

EMN FOCUSSED STUDY 2012

Establishing Identity for International Protection: Challenges and Practices

National Contribution from Estonia

Disclaimer: The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of completing a Synthesis Report for the above-titled EMN Focussed Study. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided information that is, to the best of their knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

Top-line 'Factsheet'

(National Contribution)

[Executive Summary

(Synthesis Report)]

National Contribution (one page only)

In general questions related to international protection are not very prominent, which is mainly due to the low number of applications. However, it is important to notice that the number of application has been growing steadily each year. In 2011 the number of applications was almost twice as high as compared to 2010 (from 35 to 65), which is in turn twice as high as compared to 2008 (15). Therefore in the last four years the number of applications has grown more than fourfold. This also has meant that the number of applicants whose identity was not determined at the time of application has been rising. In 2011 total number of applicants whose identity was not documented at the time of application was 22, which is about one third of applications. It is similar to the level in 2010 (13 out of 35 and 2009 17 out of 40). This is again a significant increase as compared to 2008, when the number of applicants was 15, out of which only 2 applicants had difficulties with documenting their identity. The main countries where applicants are coming from are Afghanistan, Russian Federation, Belarus and Georgia. Increase in the number of applications has had an impact on the numbers of positive/negative decisions for applicants whose identity was not documented at the time of application. About in 50% of the cases that resulted positive decisions (9 out of 17, in 2011) the applicant's identity was not documented at the time of application. The level was similar in 2010.

The area of international protection is regulated by the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens, which was adopted in 2006. The common rules for identification of identity for aliens are specified in the Aliens Act and the common rules for forced return are specified in the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act. The responsible authority is Police and Border Guard Board .

Overview of the National Contribution – drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections of the Study, with a particular emphasis on elements that will be of relevance to (national) policymakers.

Synthesis Report (up to 3 pages)

Executive Summary of Synthesis Report: this will form the basis of an EMN Inform, which will have EU and National policymakers as its main target audience.

Section 1

The National Framework

(National Contribution: Maximum 6 pages, excluding statistics)

The Synthesis Report will provide the reader and policymakers, in particular, with insights into the scale and scope of the issue at national and EU level, evidenced by statistics. It will present an overview of which (Member) States consider, in the absence of credible documentation, the establishing of identity of applicants for international protection and for those applicants who have to be forcibly returned an issue and why. It will hence identify the extent to which (particular) challenges are shared across (Member) States.

It will subsequently analyse the extent to which the process for establishing identity in those cases is laid down in legislation across (Member) States, and the institutional framework for this process. Differences in the capacity that (Member) States have available to meet the challenges (e.g. in terms of being able to draw on expertise, access databases, or have a legal basis for using certain methods) will be drawn out.

1.1 The Challenges and Scope of the issue

Is the issue of establishing identity in the absence of credible documentation considered an issue within the framework of the procedure for:

a) international protection?; and

b) the forced return of a rejected applicant to their (presumed) country of origin?

If Yes, briefly outline for either or both of the two cases above, the main issues, challenges and difficulties within your (Member) State (e.g. no identification documents, false documents, multiple identities, applicants from certain third countries)

- a) The issue of establishing identity in the absence of credible documentation in the case of applicants for international protection it is not an issue.
- b) Taking into account the scale of asylum seekers in Estonia then the absence of documentation cannot be considered as burning issue regarding forced return. Most of the failed asylum seekers end up with feasible identities.

If Yes, please also indicate which of the following factors listed below contribute to the issues. Please support your answers with reference to statistics (e.g. those presented under Question 1.2 below), research or any other sources of information (e.g. media debates, case-law, policy documents, practitioners' views).

➤ *The volume of cases where no credible documentation is available to substantiate an applicant's identity is considered to be large and/or growing.*

NA

➤ *The measures used to establish an applicant's identity in the absence of*

credible documentation are resource-intensive.

NA

- *The measures used to establish identity are not always successful.*

NA

- *Decision-making on applications for international protection is difficult due to the fact that measures used to establish identity are not always successful.*

NA

- *A significant proportion of rejected applicants for international protection cannot be returned to their country of origin due to the fact that measures used to establish identity are not always successful.*

NA

List the countries of (claimed) origin for which establishing identity is particularly difficult, (i) when considering asylum applications; (ii) for implementing return

- *Other (Member) State specific factors*

NA

If No, please provide reasons why the question of establishing identity in the absence of credible documentation is not considered an issue within the framework of the procedure for:

- a) international protection; and*
- b) the forced return of a rejected applicant to their (presumed) country of origin.*

a) The absence of credible documentation is not a problem in the case of international protection because one cannot assume that the third country national has all the documents when he leaves his country. There might be a possibility that the third country national has never had documents in his/her country of origin.

b) The amount of applicants (for international protection) is very small in Estonia and therefore it is possible to put in more effort for establishing the correct identity. One of the reasons may also be the fact that Estonia is not a country of destination and therefore the applicants are somehow more willing to reveal their real identity in the process of forced return.

1.2 Statistics on the Scale of the Issue

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their Source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them if, for example, the statistics provided are partial, had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differs from the below, or of first-hand research) or if they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy, improved methods of establishing identity, a change in the country of origin of applicants or of rejected applicants, etc.) If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude. Where available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2007 and 2011 inclusive.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Additional Information (e.g. Source, caveats, reasons for trends, top five nationalities, with numbers for total applicants – see below Table also)
<u>Total Number</u> of applicants for international protection	15 (provisional)	15	40	35	65	Source: Eurostat. Top five nationalities 2007-2011 were Afghanistan 24, Russia 23, Belarus 16, Georgia 14 and DR Congo 13; Source: Police and Border Guard Board.
Number of applicants for whom <u>identity</u> was not documented at the time of application	7	2	17	13	22	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Number of applicants for whom <u>identity was wholly or partially established</u> during the asylum process thereby allowing the relevant authorities to reach a particular decision on international application (e.g. grant, refuse, defer)						No statistics available.
Total Number of <u>Positive Decisions</u>	4	4	4	17	17	Source: Police and Border Guard Board. Top four nationalities 2007-2011: Russia 12, Afghanistan 10, Sri Lanka 9, Belarus 5.
Total Number of Positive Decisions for applicants whose identity was not documented at the time of application	2	1	4	7	9	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Total Number of Positive Decisions for applicants whose identity was considered sufficiently established by the decision-making authorities	4	4	4	17	17	Source: Police and Border Guard Board. At the end of asylum process, when we give the positive decision we consider that the identity is sufficiently established.

Total Number of <u>Negative Decisions</u>	7	8	15	22	54	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Total Number of Negative Decisions for applicants whose identity was not documented at the time of application	3	6	19	8	24	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Total Number of Negative Decisions for applicants whose identity was not considered by sufficiently established by the decision-making authorities	-	-	-	-	-	No statistics available.
Total number of (Forced) ¹ <u>Returns undertaken</u> of all rejected applicants	3	3	15	8	15	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Number of (Forced) ² Returns of rejected applicants whose identity had to be established at the time of return	0	0	0	1	1	Source: Police and Border Guard Board
Number of (Forced) ³ Returns of rejected applicants whose return could not be executed as their identity was not considered to be sufficiently established by the authorities of the (presumed) country of origin	-	-	-	-	-	No statistics available

If desired, and it cannot be fitted in the Table, add further details concerning particular trends and/or notable aspects of the statistics provided.

¹ While the scope of this Focussed Study (with respect to Returns) includes only the forced return of rejected applicants, it is acknowledged that distinguishing between forced and voluntary returns in official statistics may not be possible. Where possible, do make this distinction.

² Idem.

³ Idem.

1.3 Relevant EU and National Legislation

Is the process to be used to determine identity within the procedure for international protection laid down in legislation?

If Yes, briefly specify which legislative documents, including their link to relevant EU acquis, regulate the process of identity determination in relation to the procedure for international protection.

*Where possible, please refer to your National Contribution to the Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in the EU, rather than repeating the information here.*⁴

Determination of identity is laid down in Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens <http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=XX00013K1&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=v%E4lismaalasele+rahvusvahelise>.

The Act was adopted in 2006 and already includes the relevant EU acquis⁵. Estonia has joined the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva 28.07.1951), Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. At the same time Estonia does not take part in voluntary resettlement or relocation programmes.

The Police and Border Guard Board is obliged to identify the person. They have to identify the person on the basis of documents or on the basis of biometrical data and DNA or on the basis of other evidences like statements.

Is the process to be used to determine identity within the procedure for the forced return of rejected applicants laid down in legislation?

If Yes, briefly specify which legislative documents, including their link to relevant EU acquis, regulate the process of identity determination in relation to the forced return of rejected applicants.

*Where possible, please refer to your National Contribution to the Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in the EU, rather than repeating the information here.*⁶

Regarding forced return there are common rules which have to be followed. In case of rejected asylum applicant the same rules apply taking into account the differences stated in asylum regulation. The common rules for identification of identity for aliens are specified in the Aliens Act

(<http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=XXXXXX14&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=v%E4lismaalaste>) and the common rules for forced return are specified in the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act (<http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X30034K10&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=v%E4ljas%F5idu>). The principles of Returns Directive were transposed into the Obligation to Leave and Prohibition on Entry Act on 24.12.2010.

1.4 The institutional framework at national level

Which national authorities have the operational responsibility for establishing the identity

⁴ If however the level of detail is highly relevant, by shedding light on, for example, which elements of identity should be evidenced, what methods can or should be used to do so, what weight is to be given to the outcomes of the use of these methods, etc., it would be useful to insert the information directly in the Template.

⁵ E.g. Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001; Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003; Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003; Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004; EU Council Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 of 11 December 2000; EU Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003; EU Council Regulation (EC) No 407/2002 of 28 February 2002

⁶ Idem.

of applicants for international protection?

The International Protection Unit of the Police and Border Guard Board has the responsibility.

Which national authorities have the operational responsibility for establishing the identity of applicants for international protection who have to (be) forcibly return(ed) to their (presumed) country of origin?

The responsible authority is Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) specifically the Migration Surveillance Bureau of PBGB

***Does your (Member) State have a central competence centre for issues related to the determination of identity and/or verification of documents?*⁷**

If Yes, what issues does the centre cover:

-issues relating to the determination of identity in respect of the procedure for granting international protection OR in respect of the procedure for executing the return of rejected applicants) OR in respect of both of these procedures

-issues relating to the verification of documents in respect of the procedure for granting international protection OR in respect of the procedure for executing the return of rejected applicants OR in respect of both of these procedures

Yes. In PBGB there is a Travel Document Evaluation Centre. The centre is a sub-unit of PBGB and evaluates documents only for PBGB. On state level Estonian Forensic Science Institute (<http://www.ekei.ee/36548>) also has the competence to evaluate validity of documents (including travel documents). Institute is administered by Ministry of Justice as opposed to Evaluation centre that is administered by the Ministry of Interior. The Institute provides forensic expertise criminal cases mainly. The Institute has necessary facilities (laboratory) and equipment to evaluate the authenticity of (travel) documents. The recognition of certain types of documents as travel documents is administered through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Consular department).

Since international protection cases are responsibility of PBGB then the Travel Document Evaluation Centre is responsible validating and assessing documents. Full name of the Centre is Police and Border Guard Board, Border Guard Department, Border Security Bureau, Border Control Division, Travel Document Evaluation Centre. The main responsibility of the centre are:

- Evaluation of documents
- Supporting and consulting 1st and 2nd level document control at border crossing points
- Supporting and consulting other police and migration units
- Exhaustive control of the documents
- Consultation and consulting other authorities (including other countries).
- Making the descriptions of documents (including authentic documents)
- Making expertises
- Participation in the documentation recognition process
- Making training materials and programmes
- Advances courses (2nd level officers, government authorities, travel agencies, banks, aviation companies etc.)

In Addition, concerning the verification of documents there are units within a relevant

⁷ This may be a separate body (as in Norway) or a unit within a relevant authority.

authority. Different structures of PBGB are available to provide advisory services including Border Guard and Criminal Police units.

If Yes:

- ***Has the centre developed its own database / reference base for***
 - ***genuine documents?*** Yes.
 - ***false documents?*** Yes.
- ***Does it make use of the database iFADO (iPRADO)⁸ for checking false ID documents?*** Yes, but they are using PRADO, FADO, iFADO, DOCIS, Frontex Reference Manual, Centre own database – Internal Network website “Service at border” (TEPI – genuine and false documents).
- ***Does it make use of the EDISON⁹ system?*** Yes.
- ***Does its tasks involve:***
 - ***Advisory services?*** Yes.
 - ***Development of Methods?*** Yes.
 - ***Training of frontline officers?*** Yes.
 - ***Support with difficult cases?*** Yes.
- ***Does it have a forensic document unit?*** They have the necessary equipment and tasks but they do not have separate personnel for this.

If No, i.e. your (Member) State does not have a central competence centre, what other institutions / systems are available to provide advisory services/other forms of support to officials responsible for establishing the identity of applicants for international protection?

NA

Are the officials responsible for determining the identity of applicants for international protection authorised to access EU databases holding identity information about third-country nationals (e.g. EURODAC, SIS II, VIS, etc.)?

NA

If No, are the officials responsible for determining the identity of applicants for international protection authorised to liaise directly with the officials who do have access to these databases?

NA

⁸ [PRADO](#) Public register of authentic identity and travel documents online

⁹ EDISON Travel Documents System

Section 2

Methods for Establishing Identity

(National Contribution: Maximum 8 pages)

The Synthesis Report will provide an overview of the types of documents that are required for establishing identity (preferable in Table format), of the methods that can/should be used in the absence of credible documentation (preferably in Table format), and the relative weight that is given to the outcomes of the methods used (Table or narrative, depending on the responses given) across the (Member) States.

2.1 Definition and Documents required for establishing identity

What definition (if any) of identity is used with regard to (a) applicants for international protection and (b) for the return process.

Concerning international protection and forced return The Police and Border Guard Board is obliged to identify a person or verify his identity. According to definition the “identity” is *coherent, comprehensive and unique set of personal data*

What types of documents and other information do authorities in your (Member) State accept as (contributing to) establishing the identity for applicants of international protection? For example:

- *Official travel documents: Passports, ID cards;*
- *Other documents: birth certificates, divorce certificates, marriage licences, qualification certificates, etc.*

Where possible, please indicate whether copies are accepted by relevant authority(ies) and which type of documents are considered by the national authorities as core or supporting documents. Also indicate the major issues faced concerning determining the veracity (or genuineness) of documents.

Concerning international protection the core documents for establishing the identity are a digital identity card, a residence permit card, a national passport, a diplomatic passport, an alien’s passport, a temporary travel document, a seafarer’s discharge book, travel document for a refugee, a certificate of record of service on ship, a certificate of return and permit of return. All other documents are considered supporting documents. In addition to the ones mentioned above (birth certificates, marriage licences etc. also driving license have been used as supporting documents, but in Estonia it has been very rare that the so called supporting documents are presented, usually applicants have some form of the core documents. Biggest problem concerning the genuineness of documents come when there is a need to evaluate copies.

What types of documents are accepted by national authorities in the (presumed) countries of origin if those applicants for international protection have to be returned, because they have received a negative decision, exhausted or abandoned the procedure? Please illustrate any differences between the documents accepted by the authorities of the (presumed) countries of origin and the documents accepted by the relevant authorities of your (Member) State.

Official travel documents are considered as core documents for identifying the identity of the person. Other documents are considered as supporting documents

unless they have a power of proof in the specific third country. If a document is considered as proof of identity in the country of origin then the document is also considered as a proof by the state authorities in the proceedings of forced return.

There are no significant differences to be highlighted and based on the low numbers of applicants it is possible to deal with arising issues on ad hoc basis.

2.2 Methods used in the absence of documentary evidence of identity

The aim of this section is to investigate, for cases where aspects of the applicant's statements regarding his/her identity are not supported by documentary evidence, which methods are used by the competent authorities in the (Member) State to check the credibility of the applicant's statements. In the boxes below, a list of methods is provided. For each method listed, please indicate

- (a) whether it is used within the framework of the procedure for international protection and/or the procedure to forcibly return rejected applicants, or have exhausted or abandoned the procedure for international protection;*
- (b) whether the method is obligatory (i.e. enshrined in law), whether it is part of standard practice (i.e. used in most cases but not enshrined in law) or whether it is optional (i.e. not enshrined in law and used in some cases only). The rationale for selecting some methods as obligatory or optional may relate to national legislation, outlined in Section 1.2 (which the (Member) State can refer to in their replies);*

Do national authorities make use of:

i) Language analysis to determine probable country and/or region of origin?

- Applicants for international protection:
Language analysis is not obligatory and we haven't used it. But we do sometimes use the Language Identification Chart.
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, optional.

ii) Age assessment to determine probable age¹⁰

- Applicants for international protection:
Optional. If the Police and Border Guard Board have reasoned doubts regarding the information provided by the applicant in respect of his age, medical examination for determining the age may be conducted with the consent of the applicant or his representative. Have used it.
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, part of standard practice if there is doubt on the age of the person. If a reasonable doubt arises at the Police and Border Guard Board about the

¹⁰ EMN NCPs are asked to update the information provided through the EMN Comparative EU Study on Unaccompanied Minors. EMN (2010), *Policies on Reception, Return and Integration arrangements for, and numbers of, Unaccompanied Minors*, European Migration Network, May 2010. The EMN Synthesis Report, as well as the 22 National Reports upon which the synthesis is based, are available from <http://emn.sarenet.es/Downloads/prepareShowFiles.do;?directoryID=115>.

correctness of the data submitted about the age of an alien, medical examination may be carried out to determine the age of the alien with the consent of the alien or his or her representative.

iii) Fingerprints for comparison with National and European databases

National Database

- Applicants for international protection:
Yes. Obligatory.
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, part of standard practice.

European databases

- Applicants for international protection:
Yes. Obligatory.
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, part of standard practice.

iv) Photograph for comparison with National and European databases

National Database

- Applicants for international protection:
Not obligatory. Not used.
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, part of standard practice.

European databases

- Applicants for international protection:
Not used. Not obligatory
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
Yes, part of standard practice.

v) Iris scans for comparison with National and European databases

National Database

- Applicants for international protection:
Not used. Not obligatory
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:
No.

European databases

- Applicants for international protection:
Not used. Not obligatory
- Return of rejected applicants for international protection:

No.

vi) DNA analysis

➤ Applicants for international protection:

Optional. The Police and Border Guard Board may conduct a DNA analysis in case when the person cannot be identified or his filiation cannot be established otherwise. Not used.

➤ Return of rejected applicants for international protection:

Yes, optional. The Police and Border Guard Board may take a DNA sample of an alien who is staying in Estonia illegally unless it is possible to identify the person otherwise.

vii) Interviews to determine probable country and or region of origin (or other elements of identity, such as faith and ethnicity)¹¹

➤ Applicants for international protection:

Yes. Interviews are obligatory.

➤ Return of rejected applicants for international protection:

Yes, part of standard practice.

viii) Other (please describe, e.g. type of co-operation with or contacts in third countries), related to

➤ Applicants for international protection:

No. We are not allowed to contact with the applicants country of origin authorities

➤ Return of rejected applicants for international protection:

Interviews carried out by the officials of countries of origin.

If possible, outline briefly the rationale behind the method(s) indicated above used in your (Member) State, e.g. why some method(s) been used in preference to others, is there a hierarchy or order of methods followed, any research conducted providing evidence of the method's reliability.

It's easier to identify the person if he has documents with him. When he doesn't have then we use databases and interviews to determine his identity, origin and fear of persecution. Rational way of identifying the person is documents→databases→interview/statements. We haven't conducted any research of the method's reliability.]

¹¹ This would depend on the elements included in your national definition of "identity" used within the procedures covered by this Study. See Section 2.1.

Section 3

Decision-making Process

(National Contribution: Maximum 3 pages)

The Synthesis Report will describe how the different methods are combined to establish an identity and how the outcomes of attempts to establish identity are then used in making a decision on international protection and forced return. To the extent possible, the Synthesis Report will draw out commonalities and differences across (Member) States.

3.1 Status and weight of different methods to determine identity

On the basis of the information gathered by the methods outlined in Section 2, how then is a decision on identification made, e.g. are some methods given more weight on their reliability than others; does there need to be consistency between the results from some of the methods used? Briefly outline whether the results from the different methods will have different status and/or will be given different weights, and whether this is laid down in legislation, policy or practice guidelines.¹²

International protection: According to our legislation it is possible to reject the person's application if we determine that the person has given us false identification documents or applied for asylum under false name. If the applicant presents false identification documents which are not consistent with his statements then we put more weight on his statements because international protection is given on the basis of fear of persecution not on the basis of documents. Consistency and reliability is important to us. The different methods and different weights are not laid down in legislation.

Forced return: The biometric results of identification are considered as prevailing before the soft means of identification if contradictory. The principles are not laid down in legislation and the decision is made in ad hoc basis.

Is a "grading" structure or spectrum used to denote the degree of identity determination (e.g. from "undocumented," over "sufficiently substantiated" or "has the benefit of doubt" to "fully documented and verified")? If Yes, outline what this is.

International protection: No.

Forced return: No

Are any future measures considered with regard to setting up or further elaborating a "grading" structure? If Yes, outline what these are.

International protection: No.

Forced return: No

¹² Member States may differ significantly in how they deal with applicants for international protection whose statements regarding their identity are not supported by valid documentary evidence, not only in the methods they can or should use, but also in the weight they give to the outcomes of some methods. The aim, therefore, is to highlight these differences, should they exist.

3.2 Decisions taken by competent authorities on basis of outcomes of identity establishment

3.2.1 For the consideration of the application for international protection

What are the potential decisions that can be taken by the competent authorities where identity has been established (even partially) to inform the overall decision taken? For example, does the outcome of identity establishment influence a recommendation to “grant international protection,” “refuse international protection,” “defer decision”?

It depends on the application. e.g when we establish that there is a possibility that the person is from the on-going conflict area and he has personal circumstances which result to a fear of persecution then we may give him international protection. We don't have policy where the outcome of the identity establishment results in giving the international protection. Identity together with fear of persecution and personal circumstances results in giving or not giving the international protection.

How important is establishing identity relative to other factors used in making an overall decision? For example, if identity cannot be established, does this de facto lead to a rejected decision? Are other factors such as gender, suspected country of origin, given more weighting than identity determination in some cases?

If the identity is not established then it will not de facto lead to a rejected decision. In some cases the applicant's reliability, gender and suspected country of origin usually have more weights than the identity determination.

3.2.2 For the return to country of origin

What are the potential decisions that can be taken by the competent authorities where identity has been established (even partially) to inform the overall decision taken? For example, does the outcome of identity establishment influence a recommendation to “defer return”?

If the right identity of the person is not established then the forced return can be suspended.

Are the results of the work to establish identity during the international protection process available for work to prepare for forced return?

Yes

If ‘yes’: please describe the type of supplementary steps that may be needed with respect to identity documentation before the authorities in the receiving country are prepared to accept the return.

The identity of the person has to be verified with the competent authorities of the country of origin to specify if the identity is official and accepted in the country of origin.

If ‘no’: please describe the type of steps that may be needed with respect to identity documentation before the authorities in the receiving country are prepared to accept the return.

NA

Section 4

Conclusions

(National Contribution: Maximum 2 pages)

The Synthesis Report will outline the main findings of the Study and present conclusions relevant for policymakers at national and EU level.

With regard to the aims of this Focussed Study, what conclusions would you draw from your findings? What is the relevance of your findings to (national and/or EU level) policymakers?

In general the number of applicants for international protection is small in Estonia and issues related to identification and documentation of applicants does not yet pose a significant challenge to the authorities. However the number of applicants has been steadily rising (almost twofold in 2011 as compared to 2010). This means that the migration pressure on Estonia is growing and more attention needs to be paid to asylum (and international protection) related questions, including supporting and developing support network (e.g. voluntary and NGO initiated support activities).