(Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination

Common Template for EMN Focussed Study 2017

Final Version: 16th October 2017

Subject: Common Template for the EMN Focussed Study 2017 on “(Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination”

Action: EMN NCPs are invited to submit their National Contributions to the Study to the EMN Service Provider by 31st January 2018. If needed, further clarifications can be provided by contacting the EMN Service Provider (ICF) at emn@icf.com.

1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The number of applications for international protection has significantly increased in the European Union over recent years, mostly related to the ongoing crisis in Syria. According to Eurostat, more than 1.3 million asylum applications were lodged in the EU Member States in 2015, and just under 1.3 million again in 2016, almost five times as many as in 2010. Within the larger group of international protection applicants, the number of unaccompanied minors has increased strongly as well, from about 10,600 in 2010 to over 96,000 in 2015, before decreasing to 63,000 in 2016. According to earlier EMN outputs, while most unaccompanied minors are considered to apply for asylum, a certain number of unaccompanied minors remain outside the asylum procedure.

The overall dramatic increase in people seeking international protection and the arrival of unaccompanied minors in particular resulted in substantial challenges for Member States, including as regards integration and return policies. Applicants granted international protection and/ or another status need to be integrated into their new host societies, and those who are rejected need to return, preferably on a voluntary basis. Finding the right ways to deal with unaccompanied minors in this regard can appear particularly challenging, not least because unaccompanied minors have child-specific rights and enjoy special safeguards under international, EU and national laws.

A number of studies have been carried out in recent years on integration and return policies and practices, not least by the EMN (see “Relevant sources and literature” below). The EMN has also examined policies towards unaccompanied minors in particular. For example, the (voluntary) return of unaccompanied minors was touched upon in a 2014 EMN study on Policies, practices and data on unaccompanied minors. In 2008-2009, a comprehensive EMN study on Policies on reception, return and integration arrangements for, and numbers of, unaccompanied minors dealt explicitly with the integration of unaccompanied minors, among other aspects. Some of the information included in these studies is somewhat outdated today, however. In addition, the 2016 EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum indicated that few Member States actively engaged in the return of unaccompanied minors. Overall, this suggests that an updated inventory of the experiences made in the Member States, and of the challenges at hand and any best practices, would be of importance for future policy-making – both with regard to integration and return measures for unaccompanied minors.
2 STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the Study is to inform the EMN’s target audiences (e.g. practitioners, policy officers and decision-makers at both EU and national level including academic researchers and the general public) on **Member States’ approaches to unaccompanied minors following a final decision on their asylum/other status application.** Thus, the Study will not examine the specific status determination procedure for unaccompanied minors but rather what happens with unaccompanied minors **after its completion**, which, in principle, either consists of the protection status and hence a right to **residence** being granted, followed by integration into the new host society, or the (asylum) application being rejected, followed by the unaccompanied minors being obligated to **return**. In relation to the latter, the Study will also cover instances when an unaccompanied minor is ordered to leave the territory but the **return decision is not or cannot be enforced**. Statuses such as temporary and tolerated stay, those available to child victims of trafficking, as well as the situation of unaccompanied minors who disappear following a decision on status shall be included as well.

More specifically, the Study aims to:

🌟 With regard to **return**:

› Examine Member States’ approaches to **unaccompanied minors whose applications for asylum have been rejected and who are or cannot be (immediately) returned** or have disappeared following a decision on their application;

› Describe the **legal and organisational set-up** in Member States with regard to the **(voluntary) return** of an unaccompanied minor, including information on the stakeholders involved, what their roles are, and what measures the Member States take when unaccompanied minors are issued an enforceable return decision, to encourage voluntary return;

› Provide an overview of **challenges to return** and the measures taken to deal with such challenges, identifying good practices, including information and results of any AVR(R) programmes carried out for unaccompanied minors;

🌟 With regard to **integration**:

› Examine integration approaches in the (Member) States regarding unaccompanied minors after positive decisions on admission or asylum/other relevant procedures in key areas such as **housing, education and support in labour market entry**, including rights and entitlements awarded to unaccompanied minors (for example family reunification) and whether these are specifically geared towards unaccompanied minors. The Study shall also clarify in what way integration arrangements for unaccompanied minors are different than those for adults;

› Describe the **organisational set-up** in Member States with regard to the **integration** of unaccompanied minors, including information on which stakeholders are involved and what their roles are;

› Provide an overview of the **challenges to integration** and the actions taken to deal with such challenges, identifying good practices.

As many unaccompanied minors arriving in the EU are close to **passing the age threshold to adulthood**, the Study shall also examine whether there are any particular arrangements for unaccompanied minors who turn 18 around the point in time when they receive a final decision on status and what impact this may have on their integration trajectories or their return.

While most unaccompanied minors apply for asylum and hence this Study will focus on their situation after completion of the asylum procedure, it is important to keep in mind that not all unaccompanied minors who arrive in the (Member) States actually apply for asylum. If (Member) States receive unaccompanied minors outside their respective asylum procedures and have any other procedures in
place to determine whether they are entitled to stay in the (Member) State or not, such procedures shall also be explored.

3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The overall focus of this Study are unaccompanied minors from third countries who, following status determination, are entitled to a residence permit, or are issued a return decision, and the approaches put in place by (Member) States to ensure their integration or (voluntary) return respectively. The scope of the Study may also include, at least in some Member States, any statuses given to unaccompanied minors who for some reason cannot be returned immediately (e.g. tolerated stay). Finally, the Study also aims to examine (Member) States’ approaches to unaccompanied minors who have disappeared following a final decision on their application for asylum.

Thus, the Study does not cover the actual asylum or other relevant procedures in which the right of an unaccompanied minor to stay in a (Member) State is examined and decided upon.

4 EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

The European Union, together with its Member States, has been active regarding unaccompanied minors for many years. The existing EU policies and legislation already provide a general framework for the protection of the rights of the child in migration, covering aspects such as reception conditions, the treatment of their applications, and integration. The EU Agenda on the Rights of the Child (2006) and the EU Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014) (COM(2010) 213 final) have been instrumental in raising awareness about the protection needs of unaccompanied minors, and in promoting protective actions, such as training for guardians, public authorities and other actors who are in close contact with unaccompanied minors. More recently, the European Commission (the Commission) called for a comprehensive approach to all children in migration, including unaccompanied minors, in its Communication on the protection of children in migration (COM(2017) 211 final), the European Agenda on Migration (COM (2015) 240), the Communication on the state of play of its implementation (COM(2016) 85 final), as well as the EU Action Plan on Integration of Third-Country Nationals (COM(2016) 377 final).

Legally, there are certain ongoing changes in relation to key provisions on asylum that address the situation of unaccompanied minors, notably the:

- Recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) which aims at fairer, quicker and better-quality asylum decisions, including greater protection of unaccompanied minors during the asylum procedure (which however is out of scope of this Study). In 2016, the Commission issued a proposal for a new Regulation establishing a single common asylum procedure in the EU and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (COM(2016) 467 final), which aims at upholding and further enhancing a high level of special procedural guarantees for unaccompanied minors, such as early identification of their needs, provision of support and guidance, appointment of a guardian, and consideration of the best interests of the child in relation to minors in general.

- Recast Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), which aims to clarify the grounds for granting international protection, make asylum decisions more robust and improve the access to rights and integration measures for beneficiaries of international protection. It emphasises the obligation to take account of the best interests of the child (when relevant) and of gender-related aspects in the assessment of asylum applications, as well as in the implementation of the rules on the content of international protection. In 2016, a proposal for a new Qualification Regulation (COM(2016) 466 final) replacing the Qualification Directive, includes renewed provisions for unaccompanied minors in Article 36, such as appointment of a legal guardian, accommodation appropriate for minors, family tracing, as well as training for professionals working with minors.
A proposal for a recast **Reception Conditions Directive** aims to further harmonise reception conditions in the EU ([COM(2016)467 final](#)), reinforce the assessment of the best interests of the child and ensure that reception conditions are adapted to the specific situation of children, whether unaccompanied or within families, with due regard to their security, physical and emotional care and provided in a manner that encourages their general development. The specific needs of children, in particular with regard to respect for the child’s right to education and access to healthcare have to be taken into account.

The proposal for a new **Dublin Regulation** ([COM(2016) 270 final](#)) envisages new rules for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application lodged by an unaccompanied minor, clarifying that, in the absence of a family member or relative in another Member State, the Member State where the minor first lodged his or her application for international protection will be responsible, unless it is demonstrated that this is not in the best interests of the minor.

The revised **Eurodac Regulation** ([COM(2016) 272 final](#)) proposes to lower the age for taking fingerprints and facial images from asylum-seekers and third-country nationals from 14 years to six years. This will help identify children in cases where they are separated from their families. It shall also strengthen the protection of unaccompanied minors, who do not always formally seek international protection and who can risk harm when absconding from care institutions or child social services.

The proposal for Regulation transforming the existing European Asylum Support Office (EASO) into a fully-fledged **European Union Agency for Asylum** ([COM(2016) 271 final](#)) would expand Agency mandate regarding operational and technical assistance, including providing assistance to Member States in ensuring that all the necessary child rights and child protection safeguards are in place within the framework of their asylum and reception systems. The new Agency shall also assist Member States in developing training activities concerning the handling of applications for international protection made by unaccompanied minors, including as regards the assessment of the best interests of the child, specific procedural safeguards such as respect of the child’s right to be heard and child protection aspects such as age-assessment techniques.

The main legal instrument regulating the EU return policy is the 2008 **Return Directive (2008/115/EC)**, which lays down common EU standards on forced return and voluntary departure, emphasising that voluntary return is preferred, while acknowledging the inevitable need for efficient means to enforce returns where necessary. After the **Informal meeting of EU heads of state or government** held in Malta in February 2017 highlighted the need for a review of the EU’s return policy, the Commission published a **new EU Action Plan on Return**, along with an Annex listing the actions to be implemented by Member States to complete, along with a **Recommendation** on making returns more effective when implementing the Return Directive ([C(2017) 1600 final](#)), specifying among others that decisions on the legal status and on the return of unaccompanied minors should always be based on individual, multi-disciplinary and robust assessments of their best interests. The Action Plan foresees the adoption of immediate measures by the Member States to enhance the effectiveness of returns when implementing EU legislation, in line with fundamental rights obligations. Based on the results achieved in the implementation of the Recommendation and depending on whether it is estimated that further action should be taken to substantially increase return rates, the Commission may present a proposal to revise the Return Directive.

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In line with the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2012/C 326/02)**, applying the EU acquis containing child-sensitive provisions, the principle of best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.

Finally, the EU has committed to a number of international conventions which have placed an obligation to take appropriate protection and prevention measures in relation to migrants and/or children, including the **UN Refugee Convention** and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (**CRC**), the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children (**HCCH**), and the Council of Europe’s Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (**ECHR**).

## 5 PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

The Study will aim to address the following:

- Provide an overview of the legal framework of international law and the EU acquis in relation to unaccompanied minors, provisions in place to address the human rights of unaccompanied minors and their fundamental freedoms when it comes to return/integration and potential gaps;
- Provide information on the legal framework and approaches of (Member) States to (voluntary) return of unaccompanied minors; describe the process (which actors and their roles) in relation to (voluntary) return; provide details of approaches that have been used specifically for the return of unaccompanied minors (e.g. AVR(R)-programmes specifically geared towards unaccompanied minors); describe reintegration measures in third countries; describe challenges and best practices concerning the (voluntary) return of unaccompanied minors, e.g. those who cannot be immediately returned;
- Provide information on the approaches of (Member) States to the care/integration of unaccompanied minors following status determination; describe the process (which actors and their roles) in relation to integration; provide details on approaches that have been aimed specifically at the integration of unaccompanied minors (e.g. education (including progression to third level), housing, guardianship, labour market entry); describe measures available to support unaccompanied minors in advance/during/as a follow-up to their transition to adulthood; describe outcomes, challenges and best practices concerning the integration of unaccompanied minors;
- Describe the status(es) given (if any) to unaccompanied minors who are not granted protection (residence permit, visa) but who cannot be removed from a (Member) State;
- Examine possible reasons for the disappearance of unaccompanied minors from guardianship/care and whether this has any consequences on their permit to stay, plus measures in place to prevent and respond to disappearances and how effective they have been in practice.

## 6 RELEVANT SOURCES AND LITERATURE

**EMN Studies**


**EMN AHQs**

- 2017.1209 – On pull factors for unaccompanied minor asylum applicants – requested 29 June 2017
- 2017.1199 – Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children followed by family members under Dublin Regulation – requested 8 June 2017
- 2016.1071 – Rules on family reunification of unaccompanied minors granted refugee status or subsidiary protection – requested 27 May 2016
- 2016.1067 – Joint ad-hoc query COM & LU EMN NCP on statelessness: minors born in exile and unaccompanied minors (part 2) – requested 4 May 2016
- 2015.XXXX – Detention and removal of minors – requested XXX
- 2014.523 – Admission/ Residence and guardianship related provisions for unaccompanied foreign and/ or EU minors in vulnerable situations – requested 18 November 2013

**Other studies and reports**

Focussed Study 2017

(Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination


8 AVAILABLE STATISTICS

EU level

Statistics are available through Eurostat on the number of asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors, which may be indicative of the scale and, to a lesser degree, nature of the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors in the EU plus Norway.

National level

Subject to availability, the following statistical data sources would be very useful for this Study, and should be included insofar as possible:

- Decisions on asylum applications by unaccompanied minors and/or number of residence permits on grounds such as international protection, temporary/permanent residence permits, etc., issued to unaccompanied minors, if possible disaggregated by status, gender, age group of the minors;
- Number of asylum applications by unaccompanied minors who have been rejected;

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(Estimated) number of unaccompanied minors not seeking asylum and their respective statuses, e.g. those who entered irregularly and victims of trafficking, etc.;

Number of unaccompanied minors issued temporary/ alternative statuses, tolerated stay, etc.

If available, data/ Indicators pertaining to the integration of unaccompanied minors, for example, number of unaccompanied minors enrolled in primary/ secondary education, traineeships/ internships, training, labour market programmes or any other targeted measures; number of unaccompanied minors who have completed successfully any (civic) integration courses; number of unaccompanied minors registered with leisure associations (e.g. football/ cricket federation, scouting, etc.); number of cases of successful family reunification involving unaccompanied minors;

Number of unaccompanied minors with enforceable return decisions and/ or number of unaccompanied minors returned (voluntary and forced), including data on AVR(R)-programmes targeting unaccompanied minors;

Number of unaccompanied minors with temporary/ permanent residence permits for unaccompanied minors on reaching 18 years of age may be available from immigration authorities and other competent authorities responsible for the protection of unaccompanied minors, such as child protection authorities, NGOs, etc.

**NB: The EMN Statistics Working Group is kindly invited to comment on the inclusion of statistics in the Common Template and to trial the collection of statistics in their (Member) State.**

8 **DEFINITIONS**

The following key terms are used in the Common Template. The definitions are taken mostly from the EMN Glossary v4.0.4

‘Absconding’ is defined as an “action by which a person seeks to avoid legal proceedings by not remaining available to the relevant authorities or to the court”.

‘Applicant for international protection’ is defined as “a third-country national or a stateless person who has made an application for international protection in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken”.

‘Application for international protection’ is defined as “a request made by a third-country national or a stateless person for protection from a Member State, who can be understood to seek refugee status or subsidiary protection status, and who does not explicitly request another kind of protection, outside the scope of Directive 2011/95/EU, that can be applied for separately”.

‘Assisted voluntary return’ is defined as “voluntary return or voluntary departure supported by logistical, financial and/ or other material assistance”.

‘Asylum seeker’ is defined in the global context as a person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments; and in the EU context as a person who

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has made an application for protection under the Geneva Convention in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken.

‘Compulsory return’ in the EU context is defined as “the process of going back – whether in voluntary or enforced compliance with an obligation to return – to:

★ one’s country of origin; or
★ a country of transit in accordance with EU or bilateral readmission agreements or other arrangements; or
★ another third country, to which the third-country national concerned voluntarily decides to return and in which they will be accepted.

‘Final decision’ is defined as “a decision on whether the third-country national or stateless person be granted refugee status or subsidiary protection status by virtue of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) and which is no longer subject to a remedy within the framework of Chapter V of this Directive, irrespective of whether such remedy has the effect of allowing applicants to remain in the Member States concerned pending its outcome”. Within the context of this Study, other statuses (than refugee status and subsidiary protection) are taken into account as well.

‘Forced return’ in the EU context is defined as “the process of going back – whether in voluntary or enforced compliance with an obligation to return – to:

★ one’s country of origin; or
★ a country of transit in accordance with EU or bilateral readmission agreements or other arrangements; or
★ another third country, to which the concerned voluntarily decides to return and in which they will be accepted.

‘Integration’ in the EU context is defined as “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.”

‘Irregular stay’ is defined as “the presence on the territory of a Member State, of a third-country national who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils the conditions of entry as set out in Art. 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that Member State”.

‘Reintegration assistance’ is defined as “support - either cash, in kind or combined, provided by a host country to a returnee, with the aim of helping the returnee to lead an independent life after return.”

‘Regularisation’ is defined as “in the EU context, state procedure by which illegally staying third-country nationals are awarded a legal status”.

‘Residence permit’ is defined as “any authorisation issued by the authorities of an EU Member State allowing a non-EU national to stay legally in its territory, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 265/2010 (Long Stay Visa Regulation).”

‘Rejected applicant for international protection’ is defined as “a person covered by a first instance decision rejecting an application for international protection, including decisions considering applications as inadmissible or as unfounded and decisions under priority and accelerated procedures, taken by administrative or judicial bodies during the reference period”.

‘Return decision’ is defined as “an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return”.

‘Return’ is defined as “the movement of a person going from a host country back to a country of origin, country of nationality or habitual residence usually after spending a significant period of time in the host country whether voluntary or forced, assisted or spontaneous”.

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‘Subsequent application for international protection’ is defined as “a further application for international protection made after a final decision has been taken on a previous application, including cases where the applicant has explicitly withdrawn their application and cases where the determining authority has rejected an application following its implicit withdrawal in accordance with Art. 28 (1) of Directive 2013/32/EU.”

‘Third-country national’ is defined as “any person who is not a citizen of the European Union within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of TFEU and who is not a person enjoying the Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Schengen Borders Code”.

‘Tolerated stay’ also refers to the (temporary) suspension of removal of a third-country national who has received a return decision but whose removal is not possible either for humanitarian reasons (as their removal would violate the principle of non-refoulement or due to the third-country national’s physical state or mental capacity) or for technical reasons (such as lack of transport capacity or failure of the removal due to lack of identification or the country of origin’s refusal to accept the person) and for as long as a suspensory effect is granted in accordance with Art. 13(2) of Directive 2008/115/EC.

‘Unaccompanied minor’ is defined as “a third-country national or stateless person below the age of 18 years, who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by the adult responsible for them by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person. It includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the Member States.” Furthermore, within the context of this Study, unaccompanied minors approaching 18 years of age are generally understood to be in the final couple of years before reaching the age of majority, i.e. 16 to 18 years.

‘Voluntary departure’ is defined as compliance with the obligation to return within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision.

‘Voluntary return’ is defined as “the assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or third country, based on the free will of the returnee”

‘Vulnerable person’ is defined as “minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of trafficking in human beings, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation”.

9 ADVISORY GROUP

An “Advisory Group” (AG) has been established within the context of this Study for the purpose of providing support to EMN NCPs during the development of the specifications for the Study, as well as the drafting of the Synthesis Report. In addition to COM and the EMN Service Provider (ICF-Odysseus), the members of the AG for the Study include EMN NCPs from BE, DE, FI, FR, IE, LU, PL, SE and the UK. EMN NCPs are thus invited to send any requests for clarification or further information on the Study to the following representatives of the AG:

- COM: Magnus.OVILIUS@ec.europa.eu; Maria.Zuber@ec.europa.eu
- EMN Service Provider: emn@icf.com; nataliya.nikolova@icfi.com; vittorio.furci@icfi.com
- BE EMN NCP: martine.hendrickx@ibz.fgov.be; Tim.Lagrange@fedasil.be
- DE EMN NCP: Julian.Tangermann@bamf.bund.de; Paula.Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik@bamf.bund.de
- FI EMN NCP: rafael.barlund@migri.fi; johanna.vaananen@migri.fi
10 TIMETABLE

The following tentative timetable has been proposed for the Study going forward:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd August 2017</td>
<td>Advisory Group meeting to discuss the Concept Note for the Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>31st August 2017</td>
<td>Circulation of Version 1 of the Common Template for the Study to COM and AG members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th September 2017</td>
<td>Circulation of the revised Common Template for the Study to COM, AG members and EMN NCPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-October 2017</td>
<td>Finalisation of the Common Template and official launch of the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st January 2018</td>
<td>Submission of National Reports to EMN Service Provider by EMN NCPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th February 2018</td>
<td>Circulation of Version 1 of the Synthesis Report for the Study to COM and AG Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th March 2018</td>
<td>Circulation of the revised Synthesis Report for the Study to COM, AG members and EMN NCPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-April 2018</td>
<td>Finalisation of the Synthesis Report for the Study and of the National Reports for publication on the EMN website</td>
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11 TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The template provided below outlines the information that should be included in the National Contributions of EMN NCPs to this Focussed Study. The indicative number of pages to be covered by each section is provided in the guidance note. For National Contributions, the total number of pages should **not exceed 40 pages**, including the questions and excluding the Statistical Annex. A limit of **40 pages** will also apply to the Synthesis Report, in order to ensure that it remains concise and accessible.
EMN FOCUSED STUDY 2017
(Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination

SWEDEN

Top-line factsheet [max. 2 pages, please respect the page limits provided here]

The top-line factsheet will serve as an overview of the National Contribution introducing the Study and drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policy-makers.

Please provide a concise summary of the main findings of Sections 1-6 below, for example, focussing on:

- Latest figures on the number and socio-demographic characteristics of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State, as well as evolution over time (2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017);
- Top five main issues with regard to the care/integration/return of unaccompanied minors at present;
- Most important recent or planned changes to law, policy and practice regarding the care/integration/return of unaccompanied minors since 2014,\(^5\) for example, as a result of the increase in the number of unaccompanied minors (and TCNs in general) seeking asylum in the EU between 2014 and 2016, the European Agenda on Migration,\(^6\) etc.;
- Identified challenges and good practices, for example, as a result of the (Member) State coping with the large increase in applications from unaccompanied minors between 2014 and 2016, e.g. how were unaccompanied minors housed, educated, etc.
- Any suggestions for EU level action on unaccompanied minors that might be useful for your (Member) State.

This report represents Sweden’s national contribution to the 2017 EMN focussed study (Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination. The study was carried out in the EU Member States and Norway during the autumn of 2017 and covers the period 2014-2017. The study examines the Swedish framework and policies for unaccompanied minors following a final decision on their application for asylum (resulting in a residence permit or a return decision). It looks into areas such as care/accommodation, health/healthcare, schooling, labour market integration and return of unaccompanied minors. In addition, the study examines Sweden’s framework pertaining to unaccompanied minors who disappear.

\(^5\) As the previous EMN study on Unaccompanied minors was completed in 2014, the proposed reference period for the Study is 2014 onwards with some flexibility if (Member) States believe there to be a significant change to law/policy/practice outside this period.

Unaccompanied minors have emerged as a major issue in (migration) policy debate and public debate in Sweden in the past few years, particularly following the events of 2015 when Sweden received a record number of 35,000 asylum applications from unaccompanied minors. Whereas the preceding years saw an ever steady increase in the number of applications (3,900 in 2013 and 7,000 in 2014), 2016 saw a sharp decrease in applications (2,200) in the wake of more restrictive migration policies launched that year. In the 2014-2017 period, Sweden issued 19,500 residence permits to unaccompanied minors while 3,900 applications for asylum were rejected. Afghanistan is by far the most common country of origin for unaccompanied minors followed by Eritrea, Syria and Somalia. An absolute majority of unaccompanied minors are boys, but the number of girls has increased in the past year and currently make up close to 25 per cent of the applications.

The question of care and accommodation for unaccompanied minors emerged as a main issue following the huge number of asylum applications from this group in 2015. It also led to the launch of a new form of care and accommodation being launched, “supported accommodation” [stödboende]. The overall return issue of unaccompanied minors, in particular those from Afghanistan, has been subject to intense public and policy debate recently. One outcome of the debate was that Parliament [Riksdagen] eventually adopted changes to existing legislation making it possible for some unaccompanied minors to pursue studies at the upper secondary level. An additional proposal from the Government with the aim to expand further this possibility was announced in November 2017. Unaccompanied minors and young adults in an irregular situation have received increased attention in the past year, in particular Moroccan unaccompanied minors in Stockholm. On a related theme, the Government assigned The County Administrative Boards [Länsstyrelse] and the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden [Barnombudsmannen] with tasks pertaining to unaccompanied minors who disappear, an issue that has come more into focus as well.

The Swedish Migration Agency [Migrationsverket] and in particular municipalities [kommuner] are important actors dealing with unaccompanied minors. Municipalities are, for example, responsible for care and schooling of the target group. Care normally ends at 18 years of age, but can be prolonged until 21 years of age in the individual case. The Migration Agency is responsible for the voluntary return of unaccompanied minors and to arrange orderly reception conditions in the country of origin.

Sweden introduced several changes to law, policy and practice as a result of the increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2015, many of which affect unaccompanied minors and young adults. For instance, daily allowances and accommodation are no longer available for adults without children who have enforceable return decisions and do not return voluntarily. A temporary act from 2016 introduced temporary residence permits and suspended family reunification for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, including unaccompanied minors.

Overall, the whole of Sweden’s system in place to cater for unaccompanied minors was, and remains, under strain since it was not geared to accommodate for the large increase in applications from unaccompanied minors in 2015. The care and accommodation of unaccompanied minors came as an immediate challenge in coping with the large increase in applications. With the recognition rate currently at around 80 per cent, integration looms large as a current challenge. There are many reports on inadequate resources in education, in particular in upper secondary schools, including a shortage of teachers of Swedish as a foreign language. The return of unaccompanied minors was considered a challenge already prior to the events of 2015, but caseload has now increased further for the competent authorities. Lack of readmission agreements with some major countries of origin, problems to arrange orderly reception in the country of origin and difficulties to motivate returnees due to conflicting signals from recent policy changes are some of the challenges in the return of unaccompanied minors. With regard to return it should be added that few final return decisions have been issued to the very high number of unaccompanied minors that applied for asylum in 2015, primarily because many of the applications rejected currently are in the appeals process. A growing number of unaccompanied minors displaying health issues and/or who are living in an irregular situation involving (the risk of) human trafficking and other forms of exploitation is reported as challenges by several actors in the field.

In principle, unaccompanied minors have access to the greater part of integration measures already during the application procedure, which could be considered a good practice since facilitates integration for those who are eventually awarded a residence permit. With regard to return, a significant number of unaccompanied minors have been awarded cash grants and/or in-kind reintegration support. The purpose of both types of support is
to allow the minors to re-establish themselves in their country of origin and the level of interest in these support measures suggests that the support is helpful to returnees. With regard to good practices concerning unaccompanied minors who disappear, there has been noticeable development in the past few years. In 2015, the Stockholm County Administrative Board initiated regional cooperation among competent stakeholders that emanated in a model of cooperation and uniform strategy to counter disappearances of unaccompanied minors. Further to this, the Government commissioned the County Administrative Boards to map the situation of unaccompanied minors who disappear and suggest proposals for action. One of several positive outcomes of the project was the dissemination of methods and practices to stakeholders with the view to support regional cooperation in this field.

The Swedish Government considers the EU Commission’s communication on the protection of children (12 April 2017) to be a useful document in identifying areas where EU-level action and support is useful including the dissemination of good practices among Member States. Cooperation in the areas of return of persons who, after an individual assessment are not determined to be in need of international protection, and in the area of developing methods for more efficient family tracing procedures are valuable.

Executive Summary [max. 5 pages]
The Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report will provide an overview of the Study, as well as form the basis of an EMN Inform, which will have EU and national policy-makers as its main target audience. The Executive Summary will be prepared by the EMN Service Provider (ICF).

Section 1: Overview of the international and EU legislative framework on unaccompanied minors [max. 5 pages]
This section of the Synthesis Report will briefly outline the EU legal framework guiding national legislation on unaccompanied minors. It will provide a mapping of the substantive and procedural provisions in the EU acquis that regulate the protection of unaccompanied minors. The section will also highlight how the EU acquis relates to the broader international legal framework on unaccompanied minors. This section will be developed by the EMN Service Provider, hence no input from the EMN NCPs is required here.

Section 2: Overview of the situation of unaccompanied minors in the (Member) State [max. 3 pages]
This section of the Synthesis Report will provide an up-to-date overview of the national situation with regard to unaccompanied minors in the (Member) States, including figures on the scale and nature of the phenomenon, e.g. number of residence permits issued to unaccompanied minors, number of unaccompanied minors reunited with family in (Member) States, etc. The section further sets out the context for the Study by providing information on the overall approaches of (Member) States to the care, integration and return of unaccompanied minors as deducted from the latest changes to law/ policy and/ or practice concerning this group of migrant children. The section will be drafted on the basis of data available from Eurostat or other relevant sources and complemented by national data provided by EMN NCPs (in Annex 1).

Q1. Please provide an overview of the current public debate with regard to unaccompanied minors who have received a final decision on their application for asylum/ another status in your (Member) State.

Public debate in Sweden with regard to unaccompanied minors continues to be considerable, not least since 2015 when more than 35,000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in the country. More often than not, the debate covers many different aspects of the situation for unaccompanied minors and it is sometimes difficult to single out debates that exclusively deal with individuals who have received a final decision on their application for asylum. Overall, many different actors and organisations all the way from grassroots activists to members of Parliament...
have been engaged in the debate. Furthermore, the debate has at times been rather fierce even resulting in clashes between opposing sides in connection with manifestations in the street. Altogether, the situation of (asylum seeking) unaccompanied minors has emerged as one of the major issues in current public debate on migration in Sweden.

As mentioned initially, it can be difficult to discern debates that focus solely on unaccompanied minors who have received a final decision on their application. In addition, some topics of discussion have a relevance regardless of whether a final decision has been issued or not. For example, medical age assessments of unaccompanied minors have recently been subject to intense debate following the launch of new methods in the spring of 2017 to perform these. Reports say results of medical age assessments often indicate that the minor is an adult. While the Government and competent authorities claim the assessments are reliable, some debaters have questioned their legal certainty and scientific basis. The age of unaccompanied minors is often discussed in public debate, where some debaters claim many of these are in reality adults. Many discussions seem to focus on unaccompanied minors in the migration (and return) process in general and many debaters seem to argue in favour or against the rights of unaccompanied minors in general. Much of the debate has centred on unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan, which by far is the most common country of origin. Looking specifically at the target group for this study and the two principal outcomes of integration or return, the latter seems to have been the subject of more public debate lately. Many actors, for example grass roots organisations such as “Ung i Sverige” ("Young in Sweden") and “Vi står inte ut” ("We Can't Stand This") have called for an end of return decisions (to Afghanistan) and an amnesty for all unaccompanied minors. From August through October 2017, manifestations to protest against returns were staged at some of the major public squares in Stockholm. Counter-protestors from youth right wing extremists attacked the manifestations on one occasion. On the political level, individual members of some of the political parties in Parliament have argued in favour of relaxations of the current (return) policies. The Left Party [Vänsterpartiet], which has argued in favour of an amnesty, initiated a debate on accompanied minors in Parliament 13 September 2017. By way of contrast, the Government and the remaining parties in the opposition have largely emphasised the importance of a regulated immigration policy, including that return decisions should be enforced. Eventually, however, Parliament adopted new policies expanding the possibility for some unaccompanied minors to receive a residence permit (see more details in question 3.a.)

Unaccompanied minors who have disappeared or absconded (following a return decision) is a group that has achieved increased attention in public debate. Another group that has come into focus is unaccompanied minors, in particular from Morocco, who are in an irregular situation such as in the streets in Stockholm.

The integration trajectory has been subject to less intense public debate recently, possibly since views amongst debaters are less conflicting than those with regard to return. Public debate in this case seems rather to display the challenges Swedish society is facing following the huge number of applications from unaccompanied minors in 2015, the majority of which have received (temporary) residence permits. Challenges and problems with regard to the care and accommodation of unaccompanied minors is an area that has been highlighted, not least in media reporting. Education, particularly the challenges municipalities are experiencing with the reception of newly

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7 See for example "Medicinska åldersbedömnings klara – majoriteten av de som undersöks bedöms vara äldre än 18 år“, Sveriges Television 31 May 2017.
8 See for example, "Trots starka kritiken: Sverige fortsätter att åldersbedöma“ (interview with the Minister for Justice, Mr. Morgan Johansson), Svenska Dagbladet 10 January 2018.
9 See for example www.ungisverige.nu and www.vistarinteut.org.
10 "Nu avslutas sittstrejken på Norra Bantorget“, Dagens Nyheter 3 October 2017.
12 See for example ”Socialdemokraterna måste hitta en lösning för ensamkommande barn och unga“ where a group of members of parliament from the Social Democrats [Socialdemokraterna] argue against the current party line, Aktuellt i Politiken, 1 June. 2017.
arrived minors into secondary schools, including unaccompanied minors, is another topic that has received attention. Furthermore, health concerns particularly that of mental ill health among unaccompanied minors, have been featured in some reports. Additionally, the fact that a massive majority of unaccompanied minors who are issued residence permits are boys has raised concern among some debaters citing the unbalanced sex ratio among these age groups as a challenge for the future. Some debaters have argued that municipalities need to take more consideration to the situation for unaccompanied girls. The National Board of Health and Welfare [Socialstyrelsen] hosted a seminar devoted to the situation of unaccompanied girls in October 2017.

Q2. Are unaccompanied minors that fall in this category a national policy priority, including those turning 18 years of age? Has this changed over the last few years, i.e. since 2014 onwards? Has there been a shift in focus within policy issues concerning unaccompanied minors?

Sweden had received relatively high numbers of unaccompanied minors already during the years preceding 2015. However, the sharp increase in asylum applications from this group in 2015 has of course resulted in a more comprehensive and broader policy approach to the group, including increased attention to the situation when a minor becomes an adult. During the period, policy decisions and initiatives have continued to be guided by applicable protection standards and, in relation to reception, the principle of normalisation.

Q3. a. Please provide an overview of recent changes to law, policy and practice in relation to what happens with unaccompanied minors after they have received a final decision on their application for asylum/ another status in your (Member) State since 2014 onwards. Please provide an account of such changes also in relation to those unaccompanied minors turning 18 years of age, as well as unaccompanied minors disappearing from guardianship/ care and/ or following a return decision.

Temporary legislation, new legal guidelines concerning impediments of enforcement of return decisions

A temporary act on restrictions of the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden [Lag om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige] (2016:752), (hereinafter the temporary act) is in force over the 20 July 2016 until 19 July 2019 period. This law temporarily suspends a number of provisions in the Aliens Act.

A major difference in the temporary act compared to the Aliens Act is that it restricts the possibility of being awarded a permanent residence permit. However, applications for asylum lodged by unaccompanied minors by 24 November 2015 are examined according to the Aliens Act [Utlänningslagen]. Hence, residence permits issued to unaccompanied minors in this group would normally be permanent. Due to the current backlog of applications at the Swedish Migration Agency, the majority of applications from unaccompanied minors being examined in 2017 were tried according to the provisions of the Aliens Act. It should be added that, in Sweden, it is the age of the applicant at the point when the decision on the application is taken which is crucial.

According to the temporary act, refugees are issued a temporary residence permit of three years, whereas those found to be in need of subsidiary protection are issued a temporary residence permit of thirteen months. If the need for international protection remains after the expiration of the temporary residence permit, a new temporary residence permit can be granted. A permanent residence permit can be granted to applicants who can demonstrate

16 “Stor andel nyanlända till få skolor är ett problem”, Svenska Dagbladet 3 April 2017. This news article on the reception of newly arrived pupils in primary and secondary schools in Sweden contains an interview with OECD’s Director for Education and Skills, Mr. Andreas Schleicher, commenting on the situation in Sweden.
19 The seminar was filmed and is available here: http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/nyheter/konferenser/flickorpaflykt-vadhandersen See also, http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/nyheter/2017/andelenensamkommandeflickorochyngrebarnokar
20 Temporary act on restrictions of the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden [Lag om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige] (2016:752).
they can support themselves. Importantly, persons under the age of 25 also need to have completed their secondary education to be eligible for a permanent residence permit. Furthermore, the temporary act limits the right to family reunification. In practice, only children with refugee status have the right to be reunited with their parents.\textsuperscript{21}

In 2016, the Migration Agency published new legal guidelines concerning unaccompanied minors with an enforceable return decision who are in a situation where adequate reception facilities are not in place in their country of origin.\textsuperscript{22} The starting point in these situations is that a temporary residence permit would be issued due to non-permanent impediments to enforcement. Hence, unaccompanied minors above the age of 16 years whose application for protection/humanitarian reasons is rejected would normally be issued this temporary residence permit, initially with a validity of 12 months. Unaccompanied minors in the same situation but on the verge of reaching majority age, for example those aged 17.5 years, are normally issued a return decision combined with an instruction of deferred enforcement [verkställighetsföreskrift].

On 1 June 2016, Sweden introduced new rules to the effect that individuals who have received an enforceable return decision and do not comply with this and return voluntarily lose their daily allowance and accommodation. The rules are applicable to adults without children and are inclusive of, for example, young adults from 18 years of age.

**New forms of facilities for accommodation and care for minors and young adults**

The care and accommodation of unaccompanied minors, including for those who have received a residence permit, is currently a significant challenge Sweden, in particular for municipalities. In 2016, a new form of care and accommodation, Supported accommodation, [stödboende] was launched to supplement the existing care arrangements such as Residential care homes for children and young persons [Hem för vård och boende, often referred to as HVB] and formal foster family care [familjehem]. The new care arrangement is aimed at 16 to 20 year olds that are deemed in need of more limited support as they are transitioning into adulthood. The driving force behind this government initiative was to facilitate the placement of unaccompanied minors and young adults by municipalities and to increase flexibility of the reception system.\textsuperscript{23}

**Measures pertaining to education, integration, gender equality**

In December 2014, the Government appointed a committee, the Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants (DUA)\textsuperscript{24} [Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete, DUA]. DUA was tasked to reinforce the impact of labour market policy measures on the local level by promoting cooperation between municipalities and the Swedish Public Employment Service [Arbetsförmedlingen] and the development of new forms of collaboration. The aim is to help to reduce youth unemployment and enable newly arrived migrants to become more effectively established in working life.

On 1 January 2016, a new regulation entered into force, which foresees an obligatory mapping/assessment of newly arrived students' knowledge and previous education. It also prescribes regulations on the organisational form of ‘introductory classes’ and on the number of teaching hours for newly arrived students.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Asylum seekers granted subsidiary protection (status) will not generally have the right to family reunification unless they applied for asylum by 24 November 2015. However, if such a decision would contravene a Swedish commitment under an international convention, a relative may be granted a residence permit.
\item Migrationsverket: Rättsligt ställningstagande angående praktiska verkställighetshinder, SR 25/2016. The Swedish Migration Agency issued additional legal guidelines concerning the enforcement of return decisions of unaccompanied minors the following year; Migrationsverket: Rättsligt ställningstagande angående verkställighet av beslut som rör ensamkommande barn, SR 24/2017.
\item For further details, please see the following webpage: http://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2015/11/stodboende-kan-inforas-som-ny-placering/\textsuperscript{23}.
\item For more information (partly in English), please refer to DUA’s website, available at: https://www.dua.se/\textsuperscript{24}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The Swedish Government considers gender equality a priority in its work in relation to unaccompanied minors. For example, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society [Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF] was commissioned in 2016 to develop a digital multilingual platform providing information on health, sex education and gender equality aimed at newly arrived children and young persons. The result of the task, a website entitled “Youmo”, www.youmo.se, was launched in April 2017.

On 1 June 2017, amendments to existing legislation entered into force, concerning the possibility of upper secondary level studies for asylum seeking children or young adults including unaccompanied minors as well as individuals in these groups whose status have already been determined. These amendments, normally referred to as “Gymnasielagen”, i.e. the law on upper secondary studies, were subject of public debate when launched with a number of debaters and instances arguing the law was too complicated and would be challenging to implement. On 27 November, the Government announced a proposal which, if implemented, will increase the possibility of those who applied before 24 November 2015 to be issued a residence permit on the grounds of studies at upper secondary school (certain conditions apply).

A new dispersal mechanism [anvisningsmodell] for unaccompanied minors was established in 2016. According to the mechanism, municipalities are allotted a certain share of the grand total of unaccompanied minors assigned to municipalities each year. The new mechanism was developed with a view to achieve a more even distribution of unaccompanied minors between municipalities. The numbers of residents, new arrivals and unaccompanied minors previously received in the municipality are among the indicators to determine the share to be received in each municipality. The shares of unaccompanied minors to be received is determined in February each year in connection with the Migration Agency’s prognosis.

Prevention against human trafficking of minors, unaccompanied minors who disappear, health and healthcare, social services

In June 2016, the Government launched a new action plan on the prevention of human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse against children. The action plan makes numerous references to unaccompanied minors and in a number of instances, government agencies such as the County Administrative Boards [Länsstyrelsen] and the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden [Barnombudsmannen] are commissioned with tasks to, for example, collect information on various aspects of the target group with a view to increase knowledge and reinforce safeguards and existing policies. Earlier on in 2016, the County Administrative Board of Stockholm was tasked by the Government to collect information on unaccompanied minors who disappear and to suggest points of action to be taken based on those findings.

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29 More information available at: http://www.government.se/articles/2016/01/new-model-to-distribute-unaccompanied-minors-fairly-between-municipalities/ The Migration Agency’s website has detailed information on the dispersal mechanism at: https://www.migrationsverket.se/Andra-aktorer/Kommuner/Orm-ensamkommande-barn-och-ungdomar/Mottagande-av-ensamkommando-barn/Anvisningskommn.html


31 For instance, The Ombudsman was tasked to interview unaccompanied minors who have absconded (disappeared) but returned, and as well tasked with a project to increase knowledge of children’s experiences of violent extremism and terrorism.

Finally, a government initiative of particular interest in relation to this study was launched in March 2017. The National Board of Health and Welfare [Socialstyrelsen] was commissioned to establish and host a national knowledge centre on unaccompanied minors and young adults [Nationellt kunskapscentrum om ensamkommande barn och unga]. The centre, which started operations on 1 April 2017, was set up with a view to reinforce practices and policies on unaccompanied minors and young adults by increasing knowledge and knowledge sharing.33

Further reading
The Government offices of Sweden has a designated page on its website that compiles recent government initiatives, new legislation and policies with regard to unaccompanied minors (in Swedish).34

b. Please indicate any planned changes to law/ policy/ practice regarding the care/ integration/ return of unaccompanied minors going forward.

On 5 November 2015, the Government appointed an inquiry chair that is tasked with proposing measures that can create a more cohesive system for the reception and settlement of asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and persons who have obtained residence in Sweden. The Inquiry is to present its report to the Government Offices by 31 March 2018

Furthermore, on 27 November 2017 the Government announced that it planned to propose legislative changes pertaining to unaccompanied minors. These would imply that unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum before 24 November 2015, and who have waited for at least 15 months for a decision on their asylum application, could, if all the conditions in the announced proposal are met, have the possibility to apply for a temporary residence permit for studies on secondary school level.

Q4. What statuses does your (Member) State typically grant to unaccompanied minors and in what circumstances (e.g. asylum, humanitarian protection, temporary/ tolerated status, etc.)? Please do not provide details here on the different status determination procedures (as this is not the focus of the Study), but rather on what status(es) they result in for unaccompanied minors.

Asylum applications from unaccompanied minors submitted by 24 November 2015 or earlier are examined according to the Aliens Act, whereas applications submitted after that date are examined according to the temporary act. The Aliens Act foresees refugee status, subsidiary protection status including other protection status [skyddsbehövande i övrigt], which is a non-harmonised protection status, and as an exception particularly distressing circumstances [synnerligen omständigheter] as outcomes. The residence permits issued according to the Aliens Act are normally permanent. The provision of particularly distressing circumstances is in principle suspended by the temporary act currently in force. In addition, all residence permits issued under the temporary act are temporary, which means that permanent residence permits, which were the main outcome for many years, are currently being phased out, at least until the expiration of the temporary act in 2019.

Over the 2014-2017 period, there has been a shift in the distribution of the character of residence permits awarded to unaccompanied minors in Sweden. The share of permits issued due to protection reasons has increased (in particular for Afghanistan) at the expense of permits issued on the grounds of particularly distressing circumstances (humanitarian grounds). The absolute majority of those receiving protection are awarded subsidiary protection status, not refugee status. It should be underlined that the outcomes of the asylum procedures of unaccompanied minors in Sweden, and even more so in the past year, is very much dependent on the outcomes of


34 Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/social-omsorg/regeringen-stodjer-arbetet-med-ensamkommande-flyktingbarn/
the caseload of applicants from Afghanistan, which constitute an absolute majority of the applicants.

In rare cases of permanent impediments to enforcement, a permanent (currently temporary) residence permit can be issued. In case of non-permanent impediments to enforcement, a temporary residence permit or an instruction to defer enforcement is issued. Following the Migration Agency’s new legal guidelines in this field (see question 3.), the number of temporary residence permits and deferred return decisions issued to unaccompanied minors due to non-permanent impediments to enforcement has increased considerably.

Q5. a. Please provide any further qualitative information available in your (Member) State on the characteristics of unaccompanied minors, as follows:

- Are unaccompanied minors mostly close to the age of majority when a final decision on their application for asylum/another status is issued, or (much) younger?

The absolute majority of applicants are in the 16 to 18 year age bracket when applying. At the time of a final decision, the bulk of applicants will be nearing the age of majority or will sometimes have passed that age. The latter situation is a consequence of the massive caseload of applications at the Swedish Migration Agency following the events of 2015 when more than 35,000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum. This situation led to prolonged processing times at the Migration Agency and in Migration Courts.

- Are they boys or girls predominantly?

The share of girls has varied somewhat in the past few years, but an overwhelming majority, around 80 per cent, are boys. In 2015, 92 per cent of unaccompanied minors were boys.

- Are they resettled and/or relocated unaccompanied minors whose right to reside in your (Member) State has been clarified?

Unaccompanied minors are only exceptionally accepted for resettlement. In the past two years, 22 unaccompanied minors were accepted for resettlement in Sweden. The major countries of origin were Afghanistan and Eritrea from which 7 individuals each were resettled. In the 2014-2017 period, Sweden has not accepted to receive relocated unaccompanied minors from Greece and Italy.

- Please provide any other qualitative information available not covered above, for example, unaccompanied minors not presenting themselves to the authorities, etc.:

It is generally assumed that the absolute majority of unaccompanied minors who arrive in Sweden apply for asylum. However, some sources say that the number of unaccompanied minors who are in the country in an irregular situation, for example those who have not sought asylum or have absconded or disappeared, are increasing.

As mentioned in question 1, unaccompanied minors from in particular Morocco are frequently mentioned in this context. According to return experts at the Migration Agency, Moroccans who have stated to be minors in Sweden are often reported to be of majority age by Moroccan authorities. There is strong reason to believe that many individuals in this group, such as unaccompanied minors from the north of Africa, often have been in the country for quite some time before applying for asylum. To apply for asylum may also not be their intention, since they probably are well aware their chances of receiving a residence permit are very limited. However, to apply for a residence permit (normally citing protection grounds) when detected by the authorities is in principal the only

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35 E-mail communication from the Swedish Migration Agency’s Section for resettlement and special operations, 15 November 2017.
36 See for example media reports such as “Drygt 1.800 ensamkommande flyktingbarn ”försvunna”, Dagens Nyheter 17 November 2016.
37 Internal e-mail communication from the Migration Agency’s Unit for Return Coordination, 10 January 2018.
option in Sweden for the unaccompanied minor to receive a right to stay. If he/she does not apply for a residence permit, there would not normally be any legal grounds for the individual to remain in the country and return procedures would start. Evidence suggests too that many individuals in this group abscond following an enforceable return decision but remain in the country and that they are hence back in an irregular situation.

A new phenomenon being reported in 2017 is that of Afghan unaccompanied minors and young adults having received a return decision in Sweden appearing at the Church of Sweden [Svenska Kyrkan] in Paris. According to reports, around 20 Afghans come to the facilities on a daily basis. They are, for example, offered clothes and food if needed.\(^{38}\)

In 2016, the Government tasked the County Administrative Board of Stockholm to search out information on unaccompanied minors in Sweden who do not apply for asylum. The findings are expected to be presented to the Government in April 2018.

b. Please complete the Excel document in Annex 1 (including data as well as metadata) if you have national statistics on:

- The total number of accepted/rejected applications for asylum by unaccompanied minors in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by sex/country of origin of the minor;

- The total number of residence permits issued to unaccompanied minors on grounds such as asylum, humanitarian protection, etc. in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by sex/country of origin of the minor;

- The total (estimated) number of unaccompanied minors not seeking asylum and their respective statuses, e.g. those who entered irregularly and victims of trafficking, etc. in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by age/sex/country of origin of the minor;

- The total number of unaccompanied minors issued temporary/alternative statuses, tolerated stay, etc. in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by sex/country of origin of the minor;

- If available, data pertaining to specific integration outcomes for unaccompanied minors in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by age/sex/country of origin of the minor (e.g. unaccompanied minors enrolled in primary/secondary education, traineeships/internships, training, labour market programmes or any other targeted measures; unaccompanied minors who have completed successfully any (civic) integration courses; unaccompanied minors registered with leisure associations (e.g. football/cricket federation, scouting, etc.); cases of successful family reunification involving unaccompanied minors). If such data are not available, please provide below any existing qualitative information in relation to outcomes for unaccompanied minors;

- The total number of unaccompanied minors with enforceable return decisions and/or number of unaccompanied minors returned (through voluntary and forced returns), including data on AVR(R)-programmes targeting unaccompanied minors in 2014-2016 and, where available, the first half of 2017, if possible disaggregated by age/sex/country of origin of the minor;

- The total (estimated) number of unaccompanied minors disappearing from care/guardianship and/or following a return decision, if possible disaggregated by age/sex/country of origin of the minor.

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\(^{38}\) "De hoppas få fransk asyl efter avslag i Sverige: ”Många fler är på väg", kyrkanstidning.se 5 September 2017, is one example. See www.svenskakyrkan.se for more information.
Please do not here include the Eurostat data mentioned above, as this information is available publically and can therefore be analysed centrally for the Synthesis Report.

Q6. a. Please provide a general overview of what happens with unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State when they turn 18 years of age, including a brief description of the approach (e.g. transitional measures/plans) of your (Member) State: 39

- when an unaccompanied minor has received a final negative decision on his/ her application for asylum/ another status as a minor (please elaborate below):

An unaccompanied minor that reaches majority age, i.e. 18 years of age, will be considered as an adult in the migration and return process and the assignment of the legal guardian is automatically terminated. When the applicant reaches majority age there is normally no longer a requirement to ensure adequate reception conditions in the country of origin in order to enforce the return decision. Hence, a deferred return decision can then be enforced.

- when an unaccompanied minor is granted a status as a minor (please elaborate below):

When an unaccompanied minor is issued a residence permit, his/her legal guardian is replaced by an appointed custodian [särskilt förordnad vårdnadshavare].

b. Please describe how unaccompanied minors who are approaching 18 years of age are identified in your (Member) State so that transitional measures/plans can be introduced as part of their care/ integration/ return. How often is this review being done, e.g. every month, etc.?

With regard to unaccompanied minors still in the asylum process (i.e. those who have not received a final decision), the Swedish Migration Agency’s reception units have the responsibility to monitor weekly "18 year old lists" [18-års listor]. Based on this information, the Migration Agency will request information from municipalities concerning any plans for extended care of the applicant, which will be based on an individualised assessment (see c. for more details). Transition measures with regard to return are in principle practised from the age of 16 and upwards, see question 3.a., where these are discussed in more detail.

Similarly, municipal social services assess the need for care/accommodation for those unaccompanied minors who have a residence permit at the point of reaching majority age. Supported accommodation [stödboende] tends to be the most common form of transition care/accommodation.

c. When are transitional measures/plans for those unaccompanied minors turning 18 years of age likely to commence in your (Member) State, e.g. how many months / years before? And for how long can such measures continue after the unaccompanied minor reaches adulthood, e.g. is there any age threshold?

The Migration Agency requests information from municipal social services at least three months prior to the applicant reaching majority age whether he/she is expected to remain in care facilities (if needed, care can be provided until the age of 21 years). Municipalities are normally required to reply with a statement within a month.

In case the municipality notifies the Migration Agency that care is to be ended, the applicant and his/her legal guardian are invited to an "18 year old appointment" [18-årrsamtal], which should take place four to six weeks before the applicant reaches 18 years of age. By consent from the applicant and his/her legal guardian, an officer

39 The information provided in question 6 is primarily based on the following source. Migrationsverket: Kvalitetschefens instruktion om standard för hantering av ärenden där barn utan vårdnadshavare fyller 18 år eller skrivs upp till myndig ålder (I-68/2017), 17 July 2017.
from the municipality can attend this meeting. While at the meeting, the applicant and his/her legal guardian receive information on the implications of reaching majority age, they receive written information and are as well invited to ask questions. The applicant is offered accommodation for adults arranged by the Migration Agency, if possible in the same municipality in order for a smooth transition. Within five weeks, the now young adult has an appointment with a Migration Agency counsellor to follow up on his/her accommodation situation, schooling and social/health situation. The legal guardian has the main responsibility to manage contacts with the applicant’s new school in case he/she has to move to another municipality, where accommodation is available. Applicants who remain in municipal care facilities after reaching majority age are as well called to an “18 year old appointment”.

In case the Migration Agency’s examination of the application (personal interview for asylum, medical age assessment and the results of other measures taken to examine the application) concludes that the minor’s age claim is not credible and that he/she is an adult, the reception unit is tasked to promptly notify the municipality about the decision. The municipality social services are expected to report back shortly and as well notify the Migration Agency of their decision concerning care (which if deemed needed can continue past 18 years of age). It should be mentioned that other public actors are not legally bound by Migration Agency’s decision with regard to the age of the applicant, but it is normally accepted in practice. On 1 February 2017, new rules on the procedures to adjust the age of a minor took effect.

Section 3: Care arrangements for unaccompanied minors, including after-care for unaccompanied minors turning 18 years of age [max. 10 pages]

This section of the Synthesis Report will provide a factual, comparative overview of the care arrangements in place for unaccompanied minors in the (Member) States – including any transitional/ after-care available for unaccompanied minors turning 18. Whilst the aim of this section is to report on care measures available specifically to unaccompanied minors following status determination, some care provisions are accessible for unaccompanied minors without a determination on their applications/ ‘legal’ status. Where the provisions differ from those for unaccompanied minors without a determination on their applications, this should be indicated. If applicable, please also distinguish between provisions that apply to all unaccompanied minors, as well as those that apply to certain groups of unaccompanied minors, e.g. non-asylum seeking unaccompanied minors, trafficked children, etc.

Overview of care provisions and organisational set-up in the (Member) State

Q7. a. What priority is given to the care for unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State (over their return, for example)? When does the care for unaccompanied minors commence, i.e. before or after status determination?

Care and reception activities are undertaken immediately as per the procedures detailed under b question 7.b. Return is always subject to an individual assessment of international protection needs. Moreover, an unaccompanied minor cannot be returned voluntarily or by force unless there is an orderly reception in place in the country of origin (return).

b. Please provide a summary overview of the provisions in place in your (Member) State for the care of unaccompanied minors following their status determination, including accommodation, guardianship, etc., indicating in particular how the legal status of the unaccompanied minor defines his/ her specific care arrangements (e.g. refugees, unaccompanied minors not seeking asylum, etc.).

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40 The information provided in Section 3 is primarily based the following sources: Socialstyrelsen: Ensamkommande barn och unga, Handbok om socialnämndens ansvar och uppgifter (2016) and Migrationsverket et al.: Ett gemensamt ansvar för ensamkommande barn och ungdomar (2017).
In Sweden, municipalities are responsible for providing accommodation and care for all unaccompanied minors (and if deemed needed young adults until the age of 21 years) following their status determination. Principally there are three major types of accommodation and care provided to the target group. These are described in detail in question 9. Financial support (for example daily allowance, [dagersättning]) paid by the Migration Agency to an unaccompanied minor who is issued a residence permit is terminated one month after the decision at the time of which the responsibility is assumed by municipal social services.\(^{41}\) The responsibility of municipalities with regard to accommodation and care of unaccompanied minors (young adults) who have received a return decision remains until the decision has been enforced. In addition to municipalities, government agencies such as the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) play important roles with regard to the care of unaccompanied minors. The Social Services Act [Socialtjänstlagen].\(^{42}\) is the main legal instrument that governs the care of unaccompanied minors.

A designated municipality [anvisningskommun], which is assigned by the Migration Agency in the initial stage of the asylum procedure, has the long term responsibility for the unaccompanied minor. At first hand, the unaccompanied minor would be assigned to a municipality where he/she has next of kin or other relatives. Municipal social services are tasked to examine the needs of the unaccompanied child and provide accommodation and care under the Social Services Act.

An unaccompanied minor who is granted a residence permit is entitled to an appointed custodian [särskilt förordnad vårdnadshavare].\(^ {43}\) The custodian is appointed by the district court [Tingsrätten] following a report from the social services in the municipality where the unaccompanied minor is residing. The legal guardianship [god man], which is in place during the asylum procedure, is discontinued at that point. The assignment as custodian is in legal terms the same as for the legal guardian, i.e. responsibility for the unaccompanied minor’s personal, economic and legal matters and a right and obligation to take decisions in these matters. However, a legal guardian or custodian is not involved in the care or supervision of the child or its need of financial support.\(^ {44}\)

Whereas the assignment for the legal guardian is limited to the period of the procedure of status determination, the assignment as custodian is rather more aimed at the long term planning of the unaccompanied minor’s integration in society. The appointment as custodian is automatically discontinued when the unaccompanied minor reaches majority age (18 years).

An unaccompanied minor who has received a residence permit with the duration of at least a year is entered into the population registry and issued a personal number [personnummer]. Children who have reached 13 years of age can apply for an identity card, which is issued by the Swedish Tax Agency [Skatteverket]. Unaccompanied minors who have received a return decision retain their right to a legal guardian until the return decision is enforced. In addition to accommodation, municipalities can offer specialised care and support to unaccompanied minors who have final return decisions pending enforcement.\(^ {45}\)

\(\text{c. Please describe the procedure (if any) in place in your (Member) State to determine the }\) best interests of the child \(\text{with regard to the care for unaccompanied minors following a positive decision on status. Is this set out in legislation or any other internal administrative regulations?}\)

The relevant provisions on the best interests of the child are generic and not specifically aimed at a particular group (and apply to all children whether unaccompanied or not or whether they have a residence permit or not).

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\(^{41}\) The Reception of Asylum Seekers and Others Act [Lag om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl.] (1994:137).


\(^{43}\) Ibid., section 10.


\(^{45}\) A survey co-funded by the European Return Fund and carried out in 2013-2015 by the municipality of Strömsund indicated that merely about half of Sweden’s municipalities had developed such practices. Socialstyrelsen: Ensamkommande barn och unga, Handbok om socialnämndens ansvar och uppgifter (2016), p.58.
An overarching principle [normaliseringsprincipen] of the reception of unaccompanied minors into municipalities is that all children who are in Sweden as far as possible should enjoy the same social care.\textsuperscript{46}

The best interests of the child are enshrined in the Social Services Act [Socialtjänstlagen] and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act [\textit{Lag med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga}].\textsuperscript{47} The latter act constitutes the legal base for compulsory care of minors and young persons due to, for example, unsafe home conditions and/or home conditions which jeopardise their well-being. According to the Social Services Act, the best interests of the child shall be crucial in all decisions and measures pertaining to care and treatment provided to children. The Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act similarly states the best interests of the young person shall be crucial in decisions taken according to the act. The National Board of Health and Welfare has published extensive instructions and guidelines for the use of practitioners and professionals in (municipal) social services which are tasked to (in multiple situations) to determine the best interests of the child.\textsuperscript{48}

Q8. Which national/ regional/ local authorities and organisations (including NGOs where relevant) are responsible for the care of unaccompanied minors following status determination? Please describe in particular the competent authorities responsible for the provision of accommodation, guardianship, etc., what their specific remits and roles are, any authorities specifically ensuring the principle of the ‘best interests of the child’ is taken into account, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of national competent authority/ organisation</th>
<th>Brief description (e.g. remit/ role, etc.)</th>
<th>Main activities/ responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipality [\textit{kommun}]</td>
<td>Municipalities are the key actors in providing care for unaccompanied minors (and young adults). Municipalities frequently procure accommodation and care from commercial entities.</td>
<td>Care, accommodation, the municipal chief guardian [\textit{överförmyndare}] appoints legal guardian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Migration Agency [\textit{Migrationsverket}]</td>
<td>Government agency with overall responsibility for the reception of unaccompanied minors.</td>
<td>Register and examine applications for residence permits on the grounds of protection and other reasons. Pays out state compensation [\textit{statlig ersättning}] to municipalities to cover their costs for reception, accommodation and care. Assigns municipality [\textit{anvisningskommun}] to be responsible for the unaccompanied minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Board of Health and Welfare [\textit{Socialstyrelsen}]</td>
<td>Government agency with operations primarily aimed at staff, such as practitioners and professionals in the social services, care and healthcare.</td>
<td>The National Board of Health and Welfare, inter alia, conducts follow-ups and evaluations. Importantly, this agency issues instructions [\textit{föreskrifter}], which are binding, and guidelines [\textit{rekommendationer}] aimed at providers of social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{46} Prop. 2005/06:46 p. 41

\textsuperscript{47} The Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act [\textit{Lag med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga}] (1990:52)

\textsuperscript{48} Socialstyrelsen: Dokumentation om barnets bästa inom socialtjänsten (2012)
### Accommodation arrangements

**Q9. a.** Please provide information on the accommodation options available for unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State following status determination, as follows:

- **Accommodation specifically for minors?** Yes

| The Health and Social Care Inspectorate, IVO [Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO] | Government agency that monitors and inspects, inter alia, care and healthcare providers. | Yearly inspections of providers of care and accommodation for minors and young persons. Private sector providers need a permit from IVO to start operations. |
| County Administrative Board [Länsstyrelse] | County administrative boards have a co-ordinating role focusing on regional co-operation between government agencies and municipalities. | Strive to ensure that municipalities are sufficiently prepared to receive unaccompanied minors who have been issued a residence permit. The Convention of the Rights of the Child and in particular the needs and conditions of boys and girls are essential in its work. |

There are three principal options of accommodation (and care) in which minors can be placed. 49 50 These are firstly **Formal foster care family homes** [familjehem]. These are private homes certified to receive minors on behalf of municipal social services and are to provide accommodation and pass on social values. Caregivers are not professionals. The second option is **Residential care homes for children and young persons** [Hem för vård och boende, HVB]. These are operated by municipalities or by private actors following procurement, and staffed by professionals. The final option is **Supported accommodation** [Stödboende] that was launched in 2016. Supported accommodation is intended for 16 to 20 year olds who are not in need of the level of care provided in formal foster care family homes or residential care homes for children and young persons. However, children aged 16 to 17 years of age are only exceptionally placed in supported accommodation.

Placement and care of minors aged 15 years and above require consent both from the legal guardian (appointed custodian) and the minor.51 Placement in accommodation and care facilities is normally voluntary and is carried out in joint agreement with the legal guardian (appointed custodian) and the minor. Upon receiving an unaccompanied minor, municipal social services initially make an examination of his/her care/accommodation needs which results in a care plan [vårdplan] which determines the measures/support needed in the individual case.

The need and provision of care for individuals above the age of 18 years is subject to individual assessment by municipal social services.

- **General accommodation with special provisions for minors?** Yes

The option of Supported accommodation mentioned above is provided in various forms, for example that of individual or shared flats in general accommodation.

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49 The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) maintains a registry of all service providers (public and private) providing care and accommodation under the Social Services Act, available at: [https://www.ivo.se/tillstand-och-register/register/](https://www.ivo.se/tillstand-och-register/register/)

50 The Social Services Act, Chapter 6, section 1.

51 Ibid., Chapter 4, section 1.
- Specialised accommodation for unaccompanied minors with specific identified needs? Yes

There are some Residential care homes for children and young persons that cater to unaccompanied minors with special needs. These care homes can, for example, have additional (or increased presence of) specialised staff. There are also examples of care homes that are exclusively for the placement of girls or young women (and examples of care homes with special support for girls and women victim of honour crimes). Additionally, there is compulsory care for young adults with psychosocial problems operated by The National Board of Institutional Care [Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS].

- Specialised accommodation for (unaccompanied) minors victims of trafficking? No

- Accommodation with a foster family? Yes

See question 9.a. above where Formal foster care family homes are explained. Additionally, unaccompanied minors can stay with relatives as a foster family [familjehemsplaceringsnätverket] and exceptionally in other forms of private accommodation. Placement with their next of kin [anhörigprincipen] is, if available and according to the best interests of the child, the first option in placement according to the Social Services Act.52

- Other types of accommodation for unaccompanied minors, e.g. accommodation with adults if the unaccompanied minor is over 16 years of age, etc.? Yes

Yes, as mentioned above, the accommodation option of Supported accommodation provides for care for 16 to 20 year olds. However, 16 to 17 year olds are only exceptionally placed in such facilities.

b. Please provide an estimate of the costs associated with the accommodation of unaccompanied minors, as well as how these are measured/defined in your (Member) State, e.g. per day/child, etc.

This question is difficult to answer briefly. For example, costs are dependent on the type of care/accommodation provided and in addition, the system was recently changed. Municipalities are by law obliged to provide care and accommodation for unaccompanied minors. Municipalities subsequently receive compensation from the state via the Swedish Migration Agency. Compensation is paid until the minor reaches 18 years of age and exceptionally until the young adult reaches 21 years of age. In the period 2014 until June 2017, the daily compensation per unaccompanied minor paid to municipalities with a reception agreement in place amounted to SEK 1,900 (approximately EUR 190). Following the new system for compensation to municipalities, the Government estimates the average daily costs to SEK 1,500 (approximately EUR 150). Total payments made from the Migration Agency to municipalities in the period were at SEK 3,94 billion (2014), 4,98 billion (2015), 6,06 billion (2016) and 6,49 billion (2017), rounded.53

c. Please provide information on the staff responsible for the care of unaccompanied minors, for example, main tasks, any child-specific training received, etc.

The National Board of Health and Welfare issues instructions and guidelines for example with regard to management, staffing and operations at accommodation and care facilities, including formal foster care in family

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53 Information provided based on internal PM “Statlig ersättning för vård och boende för ensamkommande barn med uppehållstillstånd – nyanlända”, email communication 27 November 2017, including Migrationsverket: Årsredovisning [Annual report] 2016. The following two ordinances regulate compensation paid to municipalities; Förordningen (2010:1122) om statlig ersättning för insatser för vissa utlänningar and Förordningen (1990:927) om statlig ersättning för flyktingmottagande m.m.
homes.

For example, instructions and guidelines concerning Residential care homes for children and young persons specify staffing requirements such as the level of education of staff and what introduction, supervision and competence development staff members should receive. A director is, inter alia, required to have a university education of at least 180 ECTS credits in the relevant fields of study, for example in social work, social pedagogy or behavioural sciences. He/she is required to have previous experience and personal suitability. Staff shall have training, experience and personal suitability needed to perform their assignments. Staff members are recommended to have at least two years of post-secondary education in the relevant fields. Requirements concerning staff at Supported accommodation are somewhat less strict since minors and young people in placement there are more self-reliant. Caregivers and their homes providing formal foster care in family homes are examined and cleared by social services in a formal procedure. Training and other forms of support to these caregivers is available.

The main tasks of the staff is to cater for the minors’ need for secure and sound living conditions, daily care and support. Care is adapted to individual needs (as examined and assessed by social services). Staff can engage in counselling with the purpose to motivate the minor and as well manage contacts with, for example, school, healthcare, and to encourage the minor to participate in leisure activities. In view of the fact that many unaccompanied minors are victims of trauma and suffer from mental ill health it has become increasingly important that staff are trained and able to cater for those special needs. Finally, staff are also engaged in helping the minors to establish new relations to both peers and adults as well as to re-establish and/or maintain contacts with the minor’s family/network in the country of origin.

d. What are the implications of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their accommodation arrangements up to that stage?
- Do these unaccompanied minors turning 18 years of age change accommodation, or do they stay in the same accommodation, for example, until they reach a certain age? If so, what is the age threshold?

Unaccompanied minors with a residence permit reaching 18 years of age can, if needed, receive continued placement in care and accommodation facilities (or formal foster care in a family home) or in supported accommodation until reaching 21 years of age. Such a decision is taken by social services in the respective municipality and is subject to an individual assessment. Supported accommodation can often serve as a transition phase after care facilities for young adults who need more time to prepare for adulthood and having independent accommodation. If care placement continues past the age of majority, the young adult will receive continued financial support and is expected to continue his/her education.

As regards asylum procedures, unaccompanied minors who reach 18 years of age will be considered as adults. The Migration Agency will subsequently assume the responsibility for their accommodation unless social services find that the young adult is in need of continued care.
- Does your (Member) State have any measures in place to support the unaccompanied minor before the transition, e.g. information provision, etc.? Yes

There should be individually tailored post-placement planning well ahead of time. Supported accommodation can accommodate to the

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56 The National Board for Health and Welfare collects all the relevant information on how family homes are assessed and selected on its website. Socialstyrelsen: http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/barnochfamilj/placeradebarnochunga/familjehem
57 The Social Services Act, Chapter 4, section 1.
often serve as the next phase for a young adult who need to practise in order to be able to live in his/her own accommodation. Social services are obliged to cater for the post-placement needs of young adults. Other options include that the young adult can continue to stay in a foster family as a boarder [inackorderad], which means he/she can enjoy greater autonomy, while receiving continued support, or that the foster family can be assigned to serve as a host family [kontaktfamilj] for the young adult for a period of time. There are designated guidelines/support materials [På väg] for staff who are working with minors/young adults in the transition period. These focus on the planning of the transition period from care facilities to independent accommodation and forms part of the comprehensive guidelines for staff [BBIC-Barns behov i centrum].

- **Does your (Member) State have any measures in place to support the unaccompanied minor during the transition, e.g. pathway plan, personal adviser, etc.?** Yes

**See above/below.**

- **Does your (Member) State have any measures in place to support the unaccompanied minor after the transition, e.g. formal follow-up or after-care service, open-door policy at accommodation facility, etc.?** Yes

As mentioned above, placement in accommodation and care (facilities) can continue past the point when the minor reaches majority age, but not beyond 21 years of age. For those young adults where placement is discontinued, social services can sometimes offer continued support. For example, young adults with special needs can receive support in finding accommodation as well as support and advice concerning finance matters, education and work. Social services are obliged to ensure that accommodation options are available when placement ends. It should be added, however, that the fact that a young adult has newly arrived in Sweden is not in itself considered a special need.

**e. Is there any research available in your (Member) State on:**

- **The standards of accommodation** provided to unaccompanied minors? No

- **The effects** of accommodation arrangements on the integration of the unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

The National Board of Health and Welfare has highlighted research looking into minors (i.e. all groups of minors) having been placed in care facilities. This research indicates that minors in general who have grown up in placement in care facilities have lower than average levels of mental well-being and physical health, fare worse in school (and that schools also have lower expectations on their performance) and are less likely to succeed into secondary or tertiary education compared to other children.  

A recent dissertation from Jönköping University studied the transition of unaccompanied minors and young adults out of care. In the dissertation, the struggle against exclusion is highlighted as the greatest challenge the unaccompanied minor/young adult has to conquer during the transition from care to independent living.

**Guardianship arrangements**

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58 Socialstyrelsen: Metodstöd för BBIC. Barns behov i centrum (2015), p.71  
60 Söderqvist, Åsa, The (re)construction of home: Unaccompanied children’s and youth’s transition out of care, Jönköping: Jönköping University, School of Health and Welfare (2017).
Q10. a. Please describe the arrangements for guardianship of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State following status determination, specifying in particular who can become a guardian to an unaccompanied minor, the guardian’s role, e.g. legal representation, etc., which unaccompanied minors (e.g. asylum/ non-asylum seeking) are entitled to a guardian and until what age, etc.

Following an application of asylum, the unaccompanied minor is appointed with a legal guardian [god man]. He/she is appointed by the municipal chief guardian [överförmynndare] upon an application from the Migration Agency or municipal social services. A legal guardian is responsible for the unaccompanied minor’s personal, economic and legal matters and has a right and obligation to take decisions in these matters. It should be noted, however, that the legal guardian is not involved in the care or supervision of the child or providing financially for her/him.61

An unaccompanied minor who is granted a residence permit is entitled to an appointed custodian [särskilt förorndad vårdnadshavare].62 The custodian is appointed by the district court [Tingsrätten] following a report from municipal social services where the unaccompanied minor is residing. The legal guardianship is discontinued at the point when the custodian is appointed. The assignment as custodian is in legal terms the same as for the legal guardian. But whereas the assignment for the legal guardian is limited to the period of the procedure of status determination, the assignment as custodian is rather more aimed at the long term planning of the unaccompanied minor’s integration in society. The appointment as custodian is automatically discontinued when the unaccompanied minor reaches majority age (18 years).63

In Sweden, guardians and appointed legal custodians of unaccompanied minors are normally private persons. To qualify as a legal guardian, a person needs to have relevant experience and be suitable for the assignment and particularly suited to work with minors in a vulnerable situation. He/she should be proficient in Swedish and have a good grasp of Swedish society and institutions (school, healthcare etc.). In addition, he/she shall act impartially in relation to the authorities and have knowledge about the asylum process. Municipalities have vetting procedures in place to assess candidates’ suitability for the mission.64

b. What are the implications of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their guardianship arrangements up to that stage, e.g. are these unaccompanied minors still entitled to a guardian and until what age, or are they expected to become fully autonomous, also in terms of finances, etc.? What measures (if any) are in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after the transition, e.g. information provision, informal follow-up with guardians, etc.?

See question 9.a.

c. Is there any research available in your (Member) State on:

- The standard of guardianship provided to unaccompanied minors? Yes
- The effects of guardianship on the integration of the unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? No

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

In December 2017, The Swedish National Audit Office [Riksrevisionen] published a report that examined the...
framework and standards of guardianship provided to various groups, including unaccompanied minors. The report found serious flaws in the current system of guardianship. In particular, monitoring of the system was described as inadequate and it was suggested the Government should take steps to reinforce legal certainty. The report noted that missions have increased in numbers, not least due to the sharp increase in the number of unaccompanied minors in recent years, and become more complex. Persons appointed as legal guardians should, for example, have a demonstrated knowledge of residence permit matters, schooling and (health) care. According to the report, recruitment of legal guardians has often become more challenging under the current system. The National Audit Office called upon the Government to look into reforming the system as a whole.65

Consequences of a temporary residence permit on the care arrangements for unaccompanied minors

Q11. What impact does the expiration of a temporary residence permit have on the above-mentioned care arrangements for unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State, e.g. unaccompanied minors disappearing from care, etc.?

Unaccompanied minors are entitled to the same rights throughout the asylum process (for example legal guardian, care/accommodation). The unaccompanied minor enjoys these rights even if a temporary residence permit has expired and/or pending the decision on an application for extension of a temporary residence permit and until he/she reaches 18 years of age (or until 21 years of age if care is extended), or until a return decision is enforced. Municipalities are responsible to continue to cater to an individual who applies for extension before the expiry of his/her temporary residence permit. Meanwhile, those who apply for extension after the expiry of a temporary residence permit citing protection reasons are re-registered into the Swedish Migration Agency’s reception system. Residence permits issued according to the rules of the Aliens Act are as a rule permanent. As a result, temporary residence permits have rather been an exception. However, the temporary act in force until 19 June 2019 foresees temporary residence permits only, which means that permanent residence permits are currently being phased out, at least over this period.

Challenges and good practices

Q12. Please indicate the main challenges associated with the care of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State experienced by both unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age, and/or the competent authorities (e.g. based on existing studies/evaluations, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/IGOs, case law, etc.) and how these challenges could be overcome. Please provide references.

Challenges associated with the care of unaccompanied minors have shifted over time in the past few years. For example, experts at The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions [Sveriges kommuner och landsting, SKL] report that in 2015-2016, following the high influx of asylum seeking unaccompanied minors, the supply of care facilities and staff was a major issue. Currently, new rules on state compensation to municipalities effective as of 1 July 2017 leave municipalities with fewer resources and makes it challenging to them to uphold the previous level of operations, experts claim. In addition, the target group is multifaceted. Many of the unaccompanied minors who arrived in 2015 are on the verge of attaining majority age or have already done so, which poses a new set of challenges. Since 2016, the number of new arrivals has been relatively low. As mentioned previously many unaccompanied minors and young adults suffer from mental ill health, a situation that also results in a difficult work situation for staff. Care facilities often have a high turnover of staff. Overall, the lengthy processing times of

asylum applications and rapid migration policy changes in Sweden in 2015-2016 are factors that have had direct implications on the target group and resulted in challenges with care.66 Reports published in 2015 said that up to 25 per cent of boys admitted into compulsory care by The National Board of Institutional Care (Statens institutionstyrelse, SIS) were unaccompanied minors. In addition, unaccompanied boys were described to be more at risk of becoming radicalised.67

Q13. Please describe any examples of good practice in your (Member) State concerning the care of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18. Please identify as far as possible who considers the practice in question as successful, since when the practice has been in place, its relevance and whether its effectiveness has been proven, e.g. through an (independent) evaluation. Please reference any sources of information supporting the identification of the practice in question as a ‘good practice’ (e.g. evaluation reports, academic studies, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/ IGOs, etc.).

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has developed a dedicated page on its website that collects good examples from municipalities across the country, for example pertaining to the care of unaccompanied minors.68 The webpage was set up as a means of knowledge sharing among municipalities and for them to draw inspiration from successful projects.

Formal evaluation of a project does not appear to be a requirement for inclusion into the website, but the it serves as an important tool in this respect, not least in recent years when challenges for municipalities have been, and remain, considerable.

E-learning for stakeholders involved in the care of unaccompanied minors has been developed in recent years and has been met with good feedback from users, in particular a course aimed at legal guardians.69

Section 4: Integration of unaccompanied minors, including transitional arrangements for unaccompanied minors turning 18 years of age [max. 10 pages]

This section of the Synthesis Report will provide a factual, comparative overview of the integration measures in place for unaccompanied minors in the (Member) States, such as access to education and employment – including any transitional arrangements in place for unaccompanied minors turning 18. The aim of this section is to report on integration measures available specifically to unaccompanied minors following status determination (and not to duplicate information covered in other EMN studies on general integration measures). Where the provisions differ from those unaccompanied minors without a determination on their applications, this should be indicated. If applicable, please also distinguish between provisions that apply to all unaccompanied minors, as well as those that apply to certain groups of unaccompanied minors, e.g. non-asylum seeking unaccompanied minors, trafficked children, etc.

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66 The information provided in this paragraph is primarily based on contributions to the study from experts at The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions [Sveriges kommuner och landsting, SKL].

67 The National Board of Institutional Care was one of several government agencies commissioned by the Government to search out preventive measures against radicalisation in 2015. The report, entitled Kartläggning av metoder och arbetssätt som kan användas i arbetet med att förebygga våldsbejakande extremism på Sis särskilda ungdomshem (Dnr 1.1.1-1782-2015), is available at: https://www.stat-inst.se/contentassets/638a0987db3c4ffe9cae85a123e16e6c/kartlaggning-av-metoder-och-arbetssatt-som-kan-anvandas-i-arbete-med-att-forebygga-valdsbejakande-extremism-pa-sis-sarskilda-ungdomshem.pdf

68 Available at: https://integrationsocialomsorg/asyllochflyktingmottagandeintegrationidebankforintegrationsarbetet/barnunqafamiljochskola.5184.html

69 The e-training for legal guardians is available at: https://adobeconnect.skl.se/godman
Overview of integration provisions and organisational set-up in the (Member) State

Q14. a. What priority is given to the integration of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State (over their return, for example)?

The principle of normalisation (the minor should lead as normal life as possible) applies during the asylum procedure in the sense that the unaccompanied minor has access to many of the services that are of importance to integration already when he/she is assigned to a municipality during the application procedure. The process is not geared towards integration or return until a complete individual assessment of the minor’s international protection needs. Moreover, an unaccompanied minor cannot be returned voluntarily or force unless there is an orderly reception in place in the country of origin (return).

b. Please provide a summary overview of the provisions in place in your (Member) State for the integration of unaccompanied minors following their status determination, indicating in particular how the legal status of the unaccompanied minor defines his/her specific integration trajectory (e.g. refugee, beneficiary of subsidiary protection, other statuses granted, etc.).

Unaccompanied minors enjoy the same rights as other minors who reside in Sweden following their status determination, which is in line with an overarching principle in Sweden that rights and entitlements are normally based on age. The approach with regard to integration is normally generic, i.e. the type of legal status does not determine the integration trajectory. Unaccompanied minors have full access to education and at a certain age to labour market training. In principle, an unaccompanied minor has access to many of the services that are of importance to integration already when he/she is assigned to a municipality during the application procedure.

Access to education should be arranged as soon as possible after the arrival in Sweden. The appointed school within the assigned municipality [anvisningskommun] should call the minor to a meeting within two months. The purpose of the meeting is to examine the needs of the unaccompanied minor and to plan how the school should address these needs. An unaccompanied minor has the right to attend secondary school if/she is not qualified to secondary school. Unaccompanied minors holding a temporary residence permit have the right to attend secondary school if they have started before turning 18. Unaccompanied minors holding a permanent residence permit enjoy this right until the age of 20. Another option is education for adults (bridging courses) within the municipality [kommunal vuxenutbildning] for those who are between 18 and 20 and who want to complete secondary school. From the age of 15 years, unaccompanied minors have the right to apply for support from the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES) [Arbetsförmedlingen].

The legal status of the unaccompanied minor is hence of less importance when looking at different integration measures. What might be of importance in relation to integration, however, is the right to family reunification, which is currently suspended for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Only minors with refugee status have the right to be reunited with their parents. More importantly, the temporary act foresees only temporary residence permits. A permanent residence permit can be granted if applicants can demonstrate that they can support themselves and, if they are under the age of 25 years, have completed their secondary education. To complete secondary school and to find work is therefore of importance in order to stay in Sweden.

b. Do the above provisions differ from those for accompanied minors, as well as for adults and if so, how?

As mentioned in question 14.a., minors have the same rights no matter if accompanied or unaccompanied. What matters is instead the age of the minor when looking at education and what programmes are available at the PES. Benefits granted vary as well depending on age the age of the person and the activity of which he/she takes part.

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70 The Education Act [Skollagen, 2010:800], chapter 7, section 15.
71 Ibid., chapter 29, section 3.
72 Ibid., chapter 15, section 5, and chapter 16, section.
c. Please describe the procedure (if any) in place in your (Member) State to determine the best interests of the child with regard to the integration of unaccompanied minors. Is this set out in legislation or any other internal administrative regulations?

According to the Social Services Act the best interest of the child and the consequences for the child have to be considered in all decisions regarding children. All children have the right to have their say and be listened to. Their reasons are to be examined individually and the examination has to be adapted as much as possible to the child’s age, health, and maturity. Documentation of the assessment is integral to ensure that the best interest of the child has been considered.73

Q15. Which national/ regional/ local authorities and organisations (including NGOs where relevant) are responsible for the integration of unaccompanied minors following status determination? Please describe in particular the competent authorities responsible for the provision of education, employment support, etc., what their specific remits and roles are, any authorities specifically ensuring the principle of the ‘best interests of the child’ is taken into account, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of national competent authority/ organisation</th>
<th>Brief description (e.g. remit/ role, etc.)</th>
<th>Main activities/ responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The National Board of Health and Welfare [Socialstyrelsen]</td>
<td>Government agency with operations primarily aimed at staff, such as practitioners and professionals in the social services, care and healthcare.</td>
<td>Established a Centre of knowledge [Kunskapscentrum] on UAMs to support practitioners and professionals in the social services, care and healthcare. Provides a response function [Svarsfunktion] for local authorities and social services having questions on migration or child marriage. Developed a handbook on the responsibilities and tasks of the municipal social services regarding UAMs. Analyses and reports on the situation of UAMs, especially the situation for unaccompanied girls. Initiates and coordinates information and measures of family homes and legal guardians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish National Board of Institutional Care [Statens institutionssstyrelse, SIS]</td>
<td>Government agency responsible for compulsory youth care.</td>
<td>Closed youth care aimed to help youths to find their way out of substance abuse and criminality. Additional funds in 2017. The municipal social services decide if an UAM is in need of closed youth care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Health and Social Care Inspectorate [Inspektionen för vård]</td>
<td>The Inspectorate performs supervision and control of service</td>
<td>IVO performs regular controls of residential care homes for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73 Socialstyrelsen: Dokumentation av barnets bästa inom socialtjänsten, available at: [https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/18734/2012-6-16.pdf](https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Lists/Artikelkatalog/Attachments/18734/2012-6-16.pdf)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>och omsorg, IVO</th>
<th>providers in medical care and healthcare.</th>
<th>and young persons [HVB]. Staff at residential care homes, guardians and other persons in contact with UAMs can address IVO if concerned about the UAM or identify problems or shortcomings in the activities the UAM takes part in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Public Health Agency [Folkhälsomyndigheten]</td>
<td>Government agency that develops and supports the operations of stakeholders in order to promote health, to prevent illness and to protect against different forms of health threats.</td>
<td>Prevent mental ill health (suicide prevention in particular) among children and young people including UAMs. Additional funds given to produce more knowledge about mental ill health to facilitate for professionals working with suicide prevention and mental ill health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Authority for Civil and Youth Affairs [Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF]</td>
<td>Government agency responsible for informing about the situation of youths as well to allocate funds to organisations, municipalities and to international cooperation.</td>
<td>Provide information and to educate about health, sexual and reproductive health and rights and equality to newly arrived and children and youths that are asylum seekers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden [Barnombudsmannen, BO]</td>
<td>Government agency with the task of representing children and young people’s rights and interests.</td>
<td>Protect children against human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse as well as to report about the situation of children disappearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Social Insurance Agency [Försäkringskassan]</td>
<td>Government agency responsible for social insurance.</td>
<td>The agency makes decisions of activity support or other benefits paid upon participating in labour market programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County council [Landsting]</td>
<td>County administrative councils are responsible for health and medical care, local transport regional planning.</td>
<td>The county council concludes agreements with municipalities regarding homes for care and accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Administrative Board [Länsstyrelse]</td>
<td>County administrative boards negotiate and sign agreements with municipalities in order to ensure that the county in question can receive and introduce new arrivals as well to develop the coordination between government agencies and municipalities.</td>
<td>Strive to ensure that municipalities have readiness to receive unaccompanied minors. Protect children against human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse. Tasked to map the number of UAMs disappearing, to analyse the scale of the problem, to support the counties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMN Focussed Study 2017

(Member) States’ Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipalties [Kommuner]</th>
<th>Local authority responsible for settlement and for children having access to education, healthcare and social welfare.</th>
<th>Responsible for providing unaccompanied minors accommodation and care under the Social Services Act.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Associations [Idrottsföreningar]</td>
<td>Sports associations working with integration can apply for funds.</td>
<td>Sports Associations organise activities for newly arrived in order to promote the integration of (unaccompanied) minors into Swedish society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Red Cross [Röda Korset]</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations working for integration.</td>
<td>Funds allocated by the Government to strengthen the capacity of the Swedish Red Cross for healthcare to traumatised asylum seekers and newly arrived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children [Rädda Barnen]</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations working for integration.</td>
<td>Established a checklist in order to improve the reception for unaccompanied minors within the international project CONNECT. Support professionals working with unaccompanied minors on how to address traumatised children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access to healthcare**

**Q16. a.** When providing access to healthcare to unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State following status determination, how are the following aspects dealt with?

- Is access to healthcare automatic for unaccompanied minors upon obtaining a permit to stay which is not covered by the Qualification Directive (as it is for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection)? Does this group of unaccompanied minors have the same right to healthcare as nationals of the (Member) State? Yes

Unaccompanied minors have the same rights to health- and dental care as nationals, irrespective of their type of legal status. Municipalities refer newly arrived unaccompanied minors to primary health care centres [vårdcentral] to receive information on healthcare in Sweden, to undergo a health screening and determine the need for vaccination. Unaccompanied minors have equal access to school nurse, counsellor and psychologist.  

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75 The information provided in question 16 is primarily based on provisions in the Education Act, The Health and Medical Services Act [Häls- och sjukvårdslag, 1982:763] and information from the website of the National Board of Health and Welfare.
Please describe what this access to healthcare includes, for example, emergency treatment, basic medical care, essential or specialised medical care, counselling, etc.? Yes

Unaccompanied minors’ access to healthcare includes full access to primary health care as well as full access to any essential or specialised medical care and counselling.

Does the (Member) State undertake any form of individual assessment to ensure that the medical care provided to unaccompanied minors corresponds to the minor’s specific physical, as well as mental health needs? Yes

Individual assessment is offered to address specific physical or mental health care needs, initially by doctors/nurses at primary health care facilities, or at school by the school nurse. If needed, unaccompanied minors are referred to hospital or to child psychiatric care for further care.

Please provide any other important information in relation to the healthcare available for unaccompanied minors not covered above.

In April 2017, new regulations were introduced in the Social Services Act and the Health and Medical Services Act to guarantee access to healthcare for unaccompanied minors. Municipalities and County Councils were tasked to implement the new policies. Additional funds have been allocated to strengthen the capacity for authorities working to prevent mental ill health and suicide. More stakeholders are involved in efforts to promote health and to prevent illness. Among these are The Authority for Civil and Youth Affairs, sports associations and the Swedish Red Cross. The National Board of Health and Welfare has as well reinforced its efforts to support professionals working to prevent mental ill health among minors.

b. What are the implications (if any) of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their access to healthcare, including counselling up to that stage? What measures (if any) are in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after such a transition, e.g. information provision, etc.?

As mentioned in section 3, young adults can remain in care if deemed needed until 21 years of age. There are no implications with regard to access to healthcare of unaccompanied minors transition from the age of minority. However, adults normally pay a fee for a medical appointment (the amount varies from one County Council to another). Most of the County Councils offer free healthcare for patients up until 20 years of age.77

c. Is there any research available in your (Member) State on:

- The quality of healthcare, including counselling, provided to unaccompanied minors? Yes

- The effects of the access to healthcare on the integration of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

The bulk of research in this field seems more to focus on the health situation of unaccompanied minors rather than, for example, the quality of healthcare provided to the target group. The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden published an interesting report in 2017 that focuses on the health of

77 For more details, see Socialstyrelsen: https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/SiteCollectionDocuments/ensamkommande-barn-och-ungdomars-forsorjning.pdf
newly arrived minors (including both minors in families, unaccompanied minors and minors in an irregular situation). In the report, both children and practitioners (for example school nurses and psychologists) were interviewed. The report argues that school health services are play a vital role in (unaccompanied) minors access to health care. A number of problems and challenges are identified in the report, however. For example, a substantial number of (unaccompanied) minors have not received a health examination in spite of having been in Sweden for a longer period. In general, school health services have inadequate resources and competencies to cater to the needs of many minors who suffer from crisis and trauma. There is a lack of interpreters and often a general problem of coordination and cooperation between the school health services and other health care providers (for example psychiatric care facilities for children and youths). Many minors (and their parents) are unaware or ill-informed of their rights which have an adverse effect on the access of minors to health services. Other recent reports confirm challenges for (primary) health care centres to reach out to the target group, but state that the absolute majority (77 per cent) of unaccompanied minors actually undergo the health screening initially offered after having arrived in Sweden.

A study carried out in 2015 found that unaccompanied minors were overrepresented in inpatient psychiatric care. The results, it was argued, suggested a need for adjustment of psychiatric care services for unaccompanied minors. Furthermore, professional training of staff working in supervised homes should be considered, according to the report.

**Access to education**

**Q17. a. When providing access to education to unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State following status determination, how are the following aspects dealt with?**

- Is access to education automatic for unaccompanied minors who have obtained a status which is not covered by the Qualification Directive (as it is for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection)? Does this group of unaccompanied minors have the same right to education as nationals of the (Member) State? Yes

According to the Education Act, unaccompanied minors enjoy the same rights as nationals with regard to education. However, unaccompanied minors holding a temporary residence permit have the right to be enrolled at secondary school only before reaching 18 years of age. Municipalities have the option to decide if secondary school should be available for unaccompanied minors in this category between 18 and 20 years of age. Unaccompanied minors who hold a permanent residence permit have the right to start secondary school until the day they turn 20 years old.

- Does the (Member) State undertake any form of individual assessment to ensure that the education provided to unaccompanied minors is adapted to the age, level of education in the country of origin, degree of language barrier of the unaccompanied minor, etc.? Yes

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81 The information provided in question 17 is primarily based on provisions in the Education Act and information retrieved from the website of the Swedish National Agency for Education, such as this targeted information on new arrivals: https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/larande/nyanlandas-larande/utbildning-nyanlanda-gymnasiel-1.250929 and Att möta ensamkommande: Introduktion och mottagande av unga asylsökande, available at: http://begripligt.nu/filer/Handbok_Det_basta_for_barnen_2012.pdf
The headmaster and/or staff of the school are responsible for introducing the minor and the legal guardian/appointed custodian in the activities of the school. The first step is to welcome the unaccompanied minor to the school. The purpose of this first appointment [välkomstsamtal] is to establish an education plan together with the unaccompanied minor and the legal guardian/appointed custodian. The school assesses the level of knowledge of the minor and identifies his/her learning needs.

- Are any special measures to support access to education specifically for unaccompanied minors available in the (Member) State, in particular language training*, guidance regarding the national education system, etc.? Yes
  
  * Are there specialised institutions for the language training of unaccompanied minors? Does language training take place in public schools, in specialised language courses for unaccompanied minors or minors in general, or within adult language learning programmes for foreign citizens?

A mainstreaming schooling system is preferred in Sweden, but municipalities normally place newly arrived minors in preparatory classes for introduction into the Swedish language and to the Swedish school system. This is intended as a transition phase and students are expected to gradually move over to regular education. If possible, the minor can take part in subjects where language is not an obstacle. The time in preparatory class should be limited to 6 to 12 months.

Unaccompanied minors between 16 and 18 years of age are recommended to prepare for secondary school, but within so-called introduction programmes. The subjects vary depending on the interest and choice of the minor, if it is to qualify for secondary school or trade. Minors who are only interested in learning Swedish can do so but will not be qualified for secondary school and will not be entitled to study allowances.

Students in need of counselling [studiehandledning] are entitled to this in their native language if needed in order to qualify. The teacher together with the minor and the legal guardian/appointed custodian assess the need of student counselling. Decision to provide counselling is taken by headmasters.

Unaccompanied minors are entitled to support and language classes in their parental tongue [hemspråk]. Municipalities are obliged to offer classes in a parental tongue if more than five students are asking for it. In sparsely populated areas, municipalities often face challenges to find teachers in different languages.

- Do unaccompanied minors receive education in accommodation centres, or as part of the mainstream schooling system? Or are there other education arrangements for unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State? Yes

Unaccompanied minors receive education as part of the mainstream schooling system but arrangements are made as described above to introduce them into regular education depending on their level of education and language skills. Preparatory classes and introduction programmes are some of the means to achieve this end.

- Please provide any other important information in relation to access to education for unaccompanied minors not covered above.

b. What are the implications (if any) of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their access to education up to that stage, e.g. do unaccompanied minors have the possibility to continue compulsory education post-18, to progress to third-level education, vocation studies and training, etc.? What measures (if any) are in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after such a transition, e.g. information provision, education pathway/ plan, personal adviser, etc.?

As mentioned earlier an unaccompanied minor has the right to complete primary school for an additional two years if he/she is not qualified to secondary school and the right to start secondary school by the year he/she turns 18 years if granted a temporary residence permit and 20 years if granted a permanent residence permit. Teachers are
expected to regularly assess the minor’s need for support or student counselling in order to qualify or to graduate.

c. Is there any research available in your (Member) State on:

- The quality of education provided to unaccompanied minors? Yes
- On the educational performance of unaccompanied minors? Yes
- The effects of the access to education on the integration of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

Schooling is often described to be of fundamental importance for the integration of (unaccompanied minors) in their new host country.\textsuperscript{82}

The Swedish National Agency for Education and The Swedish Schools Inspectorate [\textit{Skolinspektionen}] publish reports on the quality of education provided at schools in the country. Both agencies report that school health services have inadequate resources, which, inter alia, makes preventive action difficult. In addition, many schools lack access to psychologists, counsellors and teachers for children with special needs. Reports also say there are big differences between schools across the country in these respects. The period from placement in the municipality until entry into schooling is normally four weeks. Municipalities where there are Residential care homes for children and young persons often, but not always, perform better in this regard.\textsuperscript{83}

In upper secondary school, “language introduction” [\textit{språkinroduktion}], is the most common study programme for newly arrived unaccompanied minors. It is an individualised programme that focuses on Swedish language learning. The programme has the purpose to enable the student to enrol in a national programme for upper secondary school or pursue other studies. The number of students enrolled in “language introduction” increased by 90 per cent in 2016 compared to the previous year. In addition, “language introduction” is the most widespread programme nationally, and available in 246 (out of 290) municipalities. However, only 36 per cent of the students in the programme continue their studies in a national programme, which represents the lowest share to do so. Many of students are unable to complete their studies before the age of 20 in order to be eligible for a national programme. Low reading and writing skills and/or very short primary school background are some of the factors behind this situation. The Schools Inspectorate has criticised upper secondary schools for inadequate quality assurance. For example, assessment of students’ individual needs and qualifications was not thorough enough and schools were not recognising that unaccompanied minors actually are a heterogeneous group. Additionally, the support offered was rather based on what was available, than on what was needed. Lack of funds as well as of staff and facilities were mentioned as reasons behind this situation.

Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö have studied how unaccompanied minors fare in education in Sweden and made some interesting observations pertaining to gender. For example, among young adults up until 20 years of age it is more common that men study than women. Conversely, among unaccompanied minors above 21 years of age, more women study, which follows the general pattern in the country that more women than men are enrolled in tertiary education. However, women are overrepresented in all age groups among those that neither work nor study.\textsuperscript{84}

\begin{flushend}
\textsuperscript{82} See for example Socialstyrelsen: Ensamkommande barn och ungas behov - En kartläggning (2013), p. 21, 24, 26.
\textsuperscript{83} Information in this and the following paragraph are primarily based on the following sources. Skolinspektionen: Skolinspektionsens årsrapport 2016 (2017), p. 31ff. and Skolverket: Skolverkets lägesbedömning 2017, rapport 455 (2017).
\end{flushend}
Access to (support to) employment

Q18. a. When providing access to employment\(^{85}\) to unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State following status determination, how are the following aspects dealt with?

- Is access to employment automatic for unaccompanied minors upon obtaining a permit to stay which is not covered by the Qualification Directive (as it is for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection)? What does the access include, e.g. internships, traineeships, vocational preparation, etc.? Is this subject to rules generally applicable to the profession and to the public service? Is this conditional upon obtaining a work permit, etc.? Yes

Access to employment is automatic upon obtaining a permanent or temporary residence permit. Labour market (introduction) programmes\(^ {86}\) are offered irrespective of the type of legal status of the unaccompanied minor, but they vary depending on age, background, experiences and skills of the minor and the purpose of the activity. The unaccompanied minor has to register him/herself as a jobseeker at the Swedish Public Employment Agency, and subsequently be assessed to be in need of support to be eligible. A plan of action or training plan is established together with the employment officer. Education is the preferred route until 20 years of age in order to find a more long-term solution for the minor. These are some of the programmes available:

- Youth job programmes for persons from 16 to 24 years [jobbgaranti för ungdomar]
- Vocational introduction employment for persons from 15 to 24 years [yrkesintroduktionsanställning]
- Supported work experience with a supervisor [arbetsträning med handledare]
- Special recruitment incentive [instegsjobb]
- Labour market training/vocational training [arbetsmarknadsutbildning]
- Internships/traineeships [arbetspraktik]

- Is the access to employment for unaccompanied minors limited in any way, for example, open only to unaccompanied minors of a certain minimum age after status determination, or restricted for a certain period and/or limited to a maximum number of days per year? Are these limitations for unaccompanied minors same as those applied to minors who are nationals of the (Member) State? Yes

There are certain limitations regarding (minimum) age but these apply to nationals too. Youth job programmes are for persons from 16 to 24 years and vocation introduction employment is for persons from 15 to 24 years. For labour market training, a person has to be at least 18 years old. Programmes usually have a duration of up to 6 months. Vocational introduction employment is available for up to one year and youth job programmes up to 15 months.

- Are any special measures to support access to employment specifically for unaccompanied minors available in the (Member) State, in particular vocational guidance, jobseeker allowance for unaccompanied minors not able to find employment, etc.? No

- Please provide any other important information in relation to access to employment for unaccompanied minors not covered above.

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\(^{85}\) Please note that this need not apply to unaccompanied minors who are still in full-time education.

\(^{86}\) The act on introduction activities for certain new arrivals [Lag om etableringsinsatser för vissa nyanlända invandrare (2010:197)]
b. What are the implications (if any) of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their access to employment up to that stage? What measures (if any) are in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after the transition, e.g. ongoing employment support as part of integration pathway/ plan, personal adviser, etc.?

Programmes are available before, during and after the transition and the Swedish Public Employment Agency provide information, support and counselling on how to find employment.

c. Is there any research available in your (Member) State on:

- The quality of employment access support provided to unaccompanied minors? Yes

- The effects of the access to employment on the integration of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

As indicated above there is no tailor made employment access support for unaccompanied minors. While employment is indeed key in becoming integrated in society, recent research show that few unaccompanied minors enter the labour market before the age of 20 years. The majority in that age group are still studying. However, the likelihood to gain foothold in the labour market increases by the time spent in Sweden and the level of education. Employment rates vary considerably between men and women; men are employed to a much higher degree than women (much more so than for those born in Sweden). Possibly this phenomenon is reflective of conditions on the labour market in their countries of origin.

A recent study say few women or men who have arrived as unaccompanied minors have jobs that require higher education. However, it is noted that this is a young age group that have recently entered the labour market. The majority of women who do work are often in service, care or sales jobs, whereas men are in service professions or traditional blue-collar jobs. Unaccompanied minors in Stockholm fare generally better on the labour market and unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan, the major country of origin, fare as well or better as other nationalities.87

Family reunification of unaccompanied minors

Q19. a. Please provide here any updated information on the possibility for family reunification for unaccompanied minors since the 2016 EMN Focussed Study on “Family Reunification of Third-Country Nationals in the EU plus Norway: National Practices,” including any information on the effects of family reunification on the integration of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

See Sweden’s national contribution to the 2016 EMN focussed study. 88

b. What are the implications (if any) of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their access to family reunification up to that stage, for example:


88 Available at: http://www.emnswen.../Family%20reunification_A5_web.pdf.
- Is there any cut-off of family reunification rights when unaccompanied minors reach 18 years of age? Yes

An individual who reaches 18 years of age is not eligible for family reunification with parents since family reunification is normally limited to the nuclear family members, i.e. spouse (common law spouse) and underage children. Family reunification of family members outside the nuclear family can only exceptionally be granted.

- Does your (Member) State have any measures in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after such a transition (please specify these measures)? No

- Please provide any other important information in relation to family reunification for unaccompanied minors not covered above.

The age of the sponsor or applicant at the day when the application is decided upon is key. The Migration Agency’s units for legal migration monitor the caseload and applications for family reunification where sponsors or applicants are nearing the age of majority are prioritised.

c. Is there any research available on the effects of family reunification on the integration of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Yes

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö have published extensively on the subject of unaccompanied minors’ entry into working life in Sweden. With regard to family reunification, they have found that unaccompanied minors whose parents were also registered around the same time as the minor, are less often employed. The findings apply in particular to girls. Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö discuss possible explanations to this phenomenon, for example that minors who are not reunited with their parents could be more independent or that foster families are beneficial for integration. The most probable explanation, however, is believed to be that minors that are not reunited with their parents may be under more financial pressure to work to support themselves and possibly family members in their country of origin.\(^89\)

**Social welfare supporting unaccompanied minors**

**Q20. a.** Does your (Member) State provide any social welfare/ assistance to support unaccompanied minors? Yes\(^90\)

If yes, please provide information on this below, citing any evidence on the effects of social welfare/ assistance on the integration of the unaccompanied minors where available (e.g. based on existing studies/ evaluations/ other sources or information received from competent authorities).

The majority of unaccompanied minors are placed in residential care homes or in formal foster care. Social welfare or assistance is supplied within the placement. Child benefit is granted up to 16 years of age by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency [Försäkringskassan]. Minors enrolled in secondary education are entitled to study grants. Activity support or personal development benefits are granted to persons participating in labour market

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\(^90\) Replies to question 20 are primarily based on information retrieved from the website of the National Board of Health and Welfare.
programmes, but these are normally aimed at persons aged 18 years or older. Social welfare/assistance [ekonomisk bistånd] is provided (subject to assessment).

b. What are the implications (if any) of unaccompanied minors’ transition from the age of minority to 18 years of age for their access to social welfare/assistance up to that stage, for example:

- Is there any benefits cut-off when unaccompanied minors reach 18 years of age? No

Benefits are granted as well after 18 years of age but the amount varies depending on age and activity. Child benefit is granted up to 16 years of age. Minors are subsequently entitled to apply for other benefits; study grant if studying and activity support or personal development benefits if registered as a jobseeker at the Swedish Public Employment Agency and taking part in activities or labour market programmes.

- Does your (Member) State have any measures in place to support the unaccompanied minor before, during and after such a transition (please specify these measures)? Yes

As mentioned above, support is provided within the respective care facility or by entitlements paid to the minor/youth adult following schooling or participation in labour market training activities. The municipal social services are as well responsible for addressing the needs of the unaccompanied minor, and if needed young persons over the age of 18 can remain in care by social services.

- Please provide any other important information in relation to social welfare for unaccompanied minors not covered above.

c. Is there any research available on the effects of social welfare on the integration of unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18 years of age (as conducted by relevant authorities, academics, NGOs, etc.)? Y/ N

If yes, please briefly describe the main findings and conclusions of such research and provide a full reference to the source (e.g. based on existing studies/evaluations/other sources or information received from competent authorities).

In a report from 2013, the National Board of Health and Welfare highlighted the importance of coordination between government agencies, municipalities and other stakeholders when working with unaccompanied minors. Coordination is needed both in organising the reception of minors but as well when addressing the unaccompanied minor in their everyday life.91

Further monitoring of unaccompanied minors’ transition to adulthood

Q21. Further to any information on after-care already provided above, please describe any (other) monitoring mechanisms/reviews/evaluations ensuring the effective transition of unaccompanied minors to adulthood, including the types of measure(s) undertaken and the duration of the monitoring period after unaccompanied minors reach 18 years of age.

Consequences of a temporary residence permit on the integration of unaccompanied minors

91 Socialstyrelsen: Ensamkommande barn och ungas behov, kartläggnings från Socialstyrelsen (2013).
Q22. What impact does the expiration of a temporary residence permit have on the above-mentioned integration measures for unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State, e.g. possibility for education-related extension of a temporary residence permit originally granted on grounds of international/humanitarian protection, etc.?

Unaccompanied minors granted a temporary residence permit can, upon application, be awarded a permanent residence permit if they can demonstrate that they can support themselves, and if they are below the age of 25, have completed their secondary education. To complete secondary school and to find work is therefore of importance in order to be able to gain permanent residency in Sweden.

Challenges and good practices

Q23. Please indicate the main challenges associated with the integration of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State experienced by both unaccompanied minors (including those turning 18 years of age), and/or competent authorities (e.g. based on existing studies/evaluations, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/IGOs, case law, etc.) and how these challenges could be overcome. Please provide references.

As mentioned in question 1. and section 7 of the study, the integration of the very high number of unaccompanied minors who arrived in Sweden until 2015 arguably represents the biggest challenge currently. As large numbers of those arrived in the 2014-2015 period are now transitioning into majority age, the upper secondary schooling and labour market entry of these individuals are imminent challenges. Many of the difficulties identified in upper secondary education have already been highlighted in question 17.c. In addition, many reports have cautioned against the lack of teachers of Swedish as a foreign language. A 2014 report warned that the share of teachers of this school subject had the lowest share of formally qualified [behörig] teachers of all school subjects. For instance, in upper secondary schools, only 18 per cent of these teachers were formally qualified at that point.

Looking at funds allocated and the number of authorities and organisations involved, the Government prioritises the integration of unaccompanied minors. Identified and prioritised challenges to address are mental ill health, suicide among children and youth, youth unemployment, sex education and gender equality. Reports say that many of the newly arrived (unaccompanied) minors and youth adults have inadequate knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and health, not least because many of them have fled from countries where they had difficulties or were unable to attend school due to war and conflict. Additionally, these subjects were not normally part of the curricula in schools in their countries of origin. Hence, The Agency for Youth and Civil Society was tasked to provide information and to educate on health, sexual and reproductive health and rights and equality to newly arrived. On the same note, concern has been raised with regard to the fact that the massive majority of unaccompanied minors are boys, and in addition that stakeholders do not pay enough attention to the situation of unaccompanied girls (as discussed in question 1.).

There are multiple reports about mental ill health among unaccompanied minors (as discussed throughout the study, for example in questions 1 and 12), which strongly indicates this is a challenge. Funds have been allocated by the Government to strengthen the capacity of psychiatric care.

Support to young adults in order to facilitate their labour market entry will clearly be a challenge in the coming years as those unaccompanied minors who arrived in 2014-2015 transition into adulthood. New regulations were introduced in January 2018 to facilitate the work of the Swedish Public Employment Agency in order to reduce

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93 Skolverket: Redovisning av uppdrag om hur stor del av undervisningen som bedrivs av behöriga lärare Dnr U2014/2048/GV

94 See for example UMO (Ungdomsmottagningen på nätet), in its final report on the "Youmo project", available at: http://www.umo.se/Global/Informationsmaterial/Slutgiltig_Rapport_A5_tryck.pdf
unemployment among newly arrived migrants.

Q24. Please describe any examples of good practice in your (Member) State concerning the integration of unaccompanied minors – including those turning 18 – identifying as far as possible who considers the practice in question as successful, since when the practice has been in place, its relevance and whether its effectiveness has been proven, e.g. through an (independent) evaluation. Please reference any sources of information supporting the identification of the practice in question as a ‘good practice’ (e.g. evaluation reports, academic studies, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/ IGOs, etc.).

A vast array of projects and new practices aimed at the integration of unaccompanied minors have been initiated, by public and private actors as well as civil society, following the high influx of unaccompanied minors in the 2014-2015 period. It would be impossible to describe all these within the scope of this study. In addition, formal evaluations of practices are sometimes difficult to come by, partly because many of the projects are on-going and have yet to be formally evaluated.

As mentioned in question 14.b., unaccompanied minors, in principle, enjoy the same rights (such as rights to schooling and healthcare) as other minors in the country already during the application procedure. For those who eventually receive a residence permit it could be argued this facilitates integration, and perhaps more so in the past two years when application processing times at the Swedish Migration Agency have been very long. Also, the fact that rights and entitlements as a rule are independent of the type residence permit awarded could be seen as a good practice to ensure that all unaccompanied minors are treated equally.

As mentioned in question 13, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has developed a dedicated page on its website that collects good examples from municipalities across the country, some of which pertain to integration. The webpage serves as an excellent tool in spreading good practices in integration to (other) municipalities. An example, which particularly merits mention as a good practice, is the municipality of Trelleborg in the south of Sweden. Trelleborg has developed a model [Trelleborgsmodellen] that has received a great deal of attention. Trelleborg was awarded funds in 2017 to further develop and introduce the model in 14 other municipalities. The approach is very much labour market oriented, and rather than being assigned to social services, unaccompanied minors are the responsibility of municipal labour market secretaries in Trelleborg. The municipality strives to develop ties with local business to create possibilities for traineeships and future employment. The objective of model is to make newly arrived young adults self sufficient and has, according to reports, received strong results.\textsuperscript{95}

As mentioned in question 3, The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society was tasked to improve knowledge in the target group on health, sexuality and gender equality. As a result, the website yuomo.se was launched in 2017. Information is available in Arabic, Dari, Somali and Tigrinya in addition to Swedish and English. While there are no formal evaluations of the website available, it certainly comes across as an effective tool of communication and interaction with the target group (it includes a question-answer service). Importantly, the website was developed in cooperation with participants from the target group, based on needs identified through interviews and surveys. Youmo has a Facebook page that features regular podcasts on topical issues. Staff in municipalities and county councils as well as practitioners have received training in how to use and promote Youmo.

Finally, the outcomes of different projects carried out in the municipality of Strömsund have received positive feedback from stakeholders and practitioners (in other municipalities and at government agencies), but independent evaluation to prove effectiveness is lacking. For instance, a centre for integration was created with a view to support children, staff and legal guardians. A handbook and templates to guide staff were published as well. Clear guiding principles, accountability and coordination are emphasised to be of importance in the reception

\textsuperscript{95} See the website of the municipality of Trelleborg for further information, available at: \url{https://www.trelleborg.se/} and media reports such as ”Jobb först för nyanlända i Trelleborg”, Sydsvenskan 1 October 2017.
of unaccompanied minors. One method used, developed by the Australian researcher Howard Bath, is to focus on what works instead of what is not working when addressing minors in order to strengthen their capacity.96

Section 5: Return of unaccompanied minors [max. 10 pages]

This section of the Synthesis Report will report on the return arrangements for unaccompanied minors as stipulated in Directive 2008/115/EC (i.e. Art. 10, Art. 17) without duplicating information covered in the forthcoming EMN study on ‘The effectiveness of return in EU Member States: challenges and good practices linked to EU rules and standards.’

Overview of the return procedure and its legal and organisational set-up in the (Member) State

Q25. a. Does your (Member) State foresee the return of unaccompanied minors? Yes

If so, please provide a brief overview of the provisions in place in your (Member) State with regard to the return of unaccompanied minors to the country of origin when the minor receives a negative decision on his/her application for asylum/another status:

- Possibility for an unaccompanied minor to return to the country of origin through a voluntary return? Yes

  If yes, please describe the procedures/processes under which an unaccompanied minor may be returned voluntarily to the country of origin according to national legislation/policy and practice, including any challenges.

Article 10 of the Return Directive has been transposed into national legislation in Sweden.97 This means that a child cannot be returned unless they are received by a family member, a nominated guardian or an appropriate reception facility in the country of return. The Swedish Migration Agency always strives to ensure that unaccompanied minors who have received legally enforceable return decisions are reunited with one or both of their parents in the first instance. If this is not possible then efforts will be made to reunite the child with another suitable family member. If these possibilities are exhausted then arrangements can be made for the child to be received by a nominated legal guardian or an adequate reception facility in the country of return.

There can be various challenges in returning unaccompanied minors. Many of the challenges are related to arranging for the child to be received in the country of origin. Some minors are unable or unwilling to provide accurate contact details for their family members. In various countries it is not possible to trace family members via the authorities. Many countries of origin also lack appropriate reception facilities for receiving unaccompanied minors who cannot be received by their families. This can be a problem even in countries where there is a readmission agreement in place.

- Possibility for an unaccompanied minor to return to the country of origin through an assisted voluntary return? Yes

  If yes, please describe the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme available in your (Member) State and the procedures/processes under which an assisted voluntary return of an unaccompanied minor may be carried out, including any challenges.

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96 The municipality of Strömsund has developed a dedicated website that collects material from several projects (co-funded by the European Return Fund and the European Refugee Fund) carried out in the municipality, available at: http://begripligt.nu (some information available in English).

97 Chapter 12, section 3a of the Aliens Act [Utlänningslagen, 2005:716]
The Swedish Migration Agency does not distinguish between voluntary returns and assisted voluntary returns. Flights are booked for all unaccompanied minors returning and the child is always accompanied during the return journey. Unaccompanied minors returning voluntarily to some countries are also eligible for cash support and/or in-kind support. See answer to question 30.a. below for details.

- Possibility for an unaccompanied minor to return to the country of origin through a **forced return**?
  - Yes
  - If yes, please describe the procedures/ processes under which an unaccompanied minor may be subject to a forced return to the country of origin according to national legislation/ policy and practice, including any challenges.

If an unaccompanied minor cannot be returned voluntarily, enforcement of the return decision can be handed over from the Swedish Migration Agency to the Swedish Police. The Migration Agency only carries out voluntary returns. However, the Migration Agency still holds the responsibility of Article 10 of the Return Directive (see answer to question 25.a. above). The Aliens Act and the Return Directive are also applicable for the Police. In consequence, a child cannot be returned voluntarily or by force unless there is an orderly reception in place in the country of origin (return). Practices and standards are the same for the Police as for the Migration Agency.

b. Please describe the procedure (if any) in place in your (Member) State to determine the **best interests of the child** once a negative decision has been reached. Is this set out in legislation or any other internal administrative regulations? Please cross-reference/ summarise here any aspects of the BID procedure for unaccompanied minors subject to a return decision already covered under the EMN study on return (see above) and provide any additional information.

It is specified in national legislation that in cases involving a child, particular attention must be given with regard to the child’s health and development and the best interests of the child in general.\(^{98}\) This means that the best interests of the child must be considered throughout the processing of every application, including after a negative decision has been reached.

The Swedish Migration Agency is also obliged to analyse the consequences for the child before making any decision or taking any other measure that can affect the child.\(^{99}\) What this means in practice is that before making any decision or taking any measure in a child’s case, a written analysis of the consequences for the child is prepared. This is a systematic way of considering, documenting and analysing the consequences of the decision/measure, before the decision is made or the measure is taken. It should therefore always be clear how the Migration Agency has reasoned, and the analysis should also make it easier for the child and the child’s legal guardian (appointed custodian) to understand the decision. The analysis should take account of the best interests of the child, the child should have the opportunity to be heard, and express his/her views and be encouraged to do so.

Q26. Which **national authorities and organisations** (including NGOs where relevant) are responsible for the return of unaccompanied minors? Please describe briefly the competent authorities involved in return, family tracing, etc., as well as any other stakeholders concerned, what their specific remits and roles are, any authorities specifically ensuring the principle of the ‘best interests of the child’ is taken into account in the return of the minor, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of national competent authority/ organisation</th>
<th>Brief description (e.g. remit/ role, etc.)</th>
<th>Main activities/ responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^{98}\) Chapter 1, section 10 of the Aliens Act.

\(^{99}\) Ordinance [Förordning (2007:996) med instruktion för Migrationsverket].
The Swedish Migration Agency [Migrationsverket] | Responsible for voluntary returns of unaccompanied minors | Return counselling, contact with family members in the country of origin to arrange family reunification, contact with authorities in country of origin to trace family or to arrange adequate reception if required, arranging and booking escorted return journeys. Regard is had to the best interests of the child throughout the return process (see answer to question 25.b. above).

The Swedish Police [Polisen] | Responsible for forced returns of unaccompanied minors. | The main responsibility is focused on planning and implementing the actual departure to the country of origin. This should be done with the best interests of the child in mind. Orderly reception should be arranged by the Swedish Migration Agency before handing over the return case.

**Enforcement of return decisions and key arrangements pre/ during/ post departure**

**Q27.** What is the estimated timeframe within which your (Member) State implements a return decision following a rejection of an unaccompanied minor’s application for asylum/ another status? If there are delays (deviating from this timeframe), what are the usual reasons for such delays?

Before unaccompanied minors can return, the Swedish Migration Agency must ensure that there is an orderly reception in place in the country of origin. Primarily, the Migration Agency, aims to facilitate family reunification but, if that cannot be accomplished, an orderly reception will be arranged through the competent authorities, institution or NGO in the country of origin. A requirement is that those actors should have a background in children’s rights or child protection.

A return decision is usually combined with a period of voluntary departure of up to 5 months. The period of voluntary departure varies. A shorter period is applied if an orderly reception is in place, and an extended period is used if no such orderly reception is in place.

In some countries such as Iraq and Somalia orderly reception through the authorities is not currently possible to arrange, due to several different factors.

**Q28.** Please describe the measures (if any) taken by your (Member) State to:

- encourage voluntary return when an enforceable return decision is issued to an unaccompanied minor:

Dedicated case officers within the Swedish Migration Agency meet regularly with unaccompanied minors who have received return decisions to discuss the return process with them. Minors are encouraged to provide contact details for their parents or other family members so that they can be reunited with their family upon return. They are also provided with information about the cash and in-kind reintegration support measures available in the country of origin if they choose to return voluntarily (where relevant – see answer to question 30.a. below).

The Migration Agency has taken the initiative to start an AMIF-funded project entitled "Best Interest of the Child and Return" [Barnets bästa vid återvändande, BBÅ], together with the municipality of Strömsund. The aim of the project is to increase the knowledge and coordination among stakeholders in order to develop a more sustainable...
return process. The asylum process and return efforts for unaccompanied minors and adolescents need to be improved when it comes to coordination between stakeholders and different/separate processes. Importantly, all stakeholders need to comply with and better understand the return decision.

All stakeholders are likely to be dedicated to the principle of the best interest of the child, but at times this can be interpreted differently. For example, some stakeholders could argue it would always be in the best interest of the child to remain in Sweden, while others would consider return and subsequent reunification with the minor’s next of kin in the country of origin to be in her/his best interest. Therefore, there is need of an ongoing dialogue and that stakeholders send clear signals as to what is applicable to the child, in order to create security and trust. It is particularly important to explain early to the minor that the process can result in return and to support the minor in developing a different goal (other than to remain in Sweden). A common platform of knowledge aims to make sure that stakeholders close to the child act on the same information about the process and know which party is responsible (or not) for different parts of the process. The platform supports professionals in the municipality on how to discuss difficult issues with the minor. The common platform facilitates coordination and ultimately secures that the principle of best interest of the child is continuously reflected.

- **enforce** return decisions against unaccompanied minors; please clarify in particular how your (Member) State perceives the forced return of unaccompanied minors, as well as what is considered effective in this context:

According to statistics from the Swedish Migration Agency, 140 return cases of unaccompanied minors were handed over from the Migration Agency to the Swedish Police in 2016. Out of these 140 cases, 87 were registered as absconded. The fact that the whereabouts of the absolute majority of these individuals is unknown to the Police obviously leads to problems with enforcement. The number of individuals whose whereabouts is known and whose return decisions are possible to carry out is very low. To conclude, the Police reports that even though the numbers (returned) are low it is important to have good cooperation and dialogue with other stakeholders in order to perform sustainable return of the unaccompanied minor.

- **mitigate any negative impact (please specify) of a return decision on the well-being of unaccompanied minors:**

See answer to question 28 above.

**Q29. a.** Please provide an overview of key arrangements for the return of unaccompanied minors to the country of origin, in particular information, support, services and preparation before departure, safeguards for unaccompanied minors during the operation, transfer of custodial care, etc.

The responsible case officer within the Swedish Migration Agency has close contact with the minor and his/her legal guardian throughout the return process. The case officer is responsible for informing the minor of the return decision and for working with the minor and the legal guardian to facilitate a voluntary return. The minor and his/her guardian are called to several meetings at the Migration Agency to discuss return. The minor is informed that he/she is obliged to leave Sweden within the period for voluntary departure set out in the return decision. The following matters are also discussed during these meetings:

- who will receive the minor when he/she arrives in the country of return
- that the Migration Agency will help the minor if he/she chooses to travel back voluntarily
- that the minor and his/her guardian are responsible for providing the names and contact telephone numbers of the minor’s parents or relatives, so that the Migration Agency can contact them.

In many cases the minor is able to provide contact details for their parents or relatives. In these cases, the case officer arranges to hold a telephone conference between the child and his or her legal guardian in Sweden and the parent(s) or relative(s) in the country of return. The purpose of the telephone conference is to establish whether the family member is able and willing to receive the minor upon return and also to assess the suitability of that person to receive the minor. The case officer always tries to obtain copies of documents that confirm the relationship of the relative to the minor. Following this telephone conference, the legal guardian is asked to give their view as to whether the family member is a suitable person to receive the minor. If the family member is
considered to be suitable and it is considered to be in the best interests of the child to be reunited with the family member, then arrangements are made for the child to return.

If the minor has lost contact with their family or does not have any family members with whom they can be reunited in the country of return then the Migration Agency can contact the responsible authorities in the country of return. This is firstly with a view to attempting to trace the parents or other family members who can receive the child. If this fails then the Migration Agency explores via the responsible authorities in the country of return whether adequate reception facilities can be arranged. A reception can be arranged either in the form of a nominated legal guardian or alternatively the child can be returned to a suitable reception facility for unaccompanied minors. This is not always possible and depends very much on the country in question and the availability of adequate accommodation and care facilities for minors.

Minors are not permitted to travel alone when returning, they are always accompanied by escorts. Normally the escorts are staff from the Migration Agency. The Migration Agency has a pool of escorts who are responsible for escorting minors to their country of origin. These escorts are selected based on several factors such as the best interests of the minor, the country of return, the language skills of the escort and their experience and knowledge of returning minors. Occasionally minors can instead be escorted by another appropriate adult, such as a relative. The escorts who travel with the child ensure that the child is received in accordance with the agreed arrangements in the country of origin.

b. Please describe the policy/practice of your (Member) State with regard to family tracing in the country of origin, including when such measures are taken, which authority/organisation is responsible, as well as the contribution and responsibility of the guardian.

The opportunities for family tracing vary depending on the country of origin. Generally, however, in cases where the minor has lost contact with their family and has received an enforceable return decision, the Swedish Migration Agency sends a written request for assistance in tracing the family. This request can be sent to the embassy of the country of origin in Sweden, directly to the responsible authorities in the country of origin or via the Swedish embassy in the country of origin who in turn make contact with the responsible authorities there. The Migration Agency also has a network of return liaison officers and immigration liaison officers placed in various countries around the world who can explore possibilities for carrying out family tracing in the country of origin. The Migration Agency also participates in the EURLO (European Union Return Liaison Officers) programme and some of these liaison officers can assist with family tracing. In some countries local lawyers are used to carry out family tracing.

Sweden participates in the ERIN (European Reintegration Network) programme in certain countries and the ERIN service providers in these countries are also obliged to provide assistance with family tracing in relation to unaccompanied minors. The Migration Agency has not yet instructed any service provider to carry out family tracing under the ERIN programme but this possibility is currently being explored.

c. How does your (Member) State interpret the term ‘adequate’ reception facilities in the country of origin, as one of the requirements for removing an unaccompanied minor from EU territory according to the Return Directive? Does your (Member) State return unaccompanied minors to care centres or parents, relatives, etc.?

For any reception facility to be considered adequate, it must meet the minor’s basic needs. In assessing whether a reception facility meets these needs, regard is to be had to both article 6 and article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Hence, the assessment includes the child’s right to life, the obligation to ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child and also the obligation to ensure a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The Swedish Migration
Agency always strives in the first instance to return unaccompanied minors to parents or other relatives. Reception facilities are used as a last option where other alternatives have been exhausted. The Migration Agency has developed comprehensive legal guidelines that address how to interpret the term.\(^\text{101}\) See question 34, where these are elaborated on.

d. Please indicate any special/ transitional arrangements for the return of unaccompanied minors approaching 18 years of age. Please do not cover here any aspects of the return of former unaccompanied minors, i.e. adults, as this is subject of a separate EMN study on return (see above).

Return decisions that gain legal force when an unaccompanied minors is 17 years and 6 months or older are not enforced until the individual reaches 18 years, and is considered as an adult. This is the timeframe normally needed in order to arrange an orderly reception. See questions 3.a. and 32.a. as well.

e. Please provide information on the follow up of unaccompanied minors once they have returned, such as duration of such follow up, competent service, etc.

The Swedish Migration Agency does not have a task to follow up unaccompanied minors once they have returned. According to return experts at the Migration Agency, this is however a recurring question from stakeholders. The task of the Migration Agency is to receive and examine applications for asylum (residence permit), perform (assisted) voluntary returns, develop operational guidelines based on country of origin information etc. In addition, Swedish authorities have limited (legal) possibilities to perform follow-ups on the territory of another state. Follow up is possible within the framework of IOM (International Organisation for Migration) and the ERIN programme, which indicate if support and payments are received. However, these do not take into account the particular circumstances of the individual returnee such as his/her security situation and social situation.

f. Please elaborate on any existing cooperation arrangements between your (Member) State and countries of origin when it comes to the return of unaccompanied minors, such as bilateral readmission agreements concerning unaccompanied minors.

Sweden has a bilateral readmission agreement with Kosovo, which states that the parties shall ensure adequate reception facilities for unaccompanied minors that cannot be returned to a member of their family or to a nominated guardian. The Swedish Migration Agency currently has only very limited experience of returning unaccompanied minors to reception facilities in Kosovo. In the few cases the Migration Agency has handled, it has been difficult in practice to secure adequate reception arrangements.

Q30. a. Does your Member State provide any reintegration assistance to unaccompanied minors returning to their countries of origin (please cross-reference/ summarise here to any aspects of the reintegration support for unaccompanied minors already covered under the EMN study on return (see above) and provide any additional information):

- through voluntary return? Yes

If yes, please describe the kind of supports available before, during and after the voluntary return of an unaccompanied minor.

Cash support and/or in-kind support are available to unaccompanied minors returning to certain countries. Cash support of up to SEK 15,000 (approx. EUR 1,500) can be granted to unaccompanied minors returning voluntarily to the following countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, DRC Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, the State of Palestine, and Yemen.

\(^{101}\) Migrationsverket: Rättsligt ställningstagande angående verkställighet av beslut som rör ensamkommande barn, SR 24/2017.
In-kind reintegration support via the ERIN programme can be granted to unaccompanied minors returning voluntarily to the following countries (the amount of support available is given in brackets):

- Afghanistan (up to EUR 2,500),
- Iraq KRG (up to EUR 2,500),
- Iraq, southern and central (up to EUR 5,000),
- Morocco (as necessary),
- Nigeria (as necessary),
- Pakistan (up to EUR 2,500),
- Russia (up to EUR 2,500),
- Somalia (Somaliland only, as necessary).

The reintegration support measures provided via the ERIN programme include:

- Airport pick-up, arrival assistance and immediate necessities, onward travel assistance in-country, temporary accommodation, schooling or further education, vocational training and job counselling/job placement.

- through **assisted voluntary return**? Yes

  If yes, please describe the kind of supports available under the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme available in your (Member) State before, during and after the assisted voluntary return of the unaccompanied minor.

The Swedish Migration Agency does not distinguish between voluntary returns and assisted voluntary returns. All voluntary returnees to the countries indicated above are entitled to apply for cash and/or in kind support.

- through **forced return**? Yes

  If yes, please describe the kind of supports available before, during and after the forced return of an unaccompanied minor.

In-kind support is available to some extent for returnees who are returned by force. However, the cash support given to voluntary returnees is not available to those returning by force.

The countries where in kind support via the ERIN programme is given to forced returnees is limited to Afghanistan, Morocco and Iraq (southern and central). The support measures provided include the same measures as for those returning voluntarily. However, the amount for forced returnees is limited to 2,000 EUR. When it comes to unaccompanied minors the amount is more flexible, but since the Swedish Police has not performed forced returns of any unaccompanied minors to the mentioned countries, there is a lack experience of how these support measures are implemented.

b. Please describe the **monitoring mechanisms** (if any) in place in your (Member) State to ensure the effective reintegration of unaccompanied minors, including the types of measure undertaken and the duration of the monitoring period.

At present, the Swedish Migration Agency does not carry out any monitoring to ensure the effective reintegration of unaccompanied minors. It is however possible to carry out monitoring of participants in the ERIN programme via the ERIN service providers and this is something which the Migration Agency is currently looking into.

**Alternatives to return**

**Q31.** Does your (Member) State provide for any **alternative solutions to stay** for unaccompanied minors, such as regularisations, etc.? How do you **inform** unaccompanied minors of such possibilities to stay following a negative decision on their application for asylum/ another status?

Unaccompanied minors enrolled in upper secondary education [gymnasieskolan] that have an enforceable return decision can receive a temporary residence permit under certain conditions. This possibility applies only to unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum by 24 November 2015 and to unaccompanied minors for whom an orderly reception cannot be arranged (and the return decision currently cannot be enforced).

The unaccompanied minor (and his/her legal guardian) are informed about this option both in connection with appointments and in writing. Additionally, there is information available (including FAQs) on the Swedish Migration
Dealing with unaccompanied minors who cannot be immediately returned

Q32. a. Please describe the procedure of dealing with unaccompanied minors who are not/ cannot be returned immediately in your (Member) State, specifying the circumstances whereby the enforcement of a return decision has been deferred/postponed, for how long such a deferral/postponement period is possible, where unaccompanied minors are housed during the deferral/postponement period, whether unaccompanied minors have the possibility to be granted a status/right to stay in the (Member) State (e.g. tolerated status), etc.

Unaccompanied minors whose return decision cannot be enforced because orderly reception is not available can be issued a temporary residence permit (non-permanent impediment to enforcement); this permit can be extended. Enforcement of a return decision can also be deferred until the minor reaches majority age. This practice is used in case the minor is approaching 18 years of age (from 17,5 years).

b. What is the impact of a deferred return decision on the well-being of unaccompanied minors (as cited in existing evaluations/studies/other sources or information received from competent authorities, please provide references)? Does your (Member) State provide any state-guaranteed healthcare, including counselling, guardianship, etc. to the unaccompanied minor during this state of limbo?

Unaccompanied minors having enforceable return decisions have the same rights as asylum seeking minors, i.e. the right to housing, schooling, medical treatment and legal guardian.

c. Please provide any other information available in your (Member) State on the well-being of unaccompanied minors during the above-mentioned state of limbo, such as instances of unaccompanied minors transferred to another reception facility because of disciplinary reasons, unaccompanied minors involved in incidents, number of consultations with psychologists, school absenteeism or school drop-out rates, etc.

See challenges explained below in section 6.

Challenges and good practices

Q33. Please indicate the main challenges associated with the implementation of the return of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State experienced by both unaccompanied minors, including those turning 18, and/or competent authorities (e.g. based on existing studies/evaluations, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/IGOs, case law, etc.) and the measures (that could be) taken to overcome these challenges. For example, do boys face different challenges than girls (and vice versa) when it comes to return and if so, how does your (Member) State deal with such challenges?

There are many challenges pertaining to the return of unaccompanied minors. Experts at the Swedish Migration Agency report that the lack of readmission agreements with some of the major countries of origin is a major challenge. Another current challenge, according to the Migration Agency, are the recent policy changes (and additional proposed policy changes by the Government) expanding the possibility for unaccompanied minors and young adults to receive a residence permit for upper secondary school studies (discussed in question 3.a.). While the Migration Agency is tasked to increase the share of voluntary returns, the recent (and proposed) policy changes do not encourage return, but rather encourage returnees to remain in the country. This situation makes it more problematic to motivate individuals to return. Additionally, these policy changes send contradictory signals

102 Available at: https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Frequently-asked-questions/-About-the-law-relating-to-upper-secondary-school-education.html
not only to returnees but as well to NGOs and other stakeholders.

The Migration Agency is obliged to assess the best interests of the child in the examination of an application for asylum from an unaccompanied minor. This includes an assessment of the individual circumstances at hand in relation to return. Conditions for returnees in some countries of origin are different for boys and girls. Therefore, country of origin information which specifically deals with the situation for children in the country and highlights (if any) differences in the conditions for boys and girls is important, and that an individual assessment is made based on the information provided.

A particular challenge in returning unaccompanied minors is in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for the child to be received by a family member, a nominated guardian or an appropriate reception facility in the country of origin. As indicated in the answer to question 25.a. above, some minors are unable or unwilling to provide accurate contact details for their family members. This means that the Migration Agency must attempt to trace the minor’s family in the country of origin. In many countries, the responsible authorities are not able to assist in tracing family members. This can be due to various factors such as a lack of capacity or a lack of population registers. In some countries where the responsible authorities are not able to assist, the Migration Agency has made use of lawyers who can carry out family tracing and also certain NGOs. The success of family tracing relies however upon the accuracy of the information provided by the minor. Inaccurate information about the identity and whereabouts of family members can hinder efforts to trace the family. Family tracing is key in relation to the return of unaccompanied minors since in many countries of origin there are no appropriate reception facilities available to receive minors who cannot be reunited with their families. Such minors cannot be returned.

The Migration Agency is currently exploring what possibilities there are for carrying out family tracing via ERIN service providers in certain ERIN countries.

Q34. Please describe any examples of good practice in your (Member) State concerning the return of unaccompanied minors. Please note that, in order to comply with children’s rights and EU policy positions, good practices in return of unaccompanied minors should only include voluntary return following a robust, individual BID procedure with all procedural safeguards, as well as holistic support, preparation and reintegration assistance.

Please identify as far as possible who considers the practice in question as successful, since when the practice has been in place, its relevance and whether its effectiveness has been proven, e.g. through an (independent) evaluation. Please reference any sources of information supporting the identification of the practice in question as a ‘good practice’ (e.g. evaluation reports, academic studies, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/ IGOs, etc.).

The Swedish Migration Agency has adopted detailed legal guidelines with regard to the enforcement of return decisions of unaccompanied minors. Inter alia, these set the out steps to be taken with regard to identify and assess adequate reception conditions (orderly reception). The Migration Agency is expected to analyse the consequences for the unaccompanied minor in returning to the receiving party, and this assessment shall include vital circumstances such as the legal and practical responsibilities for the minor of the receiving party, in order to ascertain the minor is returned to a safe environment. For instance, the opinion of the minor should be taken into consideration and it should be ensured that the party in the country of origin is not unsuitable to receive the child (for example if there is information suggesting the child was subject to abuse by a receiving party). Furthermore, the assessment should take into consideration the sociocultural context in the country of origin, for example recognising that extended family members too can receive and provide for the minor in the same way as nuclear family members, and thus avoiding an ethnocentric perspective in the assessment.

Since 2008 the Migration Agency has been able to award cash grants of up to SEK 15,000 (around EUR 1,500) to

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103 For example, the Commission Recommendation on making returns more effective when implementing the Directive 2008/115/EC, C(2017) 1600 final, see above.
minors, including unaccompanied minors, returning voluntarily to certain countries (see answer to question 30.a. above for details). The Migration Agency has also had various in-kind reintegration programmes through which unaccompanied minors have been provided with support. In the past, Sweden has had bilateral reintegration programmes in both Iraq and Afghanistan and, since the end of 2016, the Migration Agency has been able to offer unaccompanied minors in-kind reintegration support via the ERIN programme in certain countries. A significant number of unaccompanied minors have been awarded cash grants and/or in-kind reintegration support. The purpose of both types of support is to allow the minors to re-establish themselves in their country of origin and the level of interest in these support measures suggests that the support is helpful to returnees.

Section 6: Disappearances of unaccompanied minors from guardianship/ care facilities and/or following a return decision [max. 5 pages]

Q35. Is the disappearance of unaccompanied minors an issue in your (Member) State? If so, can this be linked to i) the decision on their application for asylum/ another status in terms of the point in time, i.e. before/after a decision on status is issued, and ii) in terms of the outcome of the procedure, i.e. positive/ negative decision?

Sweden is primarily a country of destination for unaccompanied minors, but as already mentioned in section 2, the disappearance of unaccompanied minors is an issue that has received increased attention in the country in the past few years. The Government has appointed, for example, a national co-ordinator on the disappearance of unaccompanied minors in a project that runs through 2017. The Swedish Migration Agency reports that the disappearance of unaccompanied minors is indeed an issue but that inadequate statistics makes it difficult to fully analyse and report on the phenomenon. Statistics is particularly inadequate for the asylum procedure, for example as to at what point in the proceedings individuals abscond (disappear). According to the Migration Agency, findings suggest, however, that there is a strong link between disappearance and (expecting) a negative decision on the application for asylum.

A 2016 report from the County Administrative Boards presents a comprehensive survey and analysis, based on statistics from the Migration Agency and a survey to municipalities. Municipalities mention mistrust and fear of authorities amongst unaccompanied minors as a reason for absconding in the early stage of the asylum procedure. In addition, some unaccompanied minors did not have the intention to apply for asylum originally. Trafficking is also reported to occur and is often not detected by municipalities. Furthermore, boys are more prone to disappear than girls are.

Furthermore, the report indicated that there is a clear link between the recognition rate and the rate of disappearances amongst certain nationalities, i.e. unaccompanied minors of nationalities less likely to receive asylum are more prone to abscond. In 2016, applicants from Algeria (50 per cent absconded), Morocco (42,5 per cent absconded) and Somalia (7,3 per cent absconded) were most prone to abscond. Additionally, the report showed some regional differences. Unaccompanied minors assigned accommodation in northern Sweden proved to be more likely to abscond. A possible explanation behind this could be the fact that many of the municipalities there are rural and sparsely populated and that children placed there head for metropolitan areas, for example to

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105 The County Administrative Boards were tasked with this assignment in 2016, with a co-ordinator based at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm heading the project. The task involved to make a national survey on unaccompanied minors who disappear and to analyse and suggest preventive measures. The first report was published in 2016. Länsstyrelsen: “På flykt och försvunnen. En nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som avviker” (2016). A summary in English of the report is also available. Länsstyrelsen: Lost in Migration (2016). These reports are available on the website of the County Administrative Boards, www.lansstyrelsen.se

106 Ibid.
be closer to their peers of the same nationalities.

Specifically with regard to trafficking in human beings, other reports indicate that unaccompanied minors (including children who have not applied for asylum) are overrepresented in police reports on suspected human trafficking in children.107

A recent phenomenon that has received attention is unaccompanied minors who abscond in connection when reaching majority age, and at which point they are as a rule not entitled to accommodation for minors and the responsibility for their accommodation is assumed by the Migration Agency. Long application processing times and (medical) age assessment resulting in the minor considered to be an adult are also mentioned as factors influencing individuals to abscond (disappear).

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden [Barnombudsmannen] recently published a report based on actual interviews with minors who have absconded (disappeared), but returned.108 Among the reasons mentioned were that minors felt uncomfortable and adults did not listen, that minors had not been placed in accommodation near relatives, that they were subject to ill treatment and discrimination (their religion or customs not being respected), and that some minors had experienced severe trauma en route to Sweden or in their country of origin.

Q36. If your (Member) State has recorded cases of unaccompanied minors disappearing from accommodation facilities and/or guardianship care following a decision on status, what are the possible reasons for such disappearances (e.g. running away from guardianship/ care facilities, expiration of a temporary residence permit, etc. as cited in existing evaluations/ studies/ other sources or information received from competent authorities, please provide references)?

Also, what are the consequences of their disappearance on their permit to stay? For example, can their status and/or residence permit be withdrawn?

Firstly, it should be noted that some of the factors believed to trigger the disappearance of unaccompanied minors which are discussed in question 35 above most likely are valid in this context as well.

Applicants who have received a return decision (an enforceable return decision) are probably among the most likely to disappear of those having received a decision on status. One recent report mentions particularly unaccompanied minors from Morocco and Afghanistan with an enforceable return decision as being particularly prone to disappear since return to both of these countries is perceived as problematic.109 The recognition rate for unaccompanied minors from Morocco is very low and return is, for various reasons, perceived an impossible option by many of these individuals. The recognition rate for unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan is considerably higher, but because Afghans are by far the largest group of applicants, the number receiving a return decision is still sizeable. Many Afghan minors experience considerable obstacles to return and they voice concerns they will be subjected to violence upon returning to Afghanistan. During 2017, there were reports that the Church of Sweden [Svenska kyrkan] in Paris has received a number of Afghan unaccompanied minors (or young adults) who had disappeared from Sweden, often following a return decision (see question 5.a. for more details and sources).

The Swedish Migration Agency’s experts on return report that given the complex situation and the fact that there are many risks and dangers for children outside the system, the disappearance of unaccompanied minors must always be taken seriously. All children who disappear are at risk of exploitation. Possible reasons for disappearances could include human trafficking, employer exploitation and minors falling into crime and drug use. Whereas the share of unaccompanied minors who commit crimes is small, the Swedish Police has registered an

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107 From 2015 up until 30 June 2016, more than 70 police reports were made concerning children subjected to human trafficking, 66 per cent of these concerned unaccompanied minors. Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län: Rapport 2017:12 om Människohandel med Barn (2017).

108 The report is available at: https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/globalassets/dokument-for-nedladdning/publikationer/publikationer2/rapport_ensamkommande_barn_som_forsvinner_2017.pdf

increase in the numbers. The majority of these children have lived in social exclusion, for example in the streets, in their country of origin or other European countries before arriving in Sweden and often continue to do so after arrival. Additionally, experts at the County Administrative Boards highlight increased mental ill health amongst unaccompanied minors as a reason for disappearance. As mentioned in section 2, recent reports have voiced concerns over increasing mental ill health among unaccompanied minors. More generally it is believed that the rapid policy changes in Sweden since 2015 (the temporary act, which, inter alia, introduced temporary residence permits as a rule and restricts family reunification) has led to fears and confusion in this group of migrants, including increased challenges for staff needing to explain the new legislation and practice to the target group. According to experts at the County Administrative Boards, this is a situation which is often conveyed by practitioners (including those working for NGOs) who encounter unaccompanied minors who have disappeared (from care facilities).

Regarding consequences of their disappearance on their permit to stay it should be noted that the same rules apply as for adults, i.e. a prerequisite to be entitled to a residence permit is that the person resides in Sweden and if this is believed to not be the case, the permit can be revoked. With regard to minors who return after having disappeared, municipalities are responsible to take the necessary steps (for example to ensure they are re-entered into care/accommodation, and to ascertain the minor was not subjected to crime, for example). In case the unaccompanied minor has an enforceable return decision, the return procedure will resume (and often as the Swedish Police as the competent agency since the return file was transferred to the Police in connection with the child being reported as absconded).

Q37. Does your (Member) State have any procedures/ measures in place to:

- Prevent and react to disappearances of unaccompanied minors from guardianship/ care facilities, e.g. support services, national hotlines for missing children, missing persons alerts in the Schengen Information System, Missing Children Europe and its member organisations, fingerprinting/photographing unaccompanied minors as an aid for tracing, etc.? Yes

The Swedish system with regard to prevention and reaction is decentralised and involves several different actors with municipalities assuming the ultimate responsibility for unaccompanied minors. Authorities and staff who deal with minors are required to report to social services upon receiving information (or suspecting) that a minor is mistreated. There are varying practices amongst municipalities and other (regional) actors working with unaccompanied minors.

Municipalities were recently asked in a survey, which (if any) practices, and guidelines were established both with regard to prevention and how to handle the disappearance of minors. Results indicated that 20 per cent of municipalities had preventive written procedures in place with regard to prevention, whereas 60 per cent had such written procedures in place on what action to take when a minor disappears. The survey found that privately run care facilities for unaccompanied minors more often did not have procedures in place. Only 13 per cent of municipalities reported they organised training of staff with regard to the disappearance of minors. In February

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111 See for example BRIS (Barnens rätt i samhället): Barn som flytt – en riskgrupp för psykisk ohälsa (Bris rapport 2017:3). Available at: https://www.bris.se/globalassets/pdf/rapporter/bris-rapport-barn-som-flytt_170914.pdf

112 Länsstyrelsen: "På flykt och försvunnen. En nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som avviker" (2016). The survey was completed by 255 of Sweden’s 290 municipalities.
The Stockholm County Administrative Board’s website has comprehensive information, including key plans and documents for regional cooperation, available at: http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/manslika-rattigheter/ensamkommande-barn-som-forsvinner/Sidor/Regional-strategi-och-samverkan.aspx

Q38. If your (Member) State has cases of unaccompanied minors disappearing following a return decision, please describe the actions (if different from the above) taken by your (Member) State to decrease the risk of such disappearances, as well as any follow-up measures in case of disappearances.

The Swedish Migration agency shall (1) inform minors and the legal guardian about the asylum process including the rights and obligations of the child and the role of other actors involved in the process. The Migration Agency also provides special information and support if needed, (2) report to social services if the minor is suspected to be at risk (notification of concern; “orosanmälan”), and request to receive written confirmation it was received and (2) report to the Police if the child disappears, all within 24-48 hours. The task of the Migration Agency in this context is to report to the competent agencies.

The Migration Agency’s efforts are primarily preventive through the provision and collection of information as well as communicating information when there is a need, primarily to the Police and social services. There is a set of questions asked about the health and social situation of the child when the application is lodged and later on.

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113 The Stockholm County Administrative Board’s website has comprehensive information, including key plans and documents for regional cooperation, available at: http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/manslika-rattigheter/ensamkommande-barn-som-forsvinner/Sidor/Regional-strategi-och-samverkan.aspx

114 Ibid.


116 Migrationsverket: Handbok i migrationsärenden.
during the personal interview for asylum. Children who are found to be at the risk of ill health are informed of possible help and support. Further appointments/interviews can be performed to obtain additional information about the child’s health and social situation (for example if there is information suggesting the minor has married, being subjected to human trafficking, abuse etc.). The primary role of the Migration Agency is to examine the asylum claims and collect other relevant information on the condition of the child, to give the child and his/her guardian guidance and, if needed, refer the child to other relevant stakeholders for support and assistance, such as social services and (primary) healthcare. In addition, there are theme specific internal guidelines and guidelines for cooperation/coordination with other key actors such as social services, the Swedish Police and legal guardians.

As mentioned previously (see answer to question 35), the Government tasked the County Administrative Boards in 2016 with a project to survey the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors who disappear and suggest preventive action.

Albeit not exclusive to unaccompanied minors disappearing following a return decision, the still ongoing project headed by the County Administrative Boards is particularly interesting and important since it resulted in a number of proposals (on preventive measures) which were handed over to the Government in February 2017. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions [Sveriges kommuner och landsting, SKL] and government agencies such as the Migration Agency, the Police, the National Board of Health and Welfare and Swedish National Agency for Education [Skolverket] also contributed to the proposals that are currently under consideration by the Government. The proposals target five main areas including statistics and reporting, cooperation and coordination, legislation, legal guardians and health concerns such as mental ill health amongst unaccompanied minors. Among concrete proposals are, for example, to extend operability of the 116 000 number (hotline for missing children) to report missing unaccompanied children and to task a designated government agency to collect improved statistics on unaccompanied minors reported missing. Furthermore, it is suggested that a national rapporteur, tasked to monitor developments, should be appointed and that a focal point should be created at the government offices to coordinate the work of the ministries involved in policies affecting newly arrived minors.  

Q39. Please indicate the main challenges associated with the disappearance of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State for the competent authorities, as well as the minors themselves and the measures (that could be) taken to overcome these challenges. For example, do you have evidence of instances of disappearances of unaccompanied minors linked to any negative consequences for the minors (e.g. exploitation, radicalisation, etc.)? Please base this information on existing studies/ evaluations, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/ IGOs, case law, etc. and provide references.

Experts at both the Swedish Migration Agency and the County Administrative Boards report that the fact that there are several different stakeholders involved in the migration and return process, care and accommodation for unaccompanied minors in Sweden can pose challenges. Whereas there is a clear division of responsibility between the actors involved, no actor has a coordinating role. There is also a lack of knowledge among actors involved about the role and tasks of other actors involved, which may have consequences for the minor. Furthermore, there are challenges in the exchange of information between the different actors involved. These challenges are often linked to the various actors’ different tasks and the legislation they are operating under and it can occur that actors make different assessments on what is in the best interest of the minor. The obligation of confidentiality according to the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act [Offentlighets- och sekretesslag] is mentioned as an obstacle in the exchange of information between actors involved, i.e. legislation with the purpose to protect the minor may not always be beneficial in all situations.

Some of the actors working with minors (for example staff at social services and schools, legal guardians) have not had previous experience in communicating with minors and young adults about an outcome of their asylum

procedure resulting in a return decision. This background has brought about a situation where such decisions come as a surprise for minors and staff alike.\textsuperscript{118}

Following the record number of unaccompanied minors that applied for asylum in Sweden in 2014-2015, many municipalities, which have not previously done so, now receive unaccompanied minors. These municipalities need a great deal of support and time to establish an organisation for the reception of minors, especially for minors at risk of disappearance. As mentioned in question 37, many municipalities have not established written guidelines on how to prevent the disappearance of unaccompanied minors.

Additionally, reports in the media as well as from stakeholders (such as Sveriges Statsmissioner and Save the Children) indicate there is a growing number of minors and young adults in Sweden who live in parallel societies in very vulnerable situations, sometimes involving crime, drug use and prostitution.\textsuperscript{119} Mental ill health amongst minors and young adults is increasing and there are reports of attempted suicides and suicides. There are a couple of examples of minors who have disappeared from care facilities and have later been found dead. Homicide was suspected.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, another challenge is that few of the suspects in human trafficking cases involving minors and young adults are actually charged.\textsuperscript{121}

Q40. Please describe any examples of good practice in your (Member) State concerning the issue of disappearances of unaccompanied minors. Please identify as far as possible who considers the practice in question as successful, since when the practice has been in place, its relevance and whether its effectiveness has been proven, e.g. through an (independent) evaluation. Please reference any sources of information supporting the identification of the practice in question as a ‘good practice’ (e.g. evaluation reports, academic studies, information received from competent authorities, NGOs/ IGOs, etc.).

Given the multitude of stakeholders involved in the work of unaccompanied minors at large in Sweden, and including the issue of disappearances, there are potentially many different examples of good practices from different levels that could be included here. Often it appears that good practices emerge from project-based work, and are subsequently implemented on a larger scale. We have aimed at including some examples that have received a great deal of attention, but it should be noted this list is not exhaustive.

- The Stockholm County Administrative Board initiated regional cooperation among relevant stakeholders in 2015.\textsuperscript{122} Furthermore, the Government’s task to the County Administrative Boards on the disappearance of unaccompanied minors has contributed to increased knowledge and understanding of the current situation and identified areas of development at different levels of operations (local as well as the regional and national levels). Importantly, it established an overall picture of the issue at hand and has reinforced cooperation and the setting up of action plans in several administrative regions during 2017. The results conveyed in the first report of the project has initiated several regional analyses throughout the country. An important basis for these are the methods and practices aimed at relevant stakeholders with the view to support regional cooperation in this field, which were published in 2017 as part of the project. The whole

\textsuperscript{118}This observation has come forward in an ongoing project in the municipality of Strömsund. A report from the from the project is available at: http://www.begripligt.nu/projekt.shtml This website collects also previous projects concerning unaccompanied minors which have been carried out in Strömsund (some information available in English).

\textsuperscript{119}There has been detailed and increased reporting on the situation in Stockholm in this regard in the past few years. For example, the daily work of two local police officers assigned to work with unaccompanied minors has received a great deal of attention. “Poliserens jakt på de försvunna barnen”, Dagens Nyheter 23 February 2015 is one example of the several news articles and in-depth accounts from recent years detailing their work.

\textsuperscript{120}“Mordoffret på kyrkogården – en 16-årig pojke”, Sydsvenskan 21 September 2016.

\textsuperscript{121}Länsstyrelserna: Rapport 2017:12 Människohandel med barn.

\textsuperscript{122}The Stockholm County Administrative Board’s website has comprehensive information, including key plans and documents for regional cooperation, available at: http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/manslika-rattigheter/ensamkommande-barn-som-forsvinner/Sidor/Regional-strateqi-och-samverkan.aspx
of the project was highlighted by the European Commission in its April 2017 communication on protection of children in migration.123

- The Government commissioned the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden [Barnombudsmannen, BO] to collect information from minors who have absconded/disappeared, but returned. The findings of the project, which were published 11 December 2017, come across as unique since these are based on factual interviews with minors and young adults explaining their reasons for disappearing (and not based on surveys with municipal staff or other such stakeholders). Question 35 has more detailed information on the findings presented in the report.

- The municipality of Strömsund in the north of Sweden has been particularly active in engaging in projects that have involved unaccompanied minors. In 2014-15, the return project “Återvändande ensamkommande”, which was co-funded by AMIF, aimed at creating a sounder base for unaccompanied minors who are to return. Inter alia, the project developed information materials directly aimed at minors and various manuals for staff who work with children who are to return. The ongoing project “Best interest of the child and return”, which is discussed in detail in section 5, aims at developing a more sustainable return process, including tools with a view to reduce disappearances.124 Furthermore, while effects of the previous project have been difficult to evaluate, reports indicate positive developments. For example, since 2010 the municipality has provided several hundred places for unaccompanied minors with only one incident reported and no individuals absconding, which by comparison is exceptional. The on-going project is a further development of the 2014-15 project, inter alia, aiming at reinforcing the safety net of minors also pending return. Information suggest that staff from municipalities earlier on have been insecure in handling the issue of return as a factual outcome of the asylum process.125

- A number of NGOs are engaged in activities to support unaccompanied minors and some are specifically geared towards minors and young adults who, for various reasons, are not (currently) in contact with the authorities. One such initiative is “Projekt BABA – råd och stöd för ensamma barn på flykt”, organised by Stockholms Stadsmission, a local NGO. BABA’s counsellors offer help and advice both in social and legal issues, aiming at supporting these individuals to assert control of their situation by identifying which options they have.126 Another example of an NGO active in this field is ”Barnrättsbyrån” (The Children’s Rights Bureau), also located in Stockholm, but set to open an office in Umeå in 2018. Barnrättsbyrån focuses solely on minors and young adults and offers support and advice, including to minors who are not in contact with the authorities. Furthermore, Barnrättsbyrån has published a report on Moroccan unaccompanied minors in Sweden, which has contributed to shed light on the situation of that particular group.127


124 The municipality of Strömsund has a dedicated website which has comprehensive information on these and other projects which have been carried out in recent years, including project plans and reports (in Swedish), available at: http://www.begripligt.nu/index.shtml

125 Previous projects at Strömsund municipality have importantly addressed the need to speak to minors and young adults about alternative goals and not shy away from the fact that the asylum procedure can actually result in a return decision, and equally important highlight the need to start this dialogue early. This approach can reduce the shock of a return decision and risk of absconding. See for example these “dialogue cards” which were developed as a tool: (http://www.begripligt.nu/filer/AE/Dialogkort.pdf)

126 The website of Stockholms Stadsmission provides some further information on the BABA-project at its website, available at: https://www.stadsmissionen.se/search?filter=BABA

127 See the organisation’s website at http://barnrattsbyran.se/ The report on Moroccan unaccompanied minors entitled, De önskade - En rapport om de ensamkommande marockanska barnen i Sverige, is available on the website.
AMINA (Safeguarding Migrant Children across Europe) is an ongoing project that was recently initiated by Missing Children Europe. The Stockholm County Administrative Board represents Sweden in the project. Sweden’s participation is specifically aimed at contributing to the development to establish practices amongst Member States on how to approach situations where minors abscond (disappear) in one member state and resurface (are encountered) in another member state. While the project is ongoing, it certainly merits mentioning since it aims at contributing to address a phenomenon that has increased in proportion in recent years.\textsuperscript{128}

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**Section 7: Conclusions [max. 7 pages]**

This last section of the Synthesis Report will outline the main findings of the Study and present conclusions relevant for policy-makers at EU and national level. (Member) States should include any overall conclusions from their National Contribution in the top-line factsheet above rather than duplicate information in this section.

Over the course of the 2015-2017 period, unaccompanied minors have become a contested issue in Swedish public and policy debate, and arguably, the most discussed migration topic. The record number of unaccompanied minors coming in 2015 must obviously be considered a major reason behind this. However, it also seems to be the case that unaccompanied minors and young adults are a group that potentially raises more debate than other migrant groups. Many support groups for unaccompanied minors were created, and the group has enjoyed vocal support by quite a few organisations and individual debaters in Sweden. Unaccompanied minors themselves have also formed organisations to support their cause, which is a relatively new phenomenon. Conversely, there has been a fair share of voices in the debate arguing against, for example, policies to expand the possibilities of unaccompanied minors (young adults) to receive a temporary residence permit on the grounds of studies in upper secondary school. Finally, some of the political parties have had considerable internal debates on the issue, including widespread opposition to official party lines.

The increasing number of unaccompanied minors coming to Sweden, a development that reached its apogee in 2015, has also triggered considerable policy changes. Arguably, these policy changes are unique inasmuch as they were implemented during a very short period and depart considerably in a restrictive way from previous policies. These policy changes have affected the whole of the migration and return procedures, and with implications for unaccompanied minors and young adults alike. For example, accommodation and allowances are now discontinued to returnees who do not return voluntarily or cooperate with the Swedish Migration Agency in returning. Unaccompanied minors are exempt from this rule, but there is reason to believe young adults make out a fair share of those affected. Another facet to this question is that the temporary act currently in force foresees temporary residence permits for all, including unaccompanied minors. The latter policy change initially has implications on the access to secondary school for those holding a temporary residence permit and are transitioning into majority age. Meanwhile, Parliament adopted new legislation in 2017 that expands the possibilities of unaccompanied minors and young adults (to be) enrolled at secondary school to be awarded a temporary residence permit. NGOs and other stakeholders dealing with unaccompanied minors have reported that the considerable policy changes have left many unaccompanied minors with increased insecurity about their situation, and that the momentum in policy change has also led to challenges for staff in municipalities tasked to explain the new rules to the target group. All in all, it could be argued that Sweden’s migration policies are currently in a transition phase – a temporary act is in force until 2019. Further to this, the EU Member States are at concurrently negotiating the future EU legal framework for asylum, which can prompt further changes and contradictions, and may also affect the further development of national policies in Sweden.

Interestingly, the principle that all minors in Sweden should as far as possible enjoy the same social care [normaliseringss principen] seems still very much upheld. While the temporary act introduced some differences in rights between unaccompanied minors who are refugees and those awarded subsidiary protection, the fact that an individual is entered into the population register is by far more important than the type of legal status he/she has in order to be eligible for rights and entitlements. In addition, unaccompanied minors in an irregular situation (not in contact with the authorities) [papperslösa] still have the right to schooling and primary health care for example.

\textsuperscript{128} For more information, see http://aminameanssafe.eu/ and http://missingchildreneurope.eu/
While not all the unaccompanied minors that applied for asylum in 2015 have had their applications examined yet, (policy) focus has clearly shifted now from the asylum-processing phase to return and integration. Return of unaccompanied minors remains controversial, and the numbers who actually return are low. In the light of the fact that the vast majority of unaccompanied minors receive at least a temporary residence permit, integration comes across as the major challenge for the coming years. Again, reports seem to provide us with conflicting images. For example, many sources are citing that mental ill health and other health concerns are rife among unaccompanied minors, which suggests many new arrivals will have a tough start in Sweden and that health and medical care need to be prepared to meet this demand. Furthermore, media frequently report on problems in schools, and a lack of teachers of Swedish as a foreign language for example. Conversely, research reports suggest that some unaccompanied minors fare reasonably well on the labour market, albeit often in low wage jobs. Afghans, which constitute by far the largest group, fare generally well. A somewhat surprising observation from these research reports is that unaccompanied minors who were not reunited with their parents actually succeed better on the labour market than those whose parents came to Sweden. As mentioned in the study the unbalanced sex ratio among unaccompanied minors has raised concern. The Government prioritises gender equality, sex education and related efforts, with some initiatives already having been launched. The situation suggests that these policy areas will remain in focus in the coming years. In conclusion, it is important to underline that the number of unaccompanied minors and young adults who have received a (temporary) residence permit in the past two years is unprecedented and that this situation in itself comes with many challenges.

As discussed in the study, unaccompanied minors in an irregular situation and unaccompanied minors who disappear have emerged as a new and growing problem in Swedish society in the past few years. Media have also reported frequently on the problem. This seems to be an area, however, where developments have been met by resolute action by the Government and competent agencies as well as civil society organisations. For example, the County Administrative Boards were assigned to map and survey the phenomenon as well as deliver proposals in order to reinforce prevention mechanisms. The County Administrative Boards were as well tasked to survey and analyse the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors that do not apply for asylum (and/or are not currently in contact with the authorities), a project which is still ongoing. Likewise, NGOs appear to have been very responsive to the situation, already at an earlier stage with many examples of activities and projects, not least in the Stockholm area. While some of this work is still ongoing and we have yet to see any resulting policy changes, recent developments suggest this is an issue that the Government takes seriously.

A further observation from this study is the great number of actors involved in policies and practices affecting unaccompanied minors in Sweden; care/accommodation, integration, return and disappearance of unaccompanied minors. For instance, municipalities and a great number of private contractors are involved in the provision of care and accommodation. Several government agencies are as well involved in the support and monitoring of care (facilities). This is a situation that seems to require and perhaps will require even more coordination and cooperation between stakeholders as well as within different levels of the organisations involved, which was put forward by some of the experts contributing to the study. Several of the projects mentioned in the study, not least those pertaining to return and the disappearance of unaccompanied minors, highlight the need for increased cooperation and coordination between stakeholders. On the same note, the massive influx of unaccompanied minors to Sweden in 2013-2015 period in particular, seem to have triggered much activity in municipalities and by other stakeholders. There have been such a vast array of projects and initiatives launched in recent years; several EU co-funded projects (in return/integration for example) and many others were launched both in the public sector and by civil society organisations. While some of these are ongoing, it has proved somewhat challenging to establish an overview of the situation for the purposes of this study. Evaluations and concrete empirical evidence and results of the many projects and initiatives sometimes seem difficult to come by.

In conclusion, unaccompanied minors remain and will very likely remain for some time, a topical issue in Sweden. As shown in the study it is a complex and multifaceted issue that will continue to be subject to public and policy debate. The integration (into the labour market) of those unaccompanied minors who arrived in the 2014-2015 period and are now becoming young adults clearly comes across as the overarching challenge in the coming years.

Annex 1 National statistics (in Excel)

Q41. With reference to Q5.b. above, please complete the following table with national statistics on the (estimated) number of unaccompanied minors in your (Member) State, if available.

Please provide here a brief explanation of the metadata, describing for example the population covered, the method used to reach the estimates, any caveats as to their likely accuracy, etc. It should be noted, given the differences in methods used to make the estimates, that it will not be possible to synthesise this information to produce a ‘total EU estimate’ for the Study.
National statistics provided in the report pertaining to the number of accepted/rejected applications, statuses of residence permits issued, return decisions and enforced (voluntary/forced) returns originate in official statistics produced by the Swedish Migration Agency. Statistics on reported cases of suspected trafficking originate in manual internal reporting at the Migration Agency. Statistics on successful family reunification involving unaccompanied minors were produced specifically for this study.

Data availability specifically on “unaccompanied minors” is limited in Sweden, which was confirmed by government agencies such as Statistics Sweden [Statistiska Centralbyrån, SCB]. Dichotomies used in official statistics are more often than not “Swedish born” and “foreign born” or “new arrivals”, and a breakdown according to age would normally include all foreign-born minors. Furthermore, statistics on “young persons” would normally include both those born in Sweden and those born in foreign countries (and no distinction as to whether those born in foreign countries were unaccompanied minors). Hence, there is no (quantitative) information on, for example, schooling (primary school or secondary school) with regard to unaccompanied minors. As explained in section 4, unaccompanied minors have full access to schooling however. Similarly, specific data is lacking with regard to leisure and sports activities amongst unaccompanied minors. The Swedish Sports Confederation [Riksidrottsförbundet] has received increased funding in recent years with the purpose to facilitate and contribute to integration. While there are no exact statistics at hand, reporting suggest that many unaccompanied minors, especially boys, are engaged in sports, particularly football.\(^{129}\)

Please provide your answer by completing the Excel document provided below. NB that statistics provided in another format (e.g. Word) would not be processed centrally.

Please do not here include the Eurostat data mentioned above, as this information is available publically and can therefore be analysed centrally for the Synthesis Report.

To the extent possible, the statistics provided here will be presented under the main sections of the Synthesis Report (rather than as an annex as they are requested in this Common Template).

\(^{129}\) Riksidrottsförbundet: Sammanfattning av Idrott för nyanlända och asylsökande 2015-2016 (2017). See also the website of The Swedish Sports Confederation, available at [http://www.rf.se/](http://www.rf.se/) where there are many accounts young new arrivals who participate in sports activities.