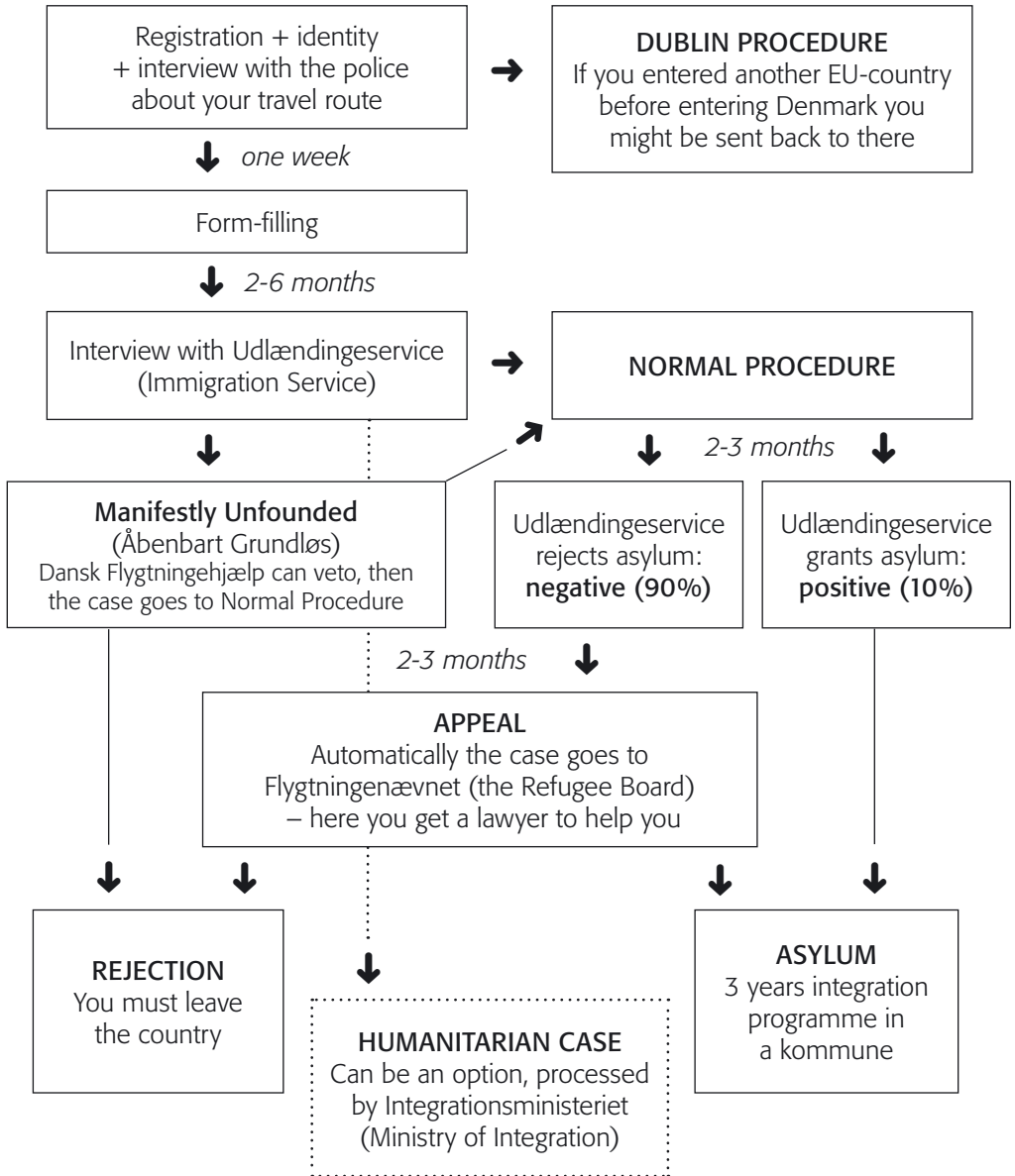


YOUR WAY THROUGH THE ASYLUM SYSTEM:

(amounts of time are only rough estimates and can vary!)



For free advice you can contact the NGO **Dansk Flygtningehjælp**, Borbergade 10, Copenhagen, every Wednesday 13.00-15.00. You can also call every day 09.00-15.00: 33735000 or send an e-mail to: advice@drc.dk (in English or Danish)

The UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as:

»A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.«

But to get asylum in Denmark you have to convince the authorities that you are in risk of **concrete and individual persecution** – it is not enough to belong to a persecuted group or come from a country at war.

STEPS IN THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE (see also the last page):

The first thing that happens is the **interview with the Danish police** about your journey and your identity. They will take your fingerprints and try to find out if you passed through another safe country or if you have already asked for asylum in another country in Europe, and then you may be returned to there. If your case is going to be considered in Denmark, shortly after you must **fill in a form** about your reason to ask for asylum.

After some time you will get a **second interview** – this time with **Udlændingetjenesten**. This is where you must tell your story in full detail, and it is very important what you say. First they will decide if your case is Manifestly Unfounded, which is a special short procedure for cases that are unlikely to give asylum – and they may reject you after this. In the Normal Procedure you will get an answer (positive or negative) usually after a few months, but it may take longer. If you get negative, your case goes on to **Flygtningenævnet**, but now you get a **free lawyer** to help you, and you can choose your own lawyer. Ask people you trust to find you a good lawyer with experience.

The questions you will be asked by Udlændingetjenesten could be:

- *How did you leave your country – legally or illegally?*
- *What will happen if you go back?*
- *Who is after you?*
- *Have you ever been arrested or put in jail – when and for how long?*
- *Are you a member of a political group or party?*
- *Did you ask the police for protection in your home country?*
- *Where is your family now?*
- *Why couldn't you just move to another part of your country?*

BE VERY CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY OR WRITE:

Everything you say or write to the police and the authorities will be very important for your chance of getting asylum. You have a duty to give relevant information to the authorities.

- The Danish police and Udlændingetjenesten make mistakes and some of them may seem hostile, but they are **not corrupt or violent**, and the things you tell them will be kept secret. You should not be afraid of them.
- If you paid somebody to help you get here, **forget their advice** and their threats. Usually their advice is bad, and they will not come looking for you.
- If you bribed someone or came with a false **passport**, also tell the truth about this.
- **Tell the truth** all the way, and **remember what you said and wrote**. The interviews and statements will be compared, and if you change your story along the way or contradict yourself they will think you are **lying** and your whole case will fall.
- Prepare yourself to explain exactly **why** you will be in danger if you return.
- Give as **many details** as possible from the start – you have lots of time.
- If you are not absolutely sure about **dates and places**, say so instead of guessing.
- If you have been exposed to **rape, torture and other abuse**: tell about it, even if it's very difficult for you.
- If you **forgot or left out** something during the interviews or form filling, write a letter to the authorities in your own language and tell about it – the sooner you correct it the better.

YOU HAVE A NUMBER OF RIGHTS:

- Get a **photocopy** of the form you filled in.
- If you are a woman and feel uncomfortable telling your story to a man, you have the right to a **female** interviewer and translator.
- Make sure the **translator** speaks your own language clearly. If not, ask for another one – a misunderstanding can be fatal.
(asking for another interviewer or translator may delay your case a little, but it is worth it!)
- You may bring a **"bisidder"** (lay observer) for the interviews. But do it only if you know someone who speaks Danish, whom you trust and who has experience with the asylum system.
- Get a **photocopy** of what the translator wrote in Danish. Try to find somebody else who can check the translation for you – if there are misunderstandings write to the authorities at once and tell them.
- Don't sign anything with **errors** in it – get the errors corrected first.
- If you have been exposed to **torture** ask to be examined by the doctors at Retsmedicinsk Institut (Institute of Forensic Medicine).