

Establishment of a list of safe countries of origin at Union level

2025/0101(COD) - 16/04/2025 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to accelerate the implementation of certain aspects of the Pact on Migration and Asylum and to establish a list of safe countries of origin at Union level with a view to strengthening the practical application of the safe country of origin concept.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with Council.

BACKGROUND: in December 2023, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the legislative proposals comprising the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**, which bring a comprehensive reform of the EU rules managing migration and the common asylum system at EU level.

Under Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and the Council, specific rules may apply where an applicant comes from a safe country of origin. In particular, the examination of an application has to be **accelerated** and, if the applicant has not yet been authorised to enter Member States' territory, a Member State may examine the merits of an application in a border procedure. It is necessary to strengthen the application of the safe country of origin concept as an essential tool to support the swift examination of applications that are likely to be unfounded by designating third countries as safe countries of origin. It is also necessary to address some of the existing divergences between Member States' national lists of safe countries of origin. Therefore, a list of safe countries of origin at Union level should be established.

CONTENT: the Commission is proposing to establish a first **EU list of safe countries of origin** covering **Kosovo, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India, Morocco and Tunisia**.

Countries that have been granted EU candidate state status are also designated as safe countries of origin at EU level. A candidate country would only be excluded in certain specific circumstances: the use of indiscriminate violence in conflict situations, sanctions adopted by the Council against that country, or an EU-wide recognition rate of asylum seekers above 20%.

Some Member States already have national lists of safe countries of origin. An EU list will complement these and support a more uniform application of the concept, which allows Member States to process asylum claims of nationals from countries on the list in an accelerated procedure, on the basis that their claims are unlikely to be successful.

The EU list of safe countries of origin can be expanded or reviewed over time. Countries can also be suspended or removed from the list, should they no longer fulfil the criteria for being designated as a safe country of origin.

The specific objectives of the proposal are as follows:

- to achieve a higher level of **convergence** on the qualification of third-country nationals and stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 (the Qualification Regulation);

- to address some of the existing **divergences** between Member States' national lists of safe countries with regard to the countries designated;
- to bring forward the possibility to designate safe country origin (SCO) and safe third country (STC) **with exceptions**, to make it more flexible for Member States to do this at national level. The designation as safe country of origin does not establish a guarantee of safety for all nationals of that country. Member States need to conduct an **individual assessment** of each asylum application, independently from the fact whether a person comes from a safe country of origin or not;
- to bring forward the possibility to process in the border or **accelerated procedure** the applications received from applicants of a nationality of a third country for which the proportion of decisions at EU level by the determining authorities granting international protection is **20 % or lower**. This will give Member States a further possibility to react quickly and flexibly to changes in the migratory flows. The application of the ground for acceleration will remain voluntary until the Asylum Procedure Regulation becomes applicable. In practice, Member States should be able to process such applications from persons who are likely not in need of international protection in the accelerated or in the border procedure and subsequently quickly return those persons. This will allow asylum and migration authorities to more efficiently assess genuine claims, deliver faster decisions and thereby contribute to a better and more credible functioning of asylum and return policies, in full respect of fundamental rights.

Furthermore, the Asylum Procedure Regulation allows for the designation both at Union and national level, of safe third countries and of safe countries of origin, with territorial exceptions and exceptions for identifiable categories of persons, to account for the complex and dynamic realities in third countries. In order to make the two concepts applicable in practice, Member States should be able to apply these provisions with regard to their national lists as early as possible **before June 2026** before the Pact on Migration and Asylum enters into force.