa Applications in the Consular Services Portal."

37 German Federal Foreign Office, "Applying for a Visa.," for the whole, cf. Bundesministerium der Justiz, *AufenthG*.

38 Sections 17–27, Federal Act on Registration/*Bundesmeldegesetz*.

39 Bundeszentralamt für Steuern, "Information for Registration and Tax Offices."

40 See, for example, ServicePortal Berlin, "Residence permit for qualified skilled workers with vocational training"; Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, "The Electronic Residence Permit," 14.

41 Section 69, *AufenthG*.

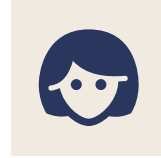
42 Dienstleistungen – Service Berlin, "elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel (eAT) – Ausgabe"; Freie Hansestadt Bremen, "eAT/Electronic Residence Permit – Serviceportal Bremen." Düsseldorf, "Gebühren für elektronische Aufenthaltstitel (eAT)."

43 For all foreigners aged six or over and coming from non-EU member States, two fingerprints must be stored on the electronic residence permit's chip. German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, "All You Need to Know About the Electronic Residence Permit (eAT)."

44 German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, "All You Need to Know About the Electronic Residence Permit (eAT)."

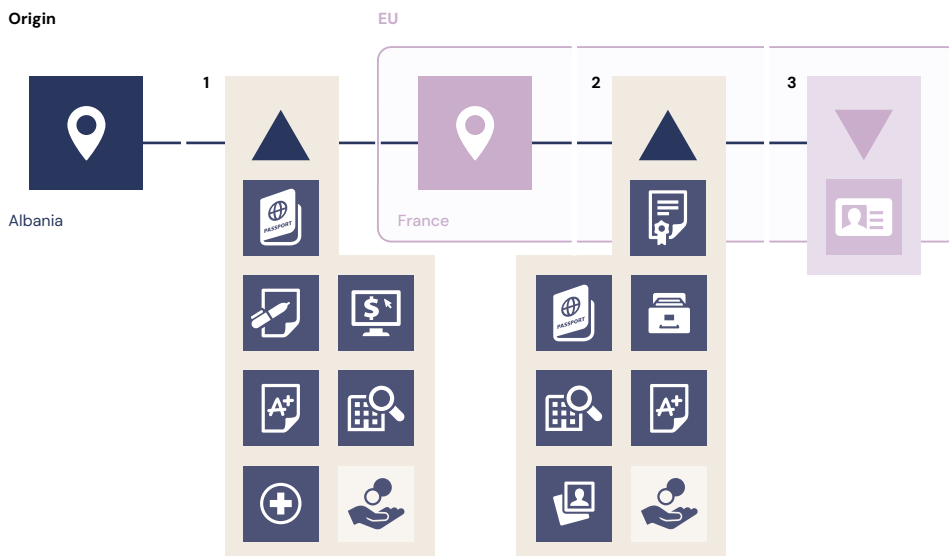
FRANCE


Irina's process and FranceConnect

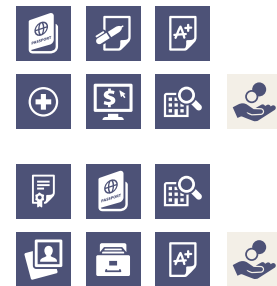


Irina is an  **Albanian** with highly sought-after professional credentials. After receiving a job offer from a French company, she prepares to move to  **France** and applies for a long-stay visa at the French consulate in Tirana.

After arriving to France, Irina submits her application for the appropriate residence permit for highly skilled employees, a Talent Passport-EU Blue Card. Irina is eligible for the Talent Passport-EU Blue Card because she possesses a recognized university degree and her work contract offers an annual pay that is equal or higher to the limit set.



- 1 She provides a valid passport, her work contract, documents attesting to  relevant higher professional qualifications, health insurance details,⁴⁵ and proof of financial self-sufficiency and accommodation.⁴⁶ The application fee is €99.⁴⁷
- 2 After obtaining her visa and arriving in France, she applies for a residence card *Passeport talent: carte de séjour pluriannuelle d'un étranger en France* (talent passport). The application process is done online. After the prefecture confirms, online, Irina's eligibility for the residence permit, she is required to purchase a tax stamp fee amount for €225. She can then pick up her residence card from the prefecture; the need for an appointment depends on the area.⁴⁸



45 Article 5 of Directive (EU) 2021/1883; additional national requirements can be required.

46 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Passeport talent: carte de séjour pluriannuelle d'un étranger en France"; Gouvernement Français, "Arrival in France"; Gouvernement Français, "Déposer Votre Dossier à l'Ambassade de France En Albanie."

47 Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères, "Frais de Visa."

48 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Passeport talent: sarte de séjour pluriannuelle d'un étranger en France."



- 3 Holding a *carte de séjour* allows Irina to legally work, study, and live in France. It also serves as an official proof of identity for various administrative processes, such as opening a bank account, registering with the French social security system, and accessing healthcare services.⁴⁹



Despite it having a secure chip⁵⁰ to store personal information (in line with EU regulations on the uniform residence permit⁵¹), the French *carte de séjour* does not have digital features that directly facilitate digital access to services in the way digital IDs do in some other countries (for instance, Germany). To access online services, Irina needs to register with FranceConnect, a separate digital identity platform that links various public service accounts and simplifies access to various public services. To use FranceConnect, Irina first must have a French social security number, which can be obtained after registering in the French social security system.⁵² Once Irina can use FranceConnect, she will be able to access most public online services.



Carte de séjour

49 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Contrôle d'identité"; France Titres, "Les documents d'identité."

50 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Contrôle d'identité"; France Titres, "Les documents d'identité."

51 Regulation (EU) 2017/1954.

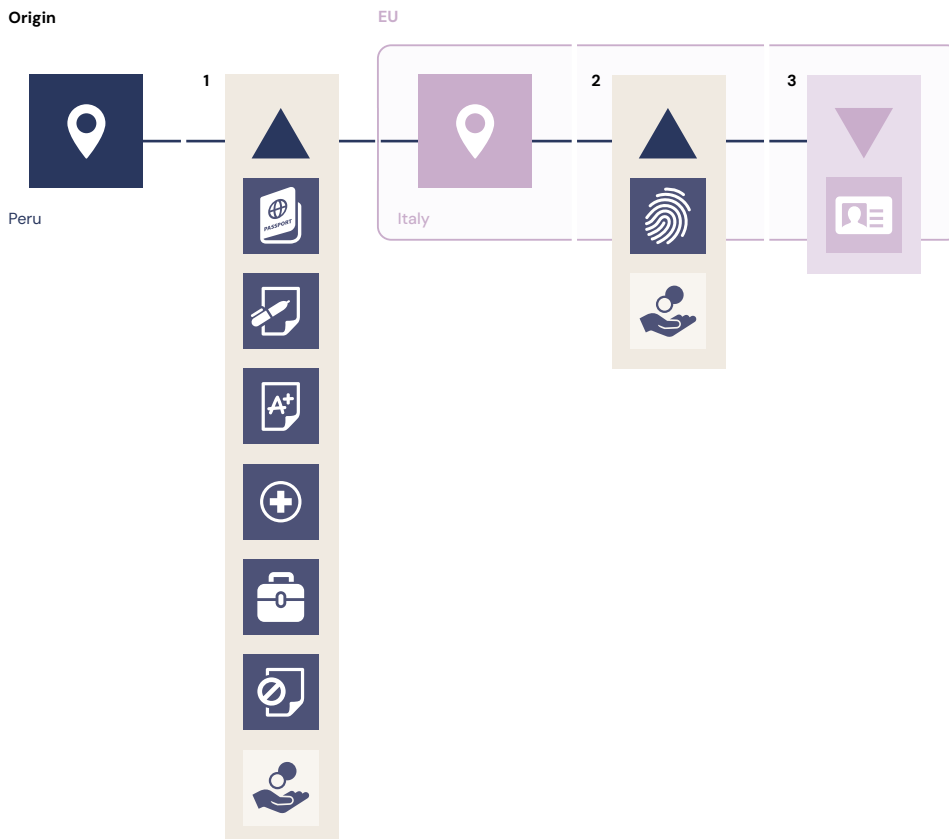
52 The obtention process depends on each country. Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Assurance maladie d'un étranger qui s'installe en France."

ITALY

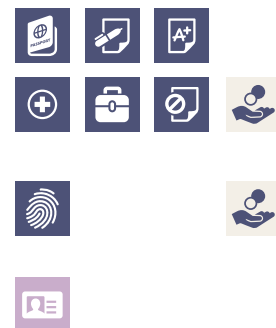
Diego's process and SPID



Diego is a **Peruvian** who is highly qualified. After receiving a job offer from an **Italian** company, he applies for a long-stay entry visa (Type D)⁵³ at the Italian consulate.⁵⁴



- 1 This requires him to provide a valid passport, work contract, documents attesting to relevant higher professional qualifications, health insurance details,⁵⁵ employment details, and a non-criminal record certificate, for a fee.
- 2 In Italy, Diego declares his presence and applies for the *permesso di soggiorno* (residency permit) at the local police station, which includes biometric data collection and costs between €100 and €200.⁵⁶
- 3 Holding a *permesso di soggiorno* allows Diego to legally reside in Italy.



53 Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, "Types of Visa and Duration."

54 Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, "Rights and Duties of Foreign Nationals for Long-Term Stays in Italy – Over 90 Days."

55 Article 5 of Directive (EU) 2021/1883; additional national requirements can be required.

56 Ministero dell'Interno, "Visto e permesso soggiorno"; cf. Polizia di Stato, "Issue/Renewal/Update of Residence Permits and Residence Cards."

Similar to France, the *permesso di soggiorno* has a secure chip to store personal information (in line with EU regulations on the uniform residence permit), but it does not have digital features that enable access to digital services.

For online service access, Diego needs to obtain the *Sistema Pubblico di identità Digitale*, or SPID (Public Digital Identity System).⁵⁷ To get a SPID, he must have a social security card (*Tessera Sanitaria*) or tax code (*Codice Fiscale*) in addition to the *permesso di soggiorno*.⁵⁸ He can apply for a SPID through authorized providers, which involves verifying his identity using these documents. The SPID allows Diego to access a wide range of digital services with a single set of credentials.



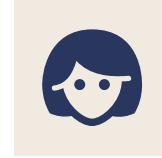
Permesso di soggiorno

57 See Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale, "How to Activate SPID."

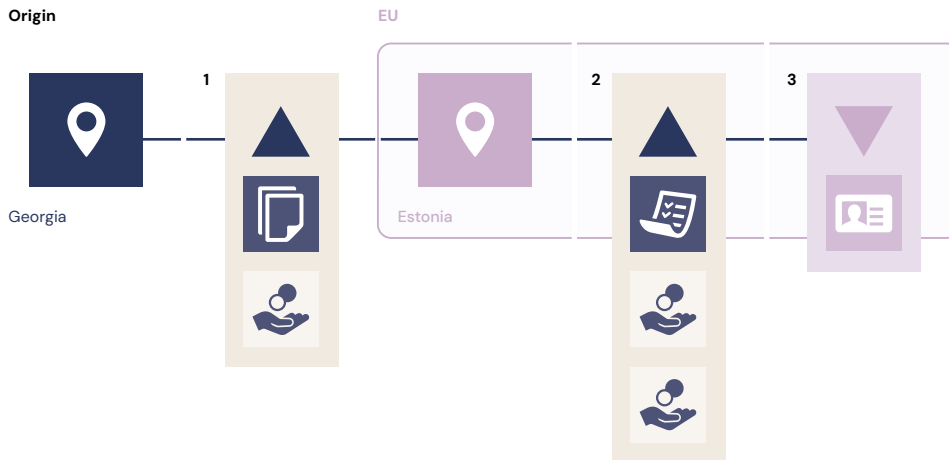
58 Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale, "How to Activate SPID."

ESTONIA

Maria's process



Maria is a **Georgian** who is highly qualified. After receiving a job offer from an **Estonian** company she wants to apply for an EU Blue Card.⁵⁹



- 1 She provides the necessary documentation to the Estonian consulate.
▲ The application fee is between €90 and €120.⁶⁰
- 2 Upon arrival in Estonia, Maria applies for a residence card together with a digital ID. She can apply for the residence card and the digital ID either at a service office or online. At the service office, the fee for the residence permit is €70; for an online application the fee is €60. The fee for a digital ID is €25.⁶¹
- 3 Under ordinary circumstances, her residence permit card and digital ID
▼ should be issued within a maximum of 30 days.⁶²



The digital ID⁶³ offers comprehensive digital authentication and digital signature capabilities, integrating Maria into Estonia's digital society with a unique personal identification code. This enables her to access government and private services online, including banking and healthcare.⁶⁴



Digital ID

59 European Commission, "Estonia – Highly-Qualified Worker."

60 Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "State Fee Amounts."

61 Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Residence Permit Card for an Adult"; Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Digital ID."

62 Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Residence Permit Card for an Adult"; Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Digital ID."

63 See Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Digital ID."

64 Estonia's approach to digital integration for TCNs is detailed on the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board's website. Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, "Residence Permit Card for an Adult."

Conclusion

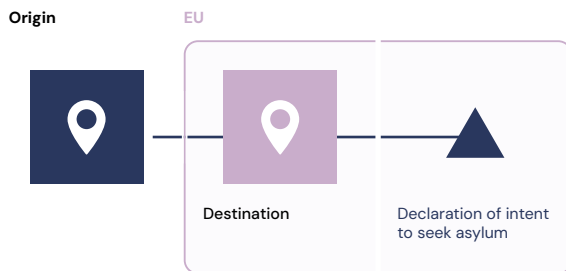
The processes in Germany, France, Italy, and Estonia showcase the varying degrees of digital integration and the steps TCNs must take to obtain residency and to access services in these countries. While Estonia offers a streamlined digital experience, other countries are more complex. In Germany, to use your eID (after it is activated and the PIN is set), you need an NFC-enabled device, an app, and sometimes a BundID account. France and Italy also require additional steps for TCNs to access online services, highlighting the importance of understanding each country's specific requirements and procedures. Despite moves towards coherence, the EU immigration context is diverse and fragmented.

The imagined trajectories of Paulo, Irina, Diego, and Maria, navigating the residency and service access processes in Germany, France, Italy, and Estonia, underscore a crucial point: even for individuals holding a valid residence permit, the ease of accessing services can significantly vary from one country to another. These examples highlight the diverse landscape of digital integration, digital identification frameworks for TCNs, and bureaucratic processes across the Schengen Area, illustrating that the journey to more complete societal integration extends beyond merely obtaining a residence permit.⁶⁵

65 There are common rules concerning moving to another country for a period over three months, depending on the status of the TCN. See notably the long-term resident status, which is governed at the EU level; European Commission, "Long-Term Residents." In any case, they'd need to apply for a new resident permit in the new country (note, however, that the proposal to recast the regulation proposes to remove this constraint for long-term residents and enable them to move freely between countries, as EU citizens would). For "regular" residents (e.g., not long-term), there are limitations as their residency is tied to their application in one country. Exceptions may exist (family member of ..., national of a specific country which has a bilateral agreement with a defined EU country, etc.). For highly skilled TCNs, Directive (EU) 2021/1883 governs the rights of TCNs to move from one EU country to another EU country. National authorities are also entitled to request some additional proof in case of a change in employer to ensure alignment with the "highly skilled" status.

2 Asylum seeker pending decision in an EU host country

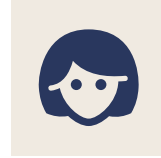
The case of asylum seekers awaiting decisions is of paramount importance for dissecting the asylum process's operational and humanitarian dimensions. It brings to the forefront the critical period during which individuals, having declared their intent to apply for asylum, must be afforded certain rights and protections even as their claims are being verified.



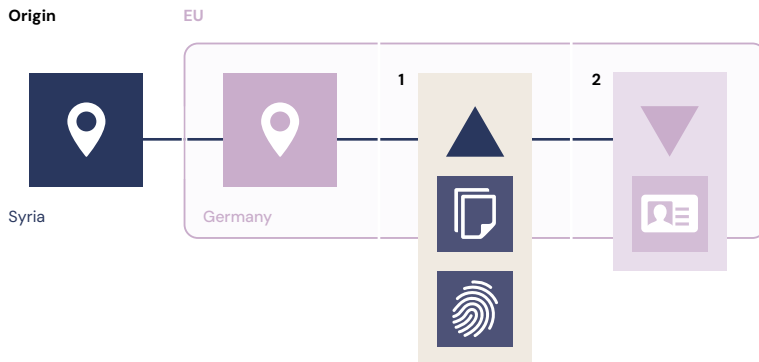
This scenario delves into the identification documents issued during this interim phase, which are standardized at the EU level, examining their utility and limitations in enabling access to essential services. By focusing on the procedural steps from application to the issuance of temporary residence documents, this analysis sheds light on the balance between ensuring security and reliability of information provided by those claiming asylum, and upholding the dignity and rights of asylum seekers within the EU framework.

GERMANY

Fatima's experience



Fatima's journey to safety leads her to 📍 **Germany**, where she seeks refuge from the conflict engulfing 📍 **Syria**.



- 1 ▲ After her arrival, Fatima reports to the German authorities as seeking asylum. Her biographic and biometric data is then recorded and stored in the Central Register of Foreigners. Her data is compared with the data already available in the Central Register of Foreigners and those of the Federal Criminal Police Office. Among other things, it is checked whether an initial application, a subsequent application, or possibly a duplicate application has been made. EURODAC is also used to check whether another European state might be responsible for carrying out the asylum procedure. All public authorities subsequently have access to this data to the extent that they require it for their respective areas of responsibility.⁶⁶
- 2 ▼ German authorities issue her an *Ankunftsnachweis* (proof of arrival),⁶⁷ a provisional residence document that marks the beginning of her legal stay in the country while her asylum claim is under review.⁶⁸



⁶⁶ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, "Ankunft und Registrierung."

⁶⁷ According to Section 55 of the Asylgesetz (AsylG), a foreigner applying for asylum is authorized to stay in the federal territory for the purpose of the asylum procedure from the date of issue of the proof of arrival ("Ankunftsnachweis") pursuant to Section 63a(1), AsylG.

⁶⁸ See Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, "Ankunft und Registrierung."

The *Ankunftsnachweis* (valid until the asylum application is filed) and the *Aufenthaltsgestattung* (valid until a decision on the application is made) are critical pieces of documentation for Fatima, containing personal data (names, date and place of birth, gender, height, eye color, etc.⁶⁹) and a biometric picture alongside a bar code (digital seal)⁷⁰ that digitally links to her records within the German authorities' database containing further information (fingerprint data, health data, and data required in connection with integration).⁷¹ When issued, these documents are valid for up to six months and can be renewed. They serve as temporary identification, acknowledging Fatima's legal status as an asylum seeker in Germany and granting her access to medical care, food, shelter, and social benefits.⁷²



Ankunftsnachweis

After registration, Fatima is allocated to a reception facility based on the EASY quota system (Initial Distribution of Asylum-Seekers). There, she waits for an invitation for a personal interview, during which she can present the reasons why she is seeking asylum and actually apply for asylum. Once the asylum application is filed, Fatima receives an *Aufenthaltsgestattung* (permission to reside) which replaces the *Ankunftsnachweis*. This new document, whose form and structure are similar to the previous one, serves as documentation that Fatima is an asylum applicant lawfully residing in Germany.

Despite their importance, the *Ankunftsnachweis* and the *Aufenthaltsgestattung* come with limitations. Issued in paper form as a three-part sheet, they are not perceived as reliable and secure as an *Aufenthaltstitel* (residence permit), national ID card, or passport. This limitation often means Fatima faces additional verification steps when attempting to access certain services. For example, banks can—but are not required to—accept the document as sufficient identification for the opening of a bank account.⁷³ Especially in the financial sector, service providers may be hesitant to accept these documents as sufficient proof of identity due to its temporary nature and limited security features.⁷⁴ Moreover, while Fatima might be legally allowed to seek employment after a certain time and under certain conditions,⁷⁵ she does not have access to professional assistance from state agencies, and employers might be less willing to contract her due to the temporary and uncertain aspect of her legal status reflected in her German identification documents. Fatima also has limited freedom of movement as she is required to stay in areas assigned to her by the authorities (*räumliche Beschränkung*).⁷⁶

Fatima's experience in Germany highlights the nuanced challenges faced by asylum seekers in navigating life in their host countries. While the *Ankunftsnachweis* provides essential legal recognition and facilitates access to fundamental services, its limited acceptance for various civil and financial activities underscores the gap between legal status acknowledgment and full societal integration.

69 See the website of the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

70 Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik, "Der Ankunftsnachweis."

71 See the website of the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

72 Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, "Ankunft und Registrierung."

73 See Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, "Ankunft und Registrierung."

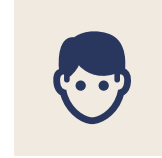
74 Note that, even if an authority has a reliable digital system managing the identity of a specific population, they do not necessarily make available any sort of identification service to third parties. Such identification services are defined on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific regulations governing the national authorities. As a consequence, many third parties might have to rely exclusively on the credential issued to TCNs, or on other sources of data or information they might consider reliable, in compliance with the standards to which they must adhere.



75 Section 61, AsylG.

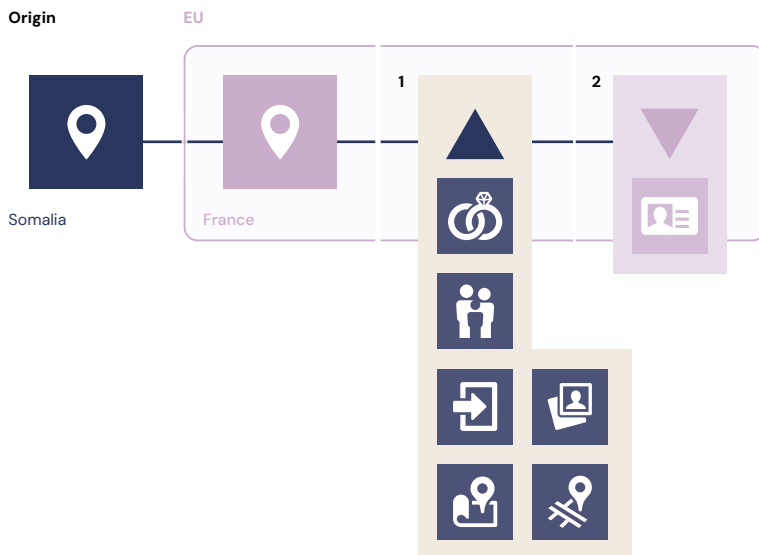
76 Section 56–59b, AsylG.



FRANCE

Yusuf's experience



Yusuf's journey unfolds as he seeks asylum in  **France**, fleeing conflict in his home country,  **Somalia**.



- 1  Upon his arrival and after submitting a request at the prefecture, Yusuf has to provide data and information (marital status, family members, conditions of entry into France, travel itineraries from country of origin, identity photos, and, if possible, an address).
- 2  He is then issued an *attestation de demandeur d'asile* (certificate of asylum seeker)⁷⁷ by the French authorities. EURODAC is also used to check whether another European state might be responsible for carrying out the asylum procedure. The document, which comes in A4 paper form, is valid for ten months in the case of a normal procedure and six months in the case of an accelerated procedure. The *attestation de demandeur d'asile* can be renewed for six months until a decision on the asylum claim is made. It is a critical piece of paper that allows Yusuf to lodge an asylum application and legitimizes his presence in France during the asylum process. As such, Yusuf has twenty-one days to submit a filled asylum request form by post or in person to the Ofpra (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons). After verifying that the file is complete, the Ofpra provides Yusuf with an application number that he can use to track the process online and upload any additional documents. Yusuf then waits for an interview, after which he is provided with a response to his application by post or online, depending on his preference.⁷⁸



77 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Demande d'asile."

78 Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "Demande d'asile."

Throughout this time, the primary function of the *attestation* is to serve as interim identification and proof of Yusuf's asylum seeker status. Its short expiration date can, however, be a barrier for refugees and asylum seekers, preventing them from accessing services that require more stable forms of ID. The *attestation* includes basic security features, such as watermarks to prevent fraud, but it is not as secure as a permanent residence permit.

While this document allows Yusuf to stay legally in France, its utility beyond proving his legal status is limited. It grants him access to healthcare,⁷⁹ education, social benefits, and shelter, aligning with France's commitment to human rights and protection for asylum seekers. However, Yusuf finds that the *attestation* is not always readily accepted for other services, such as opening a bank account or securing housing outside of state-provided collective accommodation, due to its temporary nature and lack of comprehensive security features. While the *attestation* provides essential legal recognition and access to fundamental services, it falls short of enabling full participation in society due to its limited acceptance for various civil and financial activities.

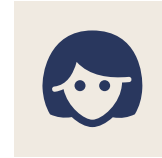




Attestation de demandeur d'asile

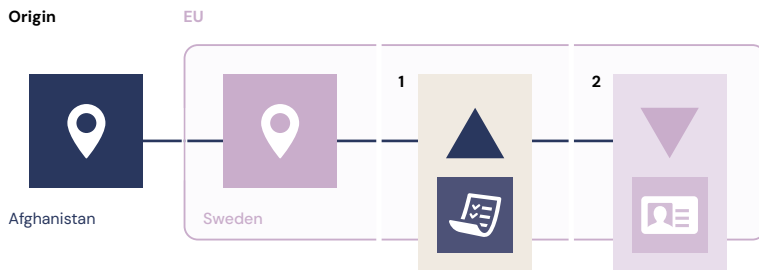
⁷⁹ While full healthcare is provided to asylum applicants, emergency healthcare only is granted prior to the asylum application. Direction de l'information légale et administrative, "[Droits du demandeur d'asile.](#)"



SWEDEN

Seyda's experience



Seyda's path to safety leads her to  Sweden, escaping the turmoil of her native  Afghanistan.



- 1 Her application for asylum in Sweden results in the issuance of an “LMA card,” a pivotal document affirming her legal status as an asylum seeker within Swedish borders. 
- 2 The LMA card,⁸⁰ equipped with Seyda's name, photograph, date of birth, and a unique identification number, acts as her primary form of identification during the asylum process. Notably, the card incorporates several security features, including a machine-readable zone, enhancing its integrity and reducing the risk of unauthorized duplication. These features ensure that the card is a secure and reliable form of identification for Seyda while she awaits the final decision on her asylum application. Seyda does not need to replace her LMA card during the time that she is an asylum seeker. Whenever she visits the Swedish Migration Agency, she can request to extend the card's period of validity, which is done digitally.⁸¹ 

Despite its security, the LMA card's primary role is to signify Seyda's eligibility to remain in Sweden and access essential services. It enables her to receive emergency healthcare, enroll her children in school, access collective accommodation, receive social benefits, and—under certain conditions—seek employment. However, the card's recognition outside of these basic services can be limited. For instance, Seyda discovers that, while the LMA card facilitates access to emergency healthcare and receive emergency healthcare, enroll her children in school, access collective accommodation, receive social benefits, using it for financial services or housing agreements often requires additional verification steps, reflecting its status as a temporary document rather than a comprehensive ID.



LMA card

Seyda's experience underscores the Swedish approach to documentation for asylum seekers, which reflects the practical need to provide asylum seekers with access to critical services. The LMA card shows Sweden's aspiration toward supporting individuals like Seyda during their asylum process, intending to offer a more streamlined and digitalized approach to documentation and identification management for asylum seekers.

80 See Migrationsverket, “LMA Card for Asylum Seekers.”

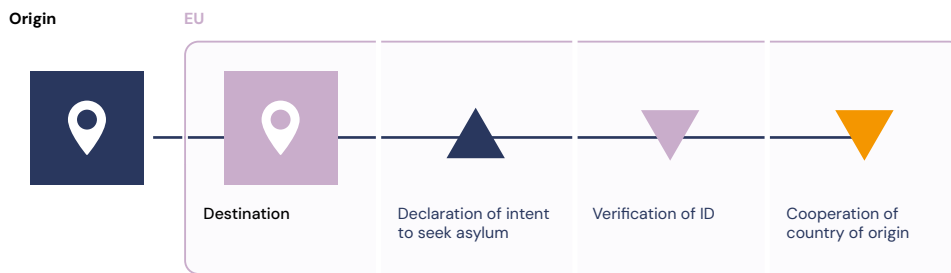
81 Migrationsverket, “LMA Card for Asylum Seekers.”

Conclusion

The experiences of Fatima in Germany, Yusuf in France, and Seyda in Sweden illuminate the varied approaches within the EU towards providing asylum seekers with temporary identification and access to services. While documents like Germany's *Ankunftsnachweis* and *Aufenthalts gestattetung* and France's *attestation de demandeur d'asile* offer legal recognition and access to essential services, their limited security features and temporary nature often pose challenges for asylum seekers in accessing a broader range of services, reflecting a gap between legal acknowledgment and full societal integration. In contrast, Sweden's LMA card, with its enhanced security features and broader service access, represents a more integrated approach, albeit with its own limitations in recognition for certain services. These narratives underscore the ongoing challenge of balancing security, humanitarian obligations, and practical integration needs within the EU's asylum framework, highlighting the importance of continuous policy evolution to support the dignity and rights of asylum seekers.

3 Undocumented, irregular migrant who lodges an asylum application after being apprehended at an EU external border

The scenario is critically relevant for several reasons. It encapsulates the identification challenges faced by both migrants and European authorities at the intersection of border security and humanitarian obligations.



This scenario provides a detailed examination of the identification process for individuals who arrive without (trusted) documentation and wish to lodge an asylum application, highlighting the mechanisms in place for verifying identity claims, the cooperation (or lack thereof) with countries of origin, and the implications for migrants' ability to secure international protection. Through this lens, the study aims to unravel the complexities of verifying migrants' identity, offering insights into potential areas for policy enhancement and operational improvement within the EU's asylum system.

These examples are intended to show how these procedures are *meant* to work. As reports of human rights abuses along Europe's external borders have shown, such policies are not always followed and, in fact, there have been alarming cases of illegal pushbacks against migrants and asylum seekers. As Human Rights Watch reports, "*EU institutions have effectively turned a blind eye to the abuse and violence by border officials at EU's external borders.*"⁸² Particularly troubling are recent reports of the Greek Coast Guard throwing migrants overboard to their deaths and putting detained migrants aboard dangerous inflatable rafts, leading directly to increased fatalities.⁸³



82 Gall, "EU Should Stop Illegal Migrant Pushbacks at Its Borders."

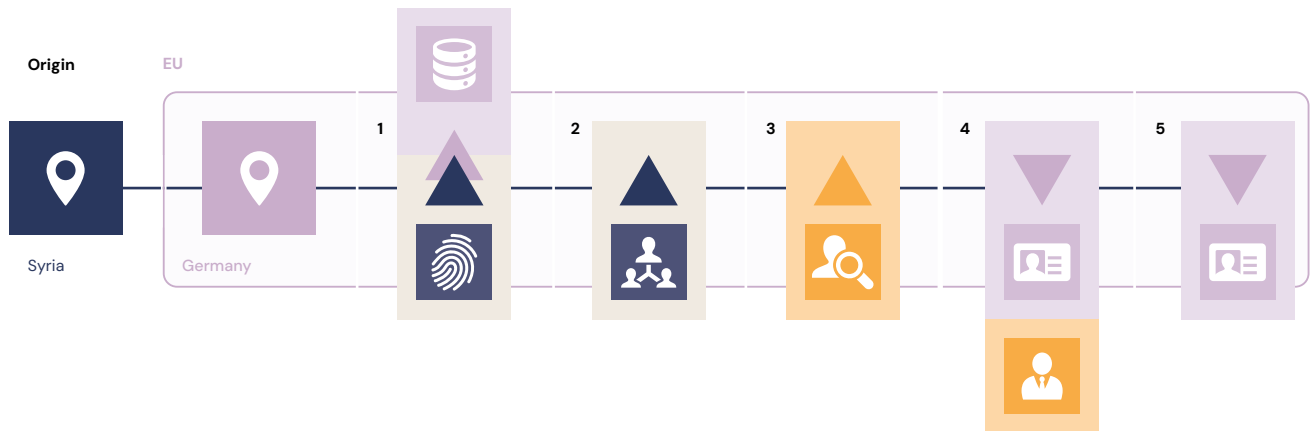
83 Smith and Steele, "Greek Coastguard Threw Migrants Overboard to Their Deaths, Witnesses Say."





GERMANY

Amir's journey



Amir, a  **Syrian** national without any documents,⁸⁴ arrives in  **Germany** seeking asylum. His lack of documentation presents a significant challenge for both him and the German authorities tasked with assessing his claim.



- 1 Upon Amir's irregular entry into Germany, he is apprehended by border  authorities. Following initial processing, his fingerprints are taken and  immediately checked against EURODAC, an EU-wide database designed to compare fingerprints of asylum seekers and irregular migrants.⁸⁵ This step is intended to determine whether Amir has previously applied for asylum in another EU country or has been recorded during another irregular entry. The system shows that Amir has never lodged an asylum application in the Schengen Area.
- 2 Given Amir's claim of Syrian nationality and his lack of documents, German  authorities first ask Amir to provide documentation through friends or family in Syria, as Amir is required to cooperate in obtaining an identity document.⁸⁶
- 3 After Amir proves that it is not possible for him to provide the required  document, Germany initiates a request for information from Syria. This process involves German embassies and consulates corroborating someone's identity and might also involve international organizations, such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The aim is to verify Amir's identity and nationality through any records available in Syrian databases and archives, a task complicated by the ongoing conflict and the varying reliability of data from conflict zones.

⁸⁴ There are a number of reasons why migrants, including asylum seekers, may not have documents: leaving them behind as they fled their place of origin; loss, theft, or destruction; or inefficiency or breakdown of government bureaucracy.

⁸⁵ Note that the EURODAC Regulation has been revised as mentioned above. After the implementation process, which was set to take place within two years from May 2024, asylum seekers will have to provide much more data, such as facial images, a raft of biographic information, and pictures of their identification documents.

⁸⁶ Section 15, AsylG.



4 Pending verification of his identity and asylum claim, Amir is first issued an *Ankunftsnachweis* (proof of arrival), then an *Aufenthaltsgestattung* (temporary residence document), as described in the case of Fatima. These documents acknowledge his status as an asylum seeker and allow him to legally stay in Germany while his application is under review. German authorities use various methods to verify Amir’s identity, such as personal interviews and language analysis.⁸⁷ Ultimately, they decide that Amir is hiding his true identity and his asylum application is rejected.



5 Because his identity cannot be corroborated, Amir cannot be deported and is issued a provisional toleration permit for unidentified persons (*Duldung für Personen mit ungeklärter Identität*).⁸⁸



The *Duldung* is not a residence permit and does not grant lawful residence in Germany; it only eliminates criminal liability for illegal stay and entails a temporary ban on deportation. Amir’s freedom of movement is restricted to the area of the responsible German federal state. He is not allowed to work and receives only reduced social benefits.



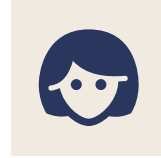
Duldung

⁸⁷ Tangermann, “Identitätssicherung Und -feststellung Im Migrationsprozess.”

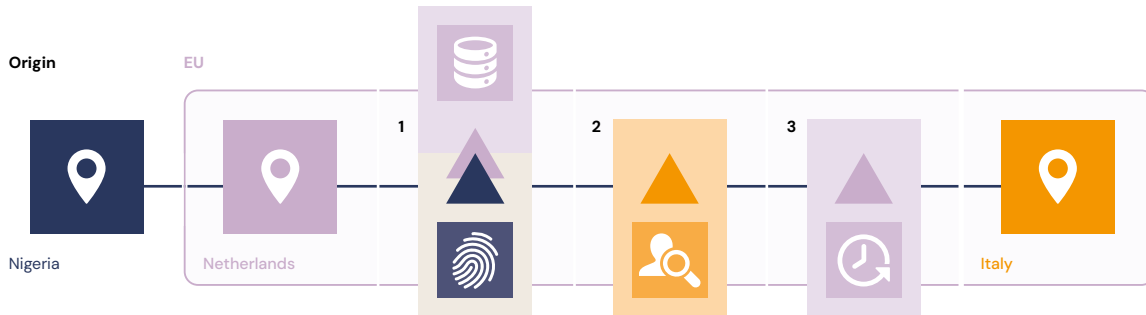
⁸⁸ Section 60b, *AufenthG*.




NETHERLANDS

Lucy's challenge



Lucy, a  **Nigerian** national and a minor who traveled to the EU without her parents, claims asylum in the  **Netherlands**. Lucy carries a Nigerian passport that corroborates her date of birth.



- 1  Upon Lucy's application for asylum in the Netherlands, her fingerprints are collected and checked against the EURODAC system. This initial step enables Dutch authorities to determine if Lucy had previously sought asylum or had been apprehended for irregular entry elsewhere in the EU. The system shows that Lucy has previously been registered in Italy. EURODAC shows a "category 1 hit," meaning that Italy has registered Lucy as an asylum seeker.
- 2  The Netherlands requests information about her from Italy, which proves that Lucy is an adult. The Dutch authorities inform Lucy that they will initiate a take-back procedure for her to be sent back to Italy, as the Document and Identity Office has determined that her passport is fake⁸⁹ and they suspect her to be an adult, based on the information received from Italy. Lucy, through a lawyer, assures that the passport was issued by an official authority in Nigeria and requests further measures to prove her age.⁹⁰
- 3  The Dutch authorities order an age assessment test that shows that Lucy is 18 years old.⁹¹ The Dutch authorities state that she is an adult and that, for further assessment of her identity and to process her asylum claim, she will be sent back to Italy.



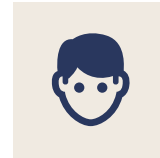
89 Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, "What Does the Document and Identity Office Do?"

90 In various countries, official authorities may issue documents that are, even if they are genuine, not considered full evidence in the EU. See UNHCR, "Left in Limbo."

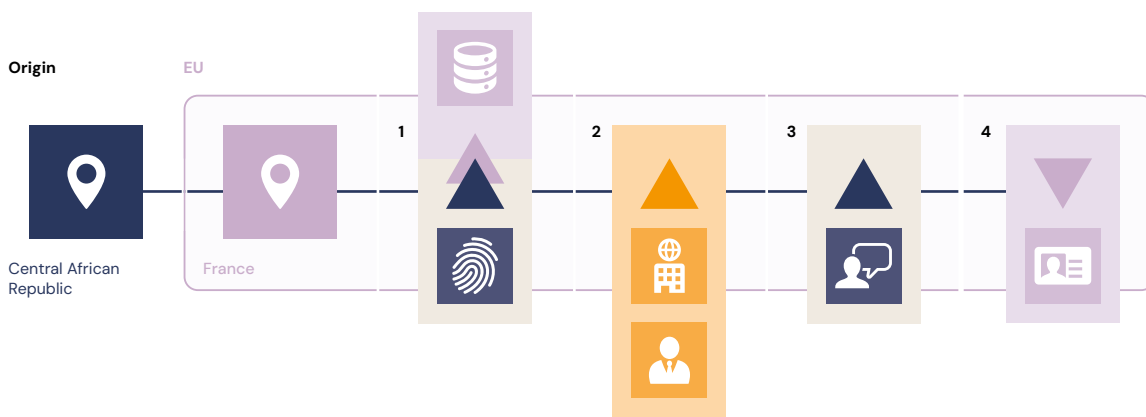
91 Cf. European Asylum Support Office, "Age Assessment Practices in EU+ Countries: Updated Findings." Age assessment tests are controversial and not always reliable; see European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Age Assessment in Europe."

FRANCE

Marc's challenge



Marc fled the 📍 **Central African Republic (CAR)** in search of a better future in France. He irregularly enters 📍 **France** and is apprehended by French authorities on French soil. Marc expresses his intention to seek asylum in France.



- 1 Following Marc's application for asylum, French authorities collect his ▲ **biometric data** for a **EURODAC** check. Results from EURODAC shows that Marc has never placed a claim for asylum in the Schengen Area.⁹²



Marc's birth was never registered at the civil registry in CAR; thus, Marc has never obtained a legal identity. As a result, Marc faces hurdles proving his identity and nationality to French authorities.

- 2 The French authorities undertake efforts to gather information on Marc through ▲ the **embassy** and a **trusted lawyer** in the CAR. The lawyer checks the local birth register in the city Marc claims to have been born. He also talks to NGOs and international organizations that might hold relevant data to corroborate Marc's claims.⁹³ Furthermore, the lawyer speaks to the director of the hospital of Marc's



92 Note that EU regulation (notably in the Asylum Procedures Directive and the Dublin Regulation) establishes the rules in case there is a match, meaning that the asylum seeker has previously lodged an application in another country of the region. As a broad simplification, and if the original asylum application is less than twelve months old, then the TCN cannot lodge a new asylum application, and there are two options. First, if the original application was lodged in a different country, then it is the responsibility of that other country to process the claim. Second, if the claim was lodged in the same country, then there are three options: 1) if the application's conclusion is pending, then the migrant should have the *récépissé* issued at the time of lodging their application; 2) if the application was granted, the TCN should thus obtain a resident card; and 3) if the application was denied, the TCN should leave the EU territory (cf. Directive 2008/115/EC).

93 Directive 2013/32/EU. The EU Asylum Procedure Directive sets the duration of the examination procedure in Article 31. Overall, there is a time limit of six months which can be extended in several circumstances. However, studies have shown that authorities often take more time for the examination. See European Union Agency for Asylum, "4.4.11. The Length of Asylum Processes"; European Union Agency for Asylum, "4.4.10. Length of the Asylum Procedure before the Determining Authorities"; European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "The Length of Asylum Procedures in Europe."

claimed place of birth to determine whether information on Marc’s birth can be found. However, given the lack of official birth registration, the destruction of numerous archives, and limited capacity to access reliable data in the country, no data can be found to support Marc’s claim.

- 3 In the end, the French authorities have to rely on oral information that ▲ Marc provided in the interview process. They make a credibility assessment, corroborating his identity by checking whether what Marc stated shows contradictions or other signs of a lie.⁹⁴ They determine that his statements seem credible.
- 4 If his asylum application is approved, Marc will be issued with a residence ▼ permit that shows the information about his identity he orally provided to the French authorities.⁹⁵



Conclusion

For asylum seekers like Amir, Lucy, and Marc, the journey from apprehension to the issuance of a temporary residence permit involves several critical steps. Authorities first collect biometric data to check against EU systems like EURODAC, which is used to identify previous asylum applications or irregular entries. The process of requesting information from the would-be country of origin involves diplomatic efforts and collaboration with international organizations, aiming to verify the asylum seeker’s identity and nationality. This is neither an objective nor neutral process but one that involves judgements on often sparse and disparate pieces of documentation.

Despite the challenges and complexities of these cases, the issuance of a temporary residence document⁹⁶ provides a legal basis for irregular migrants’ stay during the review of their asylum claims, reflecting the EU’s stated commitment to due process and the protection of individuals seeking refuge. However, as we saw in the cases of asylum seekers highlighted in scenario 2 (asylum seeker pending decision in an EU host country), these temporary documents have limited utility and cannot always guarantee access to essential services.

⁹⁴ Rules are set in Article 4, Directive 2011/95/EU.

⁹⁵ Directorate for Legal and Administrative Information, “Refugee.”

⁹⁶ Note that those temporary residence permits are the same as those examined in scenario 2.

Final remarks

This report has described the context of the EU's approach to migration, outlined some of the implications of the proposed new digital wallet scheme, and explored three composite, persona-based scenarios to illustrate the diversity of migrant identification needs and experiences. It underlines the complexity and variety of migration and identification policies across EU Member States in advance of further analyses of how digitization efforts—especially the EU's new digital wallet scheme—may impact migrants' access and inclusion.

Further research will explore how actual migrants experience identification in their trajectory from place of origin to current residence, and their experience of identification as they seek out access to services and opportunities in their new place of residence. Future research will also highlight how digitization shapes these experiences.

What this preliminary study suggests, however, is that migrants (including relatively privileged, “highly qualified” migrants) must navigate complex bureaucracies and face numerous barriers to accessing public and private services as a result of policy decisions made at the regional, intergovernmental, national, and local levels.

References

EU Directives and Regulations were accessed via the official database of EU law maintained by the Publications Office of the European Union at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>.

Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale. "How to Activate SPID." SPID. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://www.spid.gov.it/en/what-is-spid/how-to-activate-spid/>.

Amelung, Nina. "'Crimmigration Control' across Borders: The Convergence of Migration and Crime Control through Transnational Biometric Databases." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 46, no. 3 (2021): 151–77. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27075121>.

Amnesty International. "EU Migration Pact Agreement Will Lead to a Surge in Suffering." Amnesty International, December 20, 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/eu-migration-pact-agreement-will-lead-to-a-surge-in-suffering/>.

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. "Ankunft und Registrierung." April 1, 2021. <https://www.BAMF.de/DE/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylverfahrens/AnkunftRegistrierung/ankunftregistrierung-node.html>.

———. "The Electronic Residence Permit." April 2020. https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/MigrationAufenthalt/ElektronischerAufenthalt/broschuere-eat-a4-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=13.

———. "Erste Schritte in Deutschland." March 1, 2024. <https://www.BAMF.de/DE/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Migrathek/ErsteSchritte/ersteschritte-node.html>.

Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik. "Der Ankunftsnachweis." Deutschland Digital Sicher BSI. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://www.bsi.bund.de/dok/7708210>.

———. "Online-Ausweisfunktion." Deutschland Digital Sicher BSI. Accessed June 27, 2024. <https://www.bsi.bund.de/dok/8920706>.

- Bundestministerium der Justiz. Asylgesetz (AsylG) (2008). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_asylvfg/index.html.
- . . AufenthG – Gesetz Über Den Aufenthalt, Die Erwerbstätigkeit Und Die Integration von Ausländern Im Bundesgebiet 1 (July 30, 2004). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufenthg_2004/BJNR195010004.html.
- . . AufenthV – Aufenthaltsverordnung (2004). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufenthv/BJNR294510004.html>.
- . . Federal Act on Registration/Bundesmeldegesetz (May 3, 2013). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_bmg/englisch_bmg.html.
- Bundezentralamt für Steuern. “Information for Registration Offices and Tax Offices.” https://www.bzst.de/EN/Authorities/information_for_registration_offices/information_for_registration_offices_node.html.
- Calder, Simon. “EU to Water down Brexit Travel Checks for British Passengers as Border Plan Delayed.” *The Independent*, August 20, 2024. <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/border-checks-eu-uk-brexit-entry-b2581142.html>.
- Caribou Digital. “The European Digital Identity Wallet: Why It Matters and to Whom.” Caribou Digital, June 2024. <http://www.cariboudigital.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/European-Digital-Identity-Wallet-Brief.pdf>.
- . . “Identity and Migration.” <https://www.cariboudigital.net/identity-and-migration/>.
- Dienstleistungen – Service Berlin. “elektronischer Aufenthaltstitel (eAT) – Ausgabe.” Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/326231/>.
- Direction de l’information légale et administrative. “Assurance maladie d’un étranger qui s’installe en France.” Service-Public.fr, April 2, 2024. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F12859>.
- . . “Contrôle d’identité.” Service-Public.fr, May 3, 2023. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1036>.
- . . “Demande d’asile.” Service-Public.fr, June 30, 2024. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F35534/O?idFicheParent=F2232>.
- . . “Droits du demandeur d’asile.” Service-Public.fr, June 25, 2024. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F32454>.
- . . “Passeport talent: carte de séjour pluriannuelle d’un étranger en France.” Service-Public.fr, January 1, 2024. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F16922?lang=fr>.
- Directorate for Legal and Administrative Information. “Refugee: Residence Permit, Travel Document and Accompanying Document.” Service-Public.fr. Accessed October 15, 2024. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F15401?lang=en>.

- Düsseldorf, Landeshauptstadt. "Gebühren für elektronische Aufenthaltstitel (eAT)." Accessed October 18, 2024. <https://www.duesseldorf.de/auslaenderamt/aufenthalt/eat-gebuehren>.
- Estonian Police and Border Guard Board. "Digital ID." Accessed June 27, 2024. <https://www.politsei.ee/en/instructions/digital-id>.
- . "Residence Permit Card for an Adult." Accessed June 27, 2024. <https://www.politsei.ee/en/instructions/residence-permit-card-for-an-adult>.
- . "State Fee Amounts." Accessed March 17, 2025. <https://www.politsei.ee/en/instructions/state-fee-amounts/residence-permit-and-rights-of-residence>.
- ETIAS. "ETIAS Implementation Likely Delayed to 2025: Unforeseen Issues and Olympics Complications." September 26, 2023. <https://etias.com/articles/etias-implementation-likely-delayed-to-2025>.
- European Asylum Support Office. "Age Assessment Practices in EU+ Countries: Updated Findings." July 2021. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EASO_Age_assessment_practices_updated.pdf.
- European Commission. "Estonia - Highly-Qualified Worker." EU Immigration Portal. Accessed October 14, 2024. https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/estonia-highly-qualified-worker_en.
- . "European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation," September 17, 2024. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eudi-regulation>.
- . "Germany - Highly-Qualified Worker." EU Immigration Portal. Accessed October 14, 2024. https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/germany-highly-qualified-worker_en.
- . "Long-Term Residents." Migration and Home Affairs. Accessed June 27, 2024. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/long-term-residents_en.
- . "Pact on Migration and Asylum." Migration and Home Affairs, May 21, 2024. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.
- . "What Are EU Digital Identity Wallets." EU Digital Identity Wallets. Accessed June 27, 2024. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/sites/display/EUDIGITALIDENTITYWALLET/What+is+the+wallet>.
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles. "Age Assessment in Europe." December 2022. <https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Legal-Note-13-FINAL.pdf>.
- . "The Length of Asylum Procedures in Europe." Asylum Information Database, October 2016. <https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AIDA-Brief-DurationProcedures.pdf>.

- European Digital Rights. "Civil Society Calls for an End to the Expansion of Eu's Eurodac Database." December 4, 2023. <https://edri.org/our-work/civil-society-calls-for-an-end-to-the-expansion-of-eus-eurodac-database/>.
- European Union Agency for Asylum. "4.4.10. Length of the Asylum Procedure before the Determining Authorities." In *Asylum Report 2023*, 2023. <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/4410-length-asylum-procedure-determining-authorities>.
- . "4.4.11. The Length of Asylum Processes." In *Asylum Report 2022*, 2022. <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2022/4411-length-asylum-processes>.
- FATF. "Guidance on Digital ID," March 2020. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Financialinclusionandnpoissues/Digital-identity-guidance.html>.
- Federal Office for Information Security. "German Electronic Residence Permit (eAT)." Deutschland Digital Sicher BSI. Accessed June 27, 2024. <https://www.bsi.bund.de/EN/Themen/Oeffentliche-Verwaltung/Elektronische-Identitaeten/Elektronische-Ausweisdokumente/Elektronischer-Aufenthaltstitel/elektronischer-aufenthaltstitel.html?nn=920668>.
- France Titres. "Les documents d'identité." République Française. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://ants.gouv.fr/nos-missions/les-titres-produits-par-l-ants/les-documents-d-identite>.
- Freie Hansestadt Bremen. "eAT/Electronic Residence Permit." Service Portal Bremen, March 21, 2024. <https://www.service.bremen.de/dienstleistungen/eat-electronic-residence-permit-145254?reg=kosten>.
- Gall, Lydia. "EU Should Stop Illegal Migrant Pushbacks at Its Borders." Human Rights Watch, December 8, 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/08/eu-should-stop-illegal-migrant-pushbacks-its-borders>.
- German Federal Foreign Office. "Applying for a Visa: General Information." June 6, 2024. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/-/215870>.
- . "Top 10 Questions on the Consular Services Portal." Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://digital.diplo.de/FAQ>.
- . "Visa Applications in the Consular Services Portal." German Federal Foreign Office. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://digital.diplo.de/Visa>.
- German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. "All You Need to Know About the Electronic Residence Permit (eAT)." February 2011. https://www.landkreis-augsburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Ausl%C3%A4nderamt/Informationsbrosch%C3%BCre_eAT_-_Englisch.pdf.
- Gouvernement Français. "Arrival in France." France-Visas. Accessed October 18, 2024. <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/votre-arrivee-en-france>.
- . "Déposer votre dossier à l'ambassade de France En Albanie." France-Visas. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/albanie>.

- Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst. "What Does the Document and Identity Office Do?" Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://ind.nl/en/about-us/our-organisation/identity-and-document-investigation-unit/what-does-the-document-and-identity-office-do>.
- Migrationsverket. "LMA Card for Asylum Seekers." October 30, 2023. <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/While-you-are-waiting-for-a-decision/LMA-card.html>.
- Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères. "Frais de Visa." Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/documents/d/france-visas/frais-de-visa-francais>.
- Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale. "Rights and Duties of Foreign Nationals for Long-Term Stays in Italy – Over 90 Days." Visa for Italy. Accessed October 14, 2024. <https://vistoperitalia.esteri.it/obblighipartegenerale/en/obblighidoverigenerale.aspx>.
- . "Types of Visa and Duration." Accessed October 14, 2024. https://www.esteri.it/en/servizi-consolari-e-visti/ingressosoggiornoinitalia/visto_ingresso/tipologie_visto_durata/.
- Polizia di Stato. "Issue/Renewal/Update of Residence Permits and Residence Cards." August 31, 2023. <https://questure.poliziadistato.it/it/Arezzo/articolo/11045bc04cf3a33e7284773614>.
- ServicePortal Berlin, "Residence permit for qualified skilled workers with vocational training." <https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/305304/en/>.
- Sironi, A., C. Bauloz, and M. Emmanuel, eds. *Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law, No. 34*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2019. <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg34-glossary-migration>.
- Smith, Lucile, and Ben Steele. "Greek Coastguard Threw Migrants Overboard to Their Deaths, Witnesses Say." BBC, June 17, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cOvv717yvpeo>.
- Tangermann, Julian. "Identitätssicherung Und -feststellung Im Migrationsprozess." Europäische Migrationsnetzwerk, 2017. https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/EMN/Studien/wp76-emn-identitaetssicherung-feststellung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=18.
- UNHCR. "Left in Limbo: UNHCR Study on the Implementation of the Dublin III Regulation." August 2017. <https://www.refworld.org/reference/regionalreport/unhcr/2017/en/119137>.
- Vassor, Emmanuel. *Access to Digital Identity for People on the Move in Europe*. International Organization for Migration, 2023. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-075-r-access-to-digital-identity.pdf>.

- Vavoula, Niovi. "Interoperability of European Centralised Databases: Another Nail in the Coffin of Third-Country Nationals' Privacy?" *EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy*, July 8, 2019. <https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/interoperability-of-european-centralised-databases-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-third-country-nationals-privacy/>.
- Weinar, Agnieszka, and Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels. "Highly-Skilled Migration: Concept and Definitions." In *Highly-Skilled Migration: Between Settlement and Mobility: IMISCOE Short Reader*, edited by Agnieszka Weinar and Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, 9–35. Cham: Springer, 2020. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-42204-2_2.

