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Section 8

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Introduction

Member States must observe and comply with general international and regional legal standards on data protection, including European Union law on the processing of personal data, in the conduct of their asylum procedures.¹ In accordance with EC law, personal data encompasses any information relating to an identified applicant, or which can identify an applicant directly or indirectly.² Moreover, European Community rules apply to any operation which is performed upon such personal data in the course of the asylum procedure.³ With respect to the protection of personal data in general, international law requires that an applicant for international protection must consent to the sharing of his or her personal data with a third party, unless there is an overriding interest at stake, either of the individual concerned, or of another individual or of society at large. Circumstances in which consent is not required are an exception, in which case disclosure must be necessary, in accordance with law, and proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued.⁴

Confidentiality in asylum procedures is critically important, as the unauthorized disclosure of information regarding an individual application for international protection - or regarding the fact that an application has been made - to third parties in the country of origin or elsewhere could:

- (i) endanger any family members, community members, or associates of the applicant living in the country of origin;

¹ The Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC). See also Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1981 Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, Council of Europe. Article 41 of the APD stresses that Member States must ensure that the authorities implementing the APD are bound by the confidentiality principle as defined in national law.

² Article 2 (a) of the Data Protection Directive states that “*‘personal data’ shall mean any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identification number or to one or more factors specific to his physical, physiological, mental, economic, cultural or social identity.*”

³ Article 2 (b) of the Data Protection Directive states that “*‘processing of personal data’ (‘processing’) shall mean any operation or set of operations which is performed upon personal data, whether or not by automatic means, such as collection, recording, organization, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, blocking, erasure or destruction.*”

⁴ UNHCR, *Country of Origin Information: Towards Enhanced International Cooperation*, February 2004, Paragraph 40.

- (ii) endanger the applicant in the event of his or her return to the country of origin;
- (iii) endanger the applicant in the host State;
- (iv) result in the applicant becoming a refugee '*sur place*'.⁵

UNHCR has repeatedly stressed the need to protect the confidentiality of the applicant and the application throughout the asylum procedure⁶, and reiterated the well-established principle that information regarding applicants for international protection should not be shared with the country of origin.⁷

As such, in general terms, UNHCR welcomed the inclusion of Article 22 in the APD, which regards the specific issue of the collection of information on individual cases.

Article 22 of the APD provides that:

“For the purposes of examining individual cases, Member States shall not:

(a) directly disclose information regarding individual applications for asylum, or the fact that an application has been made, to the alleged actor(s) of persecution of the applicant for asylum;

(b) obtain any information from the alleged actor(s) of persecution in a manner that would result in such actor(s) being directly informed of the fact that an application has been made by the applicant in question, and would jeopardise the physical integrity of the applicant and his/her dependants, or the liberty and security of his/her family members still living in the country of origin.”

However, the efficacy of this provision as a safeguard is significantly undermined by the use of the word ‘directly’. Article 22 only prohibits *direct* disclosure of information regarding the application for asylum, and prohibits obtaining information in way that the actor of persecution is *directly* informed that an application has been made by an applicant. As such, it does not prohibit the *indirect* disclosure of information regarding an application for international protection to alleged actors of persecution, which could jeopardise the life, liberty and security of the applicant and/or his/her family members still living in the country of origin. UNHCR recommends that national legislation omits the term ‘direct’ and encompasses disclosure in any manner.

⁵ UNHCR, *Country of Origin Information: Towards Enhanced International Cooperation*, February 2004. This is also referred to in Section 14 of this report on subsequent applications.

⁶ UNHCR ExCom Conclusion No. 91 (LII) (2001) on the registration of refugees and asylum seekers. See also *Asylum Processes (Fair and Efficient Asylum Procedures)*, Global Consultations on International Protection, Third Track – Executive Committee Meetings, EC/GC/01/12, 31 May 2001, paragraph 50(m): *“The asylum procedure should at all stages respect the confidentiality of all aspects of an asylum claim, including the fact that the asylum-seeker has made such a request. No information on the asylum application should be shared with the country of origin.”*

⁷ UNHCR, *Addressing Security Concerns Without Undermining Refugee Protection - UNHCR's Perspective*, 29 November 2001, Rev.1, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3c0b880e0.html>.

Transposition

Most of the Member States surveyed have transposed or reflected Article 22 of the APD in national legislation. These are Bulgaria⁸, Czech Republic⁹, Finland¹⁰, France¹¹, Greece¹², Italy¹³, the Netherlands¹⁴ and the UK¹⁵. German asylum law does not explicitly

⁸ Article 63(4) LAR which states that “no information about aliens who are seeking or have been granted protection shall be gathered from or divulged to the persecuting official authorities and organizations”.

⁹ Section 19 ASA: “(1) The Ministry is entitled to establish any and all data required for issuing decisions on the matter of international protection. When establishing the data pursuant to the first sentence, the Ministry will take into consideration the protection of an applicant for granting of international protection and his/her family members in the country of which the applicant is a citizen or in case of a stateless person, a country of his/her last permanent residence. The Ministry or other state or public administration bodies, if applicable, shall not disclose any information regarding the application for granting of international protection to any person who is allegedly responsible for persecution or serious harm in any manner, and shall not obtain any information on the applicant for granting of international protection from any person who is allegedly responsible for persecution or serious harm in connection with the proceedings on international protection. (2) The Ministry shall inform the participant in the proceedings about its obligation to care for personal data protection.”

¹⁰ *Ulkomaalaislaki* (Aliens’ Act 301/2004). The new section 97 b of the Aliens’ Act will state: “Designated authorities may not in an individual matter concerning international protection obtain information in a manner that would result in the persecutor or the one inflicting serious harm being informed of the fact that an application has been made by the applicant in question, and would jeopardize the applicant or his or her dependants.”

¹¹ Article R. 723-2 *Ceseda* states: “The collection of information necessary for this examination shall not result in direct disclosure of information regarding individual application for asylum, or the fact that an application has been made, to the alleged actor(s) of persecution of the applicant for asylum.”

¹² Article 16 PD 90/2008: “For the purposes of examining individual cases, the authorities competent to receive and examine an application, the Central Authority and the authorities competent to decide shall not: (a) disclose information regarding individual applications or the fact that an application has been made, to the alleged actors of persecution of the applicant; (b) ask for any information from the alleged actors of persecution in a manner that would result in directly or indirectly informing them of the fact that an application has been made by the applicant in question, and would jeopardize the physical integrity of the applicant and his/her dependants, or the liberty and security of his/her family members still living in the country of origin.”

¹³ Article 25 of the d.lgs. 25/2008, states that “for the purposes of carrying out the procedure, in no case can information be disclosed to the alleged actors of persecution of the applicant. In no case can the Territorial Commissions and the National Commission disclose information on the application of international protection lodged by the applicant or other information that might jeopardize the physical integrity of the applicant and his/her dependants, or the liberty and security of his/her family members still residing in the country of origin”.

¹⁴ Article 2:5 General Administrative Law Act states that anyone involved in the performance of the duties of an administrative authority who in the process gains access to information which s/he knows, or should reasonably infer, to be of a confidential nature, and who is not already subject to a duty of secrecy by virtue of his/her office or profession or any statutory regulation, shall not disclose such information unless s/he is by statutory regulation obliged to do so or disclosure is necessary in consequence of his/her duties (1); this applies to institutions, and persons belonging to them or working for them, involved by an administrative authority in the performance of its duties, and to institutions and persons belonging to them or working for them, performing a duty assigned to them by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament as well (2).

prohibit the determining authority (BAMF) from contacting a potential actor of persecution with a view to gaining information about the applicant. However, contacting such authorities or other actors is not possible if the “overriding interests” of the person concerned would be affected.¹⁶ According to the BAMF’s interpretation of the relevant provision, this excludes not only passing on information to public authorities of any alleged State where persecution occurs, but also prohibits any contact or communication of the BAMF with these bodies which might suggest that an application for asylum has been made.

Article 22 APD is partially transposed in Slovenia, in that Article 22(b) is not adequately reflected in national legislation, and the provision does not encompass non-state actors of persecution.¹⁷ At the time of UNHCR’s research, Belgium and Spain had not transposed or reflected Article 22 of the APD in national legislation, regulations or administrative provisions. However, at the time of writing, a proposal for amendments to the Royal Decree of 11 July 2003 concerning the CGRA provides for the transposition

¹⁵ Immigration Rule 3391A states that “For the purposes of examining individual applications for asylum (i) information provided in support of an application and the fact that an application has been made shall not be disclosed to the alleged actor(s) of persecution of the applicant, and(ii) information shall not be obtained from the alleged actor(s) of persecution that would result in their being **directly** informed that an application for asylum has been made by the applicant in question and would jeopardise the physical integrity of the applicant and his dependants, or the liberty and security of his family members still living in the country of origin. This paragraph shall also apply where the Secretary of State is considering revoking a person’s refugee status in accordance with these Rules.”[inserted by [HC 82](#) with effect from 1st December 2007]

¹⁶ Section 7 (2) Asylum Procedure Act: *The data shall be collected from the data subject . They may also be collected from other public authorities, foreign authorities and non-public agencies without involving the data subject if*

1. *this is allowed or expressly required by this Act or another legal provision;*
2. *it is obviously in the interest of the data subject and there is no reason to assume that he would refuse his/her consent if he were aware of his personal data being collected;*
3. *the cooperation of the data subject is not sufficient or would require an unreasonable effort;*
4. *the task at hand, by its very nature, makes it necessary to collect data from other persons or agencies or*
5. *it is necessary in order to verify information provided by the data subject.*

Data may only be collected on the basis of sentence 2, items 3 and 4 and from foreign authorities or non-public agencies if there are no indications suggesting that overriding interests of the data subject that warrant protection might be affected.

¹⁷ Article 129 IPA states “(1) All confidential asylum data presented in the procedure under this Act by an applicant and person granted international protection in the Republic of Slovenia shall be protected by the competent authorities for the implementation of this Act from the authorities of the applicant’s country of origin. The interested public may only be informed upon the applicant’s consent”.

of both Articles 22 and 41 of the APD in Belgian legislation.¹⁸ The new Asylum Law in Spain transposes Article 22 (b) APD.¹⁹

UNHCR is pleased to note that the standard set in the national legislation of the majority of states surveyed is higher than that of the APD insofar as it is not limited to direct disclosure. The national legislation of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain is not qualified in this way and prohibits disclosure in any manner.

Recommendation

UNHCR welcomes the explicit reaffirmation of the confidentiality principle in relation to applicants for international protection. However, in UNHCR's view, state responsibility in this regard extends not only to direct but also to indirect disclosure to alleged actors of persecution or serious harm. UNHCR, therefore, recommends that Article 22 of the APD be amended to omit the word "directly".²⁰

Informing the applicant about the confidentiality of proceedings

An applicant may not provide a full account of the reasons for the application for international protection, if s/he fears that information regarding the application may be divulged to the alleged actor of persecution or serious harm, placing at risk any family or community members or others still living in the country of origin. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the applicant is informed, at the very outset of the procedure and in a language s/he understands, that the Member State will not disclose the fact that the application has been made, and will not disclose any information regarding the application to the alleged actor of persecution or serious harm.²¹

In a number of the Member States surveyed, UNHCR observed that the applicant is informed of the confidentiality of proceedings in written form.²² UNHCR observed that

¹⁸ The proposal foresees a new paragraph to be added to Article 4 of the Royal Decree of 11 July 2003 concerning the CGRA. It should nevertheless be noted that Article 10 of the Royal Decree of 2 October 1937 regarding the statute of public service requires the case manager to be discreet and have respect for the privacy of the asylum applicant, and case managers must observe the law of 8 December 1992 concerning the protection of private life.

¹⁹ Article 26 New Asylum Law states: "*The Administration shall seek to ensure that the information needed for the evaluation of applications for protection is not obtained from the actors of persecution or the parties responsible for the serious harm being informed that the person concerned is applying for international protection or that his or her application is being considered, or in any way that would jeopardize the integrity of the person concerned or the persons for whom the applicant is responsible, or the freedom and safety of his or her family members who are still living in the country of origin.*"

²⁰ Recast Article 26(a) would address this need: APD Recast Proposal 2009.

²¹ See UNHCR Handbook paragraph 200: "*it is, of course, of the utmost importance that the applicant's statements will be treated as confidential and that he be so informed.*"

²² Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Slovenia and Spain.

in some Member States, applicants were routinely informed of the confidentiality of proceedings at the outset of interviews.²³

Recommendation

All Member States must ensure that all applicants are informed, at the earliest possible stage, and in a language that s/he understands, that no information regarding the fact of the application, or regarding the application itself, shall be disclosed to the alleged actor of persecution or serious harm. Such information should be reiterated before the beginning of the personal interview.

Obtaining information from the country of origin

Country of origin information is crucial in determining who is in need of international protection. The information needed to assess an application for international protection is both general and case-specific. In other words, in addition to information relating to the general situation prevailing in countries and regions of origin, determining authorities may desire specific information relating to particular issues raised by an individual applicant, or relating to the applicant him/herself.

In practice, the determining authorities of some Member States obtain information from sources in the country of origin. Some Member States address case-specific questions to their embassy or consular services in the country of origin. The embassy or consular services in the country of origin may consult local and national authorities, institutions, NGOs, groups or private individuals in the country of origin in order to gather the relevant information. Some Member States conduct fact-finding missions to countries of origin where they meet with various organizations, groups or private individuals of interest. These fact-finding missions are used to gather information regarding general circumstances in the country of origin and also to address specific questions regarding individual applicants.²⁴

Recourse to information sources in the country of origin can, in appropriate circumstances, be a useful means of helping to establish the facts of an application for international protection.²⁵ However, it is critical that any such contacts or requests do not result in the disclosure of information regarding the application for international protection to the alleged actors of persecution or serious harm. It is also essential to

²³ Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain (with regard to interviews in the regular procedure but not always with regard to application interviews), and the UK. See also Section 5 on the requirements of a personal interview.

²⁴ For example, Finland has conducted such fact-finding missions. For indications as to the contacts that are used, see the lists of interviewed organizations and persons annexed to the reports from the fact-finding missions to Afghanistan and Iraq available at: <http://www.migri.fi/netcomm/content.asp?path=8,2470,2673,2680>.

²⁵ UNHCR, *Country of Origin Information: Towards Enhanced International Cooperation*, February 2004,.

ensure the safety of the sources consulted. As such, Member States are obliged to take all necessary precautions and ensure that national, regional and international standards for the protection of personal data are observed.

In the course of this research, UNHCR was informed by the research department of the determining authority in Belgium (CEDOCA) that researchers never reveal the names of applicants and the person concerned is only described.²⁶ The case workers are trained on how to pose questions to researchers. If the question is posed in a way that would endanger the asylum applicant and/or family members still in the country of origin, the question is rephrased by the researcher. Sometimes the embassy is told a name, but they are instructed not to use the name when contacting the alleged actor(s) of persecution. CEDOCA noted that when there is a chance that the alleged actor(s) have become aware of the fact that an asylum application has been made by the applicant, the applicant is recognized as a *réfugié sur place*. However, CEDOCA assured UNHCR that this only happens rarely.²⁷

UNHCR's audit of case files in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, and Spain did not reveal any concerns regarding disclosure of information to the authorities of the countries of origin, or to alleged non-state actors of persecution or serious harm.²⁸

However, a few concerns were raised for UNHCR during the research which should be noted.

UNHCR's audit of case files in France did not raise any concerns regarding disclosure of information by the determining authority, OFPRA. However, there is concern regarding the conduct of some of the Prefectures which are responsible for the issue of residence permits and removal orders and their enforcement. One of the case files audited by UNHCR in France revealed that the Prefecture had contacted police officers within the French Embassy in the country of origin, who in turn contacted the authorities of the country of origin.²⁹ Evidence in the case file revealed that the authorities in the country of origin were informed of the application for asylum, as they gave their views on the manifestly unfounded nature of the claim. The determining authority subsequently recognised the applicant as a refugee. The Ministry of Immigration informed UNHCR that it has repeatedly reminded all actors involved with asylum applicants of the law requiring non-disclosure of information, and that prefectures have been instructed not to directly contact French embassies and consulates abroad.

²⁶ The determining authority, CGRA, is supported by the Centre for Documentation and Research ("Centrum voor Documentatie en Research", henceforth; CEDOCA).

²⁷ Interview with the head of the Centre for Documentation and Research (CEDOCA), at the CGRA on 20 January 2009.

²⁸ No audit of relevant case files was conducted in Slovenia.

²⁹ Case file 26A where the SCTIP '*Service de coopération technique internationale de police*' was contacted.

In Germany, the determining authority (BAMF) reported that in case further clarification of the facts of a case is required, BAMF, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requests the German diplomatic representations abroad to conduct investigations, if necessary with involvement of trusted third parties. Pursuant to the internal guidelines of the BAMF, only certain units have exclusive responsibility for these requests.³⁰ From the case files audited by UNHCR, no conclusion could be drawn with regard to the actual practice of the BAMF, as in none of the case-files was it evident from the inserted documents that further investigations had been made. However, one of the lawyers consulted by UNHCR in the course of this research reported that requests for information submitted by the BAMF or administrative courts to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have sometimes been researched in a manner which could put the relatives of the person concerned at risk, or make probable the disclosure of the applicant's name to the authorities of the country of origin.³¹ Another lawyer³² drew attention to the fact that the authorities responsible for repatriation (*Zentrale Rückführungsstellen*) in Bavaria conduct their own hearing even before the BAMF interview has been carried out. The lawyer reported that, in the course of such hearings, applicants are asked to obtain identity documents or other documents through the authorities of the country of origin, or with the help of relatives. He mentioned an incident in which the *Zentrale Rückführungsstelle* called authorities in the country of origin during the hearing in order to verify facts as presented by the applicant.

In June 2006 and February 2007, prior to the entry into force of the APD, the Spanish determining authority OAR undertook two fact-finding missions to Colombia in order to verify with Colombian authorities the authenticity of supporting documentation in asylum applications. The last of these missions related to 1,400 documents from 700 asylum applications. The missions consisted in checking if the documents presented by the applicants in support of their applications were registered with the public authorities who had apparently issued them. The OAR asserted that in this process, the applicants' data were not disclosed and that the Colombian government was not the alleged actor of persecution or serious harm. However, UNHCR, NGOs and lawyers assisting applicants expressed serious concerns regarding the potential risk of violating the principle of confidentiality, and thereby placing applicants and/or their family members at risk. Links between the authorities and the actors of persecution in Colombia have frequently been denounced.³³

³⁰ Internal Guidelines for the Asylum Procedure, under: "Enquiries to the MfA", p. (1/4);
Internal Guidelines for the Asylum Procedure, under: "Data Exchange on the international level", p. (1/1).

³¹ Lawyer X1.

³² Lawyer X2.

³³ See among others: <http://report2009.amnesty.org/en/regions/americas/colombia> and <http://www.nrc.no/?did=9401258>.

Recommendations

Member States must take all necessary steps to ensure that competent authorities do not disclose information regarding individual applications for international protection, nor the fact that an application has been made, to the alleged actors of persecution or serious harm.

Any personnel authorized to seek or obtain information from the country of origin must have received specific training and instructions on data protection and the protection of confidentiality.

Contacting the authorities of the country of origin in Member States

It is UNHCR's position that the need to ensure confidentiality applies to all stages of the asylum procedure.³⁴ In accordance with Article 22 of the APD, Member States should not, throughout the procedure, disclose the fact that an application has been made by a specific applicant.

In the course of this research, UNHCR was informed that there is concern that when asylum applicants are held in administrative retention centres in France, some Prefectures continue to organize the removal of applicants while the examination of their applications for international protection by the determining authority is ongoing. The NGO Cimade has reported a number of cases in which asylum applicants have been taken to the consulates of their country of origin to obtain a "consular pass." This is in spite of an instruction from the Ministry of the Interior of 7 August 2006, which recalled that this practice is prohibited as long as the examination of the application by the determining authority OFPRA is ongoing. It has also been reported that the IND Departure and Return Unit in the Netherlands engages with applicants before a negative decision has been issued, which could raise the same problematic practices.

In two of the case files UNHCR audited in the UK, it appeared from correspondence with the embassies of the countries of origin, undertaken prior to the decision on the application, that the determining authority UKBA could have disclosed information regarding the asylum application (including the fact it had been made) to the applicant's country of origin.³⁵ This was done notwithstanding a Ministerial statement of June 2007 stating that the Home Office would not ask an asylum applicant to meet officials from the embassy of their country of origin until and unless a negative decision was taken in respect of his/her claim for protection.³⁶

³⁴ UNHCR, *Country of Origin Information: Towards Enhanced International Cooperation*, February 2004, paragraph 39.

³⁵ DAF20 and DAF40: in both cases, travel documents were applied for prior to reaching a decision on the asylum application.

³⁶ Hansard HC Report, 21 June 2007, Col 2073.

Concern was also raised in Italy that asylum applicants and illegal immigrants are housed together in Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIEs). Consulate personnel of countries of origin visit the CIEs to verify the nationality of illegal immigrants. This was considered to pose a potential risk for asylum applicants.³⁷

Recommendations

Member States must take all necessary steps to ensure that all relevant authorities are informed that they should not contact, nor instruct applicants for international protection to contact, representatives of the country of origin, unless and until a final negative decision has been taken on the application for international protection. Applicants for international protection should not be placed in a position where they can be observed or accessed by the embassy or consular services of the country of origin.

If all legal remedies have been exhausted, and an applicant is finally determined not to be in need of international protection, any disclosure of information to the authorities of the country of origin should be in accordance with law, and necessary and proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued, for example, readmission. Such information should not indicate that the person claimed asylum and was found to have no protection needs.

Rendering decisions anonymous

The need to protect the identity of applicants for international protection and the details of their applications from alleged actors of persecution or serious harm extends throughout the procedure, and includes any appeal.

In a number of Member States of focus, UNHCR found that the published decisions of the appeals bodies are anonymized (Belgium, Finland³⁸, France³⁹, Germany⁴⁰, Greece, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain⁴¹).

³⁷ This also occurs in Spain. The authorities have assured that consular personnel only visit illegal immigrants and not applicants for international protection. The Dutch Ombudsman has also condemned the presentation of asylum applicants in an asylum seeker centre.

³⁸ The *Laki oikeudenkäynnin julkisuudesta hallintotuomioistuimissa* (Act on Openness of Trials in Administrative Courts 381/2007) stipulates that registers with information about asylum seekers' claims must not be publicly available. The anonymization concerns only a very few (under five) cases that each year are published by the Supreme Administrative Court. No other cases are anonymized. However, asylum cases are classified under Finnish legislation and cannot be shared with the public.

³⁹ CNDA decisions are not anonymized but CNDA decisions posted on the website are.

⁴⁰ Court decisions are anonymized. See, for example, "Decisions in asylum law" under "Entscheidungssuche" on the website of the Federal Administrative Court: www.bverwg.de.

⁴¹ Agreement of 18 June 1997, of the full assembly of the General Council of the Judiciary, which modifies regulation number 5/1995, about the access to judicial acts.

However, UNHCR has noted that whilst some of the courts in Bulgaria and Czech Republic anonymize decisions, some of the courts do not.⁴² In Bulgaria, notwithstanding condemnation of the practice by the Supreme Judicial Council and the Commission on Personal Data Protection, the Supreme Administrative Court of the Republic of Bulgaria (SAC) and the Administrative Court in Sofia City continue to reveal the identity of appellants in published decisions. In Italy, there is no specific rule requiring the anonymization of appeal decisions. The general rule is that all court decisions are public and according to the Code on the Protection of Personal Data, an individual may request that a court decision is anonymized when publicised. In practice, this occurs rarely. Furthermore, in the UK, the specialized Asylum and Immigration Tribunal does anonymize the parties in all decisions, but this practice does not continue in the higher courts unless a request for anonymity is made and ordered.

Recommendations

All published decisions, including published decisions by appeal bodies, should be made anonymous.

If information regarding an individual application for international protection or the fact that an application has been made is disclosed directly or indirectly to the alleged actor(s) of persecution or serious harm, this will constitute a significant fact in the assessment of whether the applicant qualifies for refugee or subsidiary protection status. With regard to subsequent applications, it must constitute a new element, fact or finding.

⁴² Administrative Court of Sofia City and the Supreme Administrative Court in Bulgaria do not anonymise. And RC in Prague; RC in Usti n. Labem; RC in Hradec Kralove; and RC in Ostrava (Websites accessed on 19 April 2009) do not anonymise the dicta of the decisions. The website was accessed again on 18/19 November 09 and the practice appeared to have improved at most of the courts, but a non-anonymised letter was found on the webpage of one court. Full texts of decisions published on the webpage of the Supreme Administrative Court are always anonymised.