

Questionnaire and observations for early identification of asylum seekers having suffered traumatic experiences

The tool is not applicable to determine the legal status of a person and cannot be used to limit any claims or rights in later process.

What is the purpose of the Questionnaire ?

The PROTECT Questionnaire at hand has been developed to facilitate the process of receiving asylum seekers in accordance with the directives of the European Council¹.

The Questionnaire facilitates the early recognition of persons having suffered traumatic experiences, e.g. victims of torture, psychological, physical or sexual violence.

Asylum seekers having suffered such traumatic experiences should be referred to professionals of the Health Care System at an early stage in the asylum process in order to avoid deterioration and chronic manifestation of health problems and enable adaptations in reception conditions and asylum procedure.

When to use the Questionnaire ?

Upon arrival in the receiving country first aid and physical shelter should be provided. It is appropriate to carry out an interview with the asylum seeker using this Questionnaire preferably after a period of rest (e.g. 7/10 days).

The Questionnaire should be applied even under difficult circumstances, rather than being neglected.

Sometimes psychological problems caused by traumatic experiences begin to appear later. That's the reason why another investigation should be carried out or the Questionnaire should be filled out a second time and the rating may have to be corrected.

¹ With respect to article 17 in particular but also to articles 15 and 20 the Council Directive laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers (2003/9/EC of January 27th 2003) and with particular respect to article 12 §3 and article 13 §3 indent a) of the Council Directive on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing international protection (2005/85/CE of December 1st 2005).

How to apply the Questionnaire ?

Before asking the set of questions, please read the following short introduction to the asylum seeker to inform him or her about the purpose of the Questionnaire and to support an environment of trust and reassurance.

The Questionnaire establishes a rating system ("low risk", "medium risk" or "high risk") for having suffered traumatic experiences.

After completing the Questionnaire a copy should be given to the asylum seeker with the recommendation that he or she submits this paper whenever meeting a Health Care System professional, a legal advisor or a reception official.

Text to be read before asking the following questions :

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

The European Union has issued instructions to take into account the situation of some asylum seekers who need specific care.

This Questionnaire has been created jointly by specialized health and legal professionals. It will allow us to speak about your health.

The aim of this Questionnaire is to support you through raising awareness about your special needs.

Consequently, there are no good or bad answers to the questions and it is important that you answer as freely and naturally as possible.

When answering the questions, keep in mind the experiences of the last weeks.

Questionnaire and observations for early identification of asylum seekers having suffered traumatic experiences

Questions		Yes	No
<i>"Often" means : more than usual and causing suffering</i>			
1	Do you often have problem falling asleep ?		
2	Do you often have nightmares ?		
3	Do you often suffer from headaches ?		
4	Do you often suffer from other physical pains ?		
5	Do you easily get angry ?		
6	Do you often think about painful past events ?		
7	Do you often feel scared or frightened ?		
8	Do you often forget things in your daily life ?		
9	Do you find yourself losing interest in things ?		
10	Do you often have trouble concentrating ?		
Number of questions answered "Yes" →			

Rating :
 Please mark the proper category with an X to indicate the level of risk of traumatisation

0-3	4-7	8-10
Low risk	Medium risk	High risk

In case of a "medium risk" or a "high risk" rating the asylum seeker should be referred for medical and psychological examination !

A "low risk" doesn't exclude the possibility of the asylum seeker having suffered traumatic experiences. Symptoms may appear later. Another screening should be carried out.

Further observations (For example : the person cries a lot, doesn't react, pays no attention... / difficulties to understand the questions / special circumstances for the interview...):

These observations must be shared with the person

Name of asylum seeker :

Date of birth :

Country of origin :

Date :

Organisation (stamp if possible)

After the review a copy of the Questionnaire should be given to the asylum seeker with the recommendation that he or she submits this paper whenever meeting with a Health Care System professional, a legal advisor or a reception official.