



Synthesis of the answers to the questionnaire on credibility assessment in asylum procedure

8-9 December 2014

The Hague



The Project is funded by the EU



The Project is implemented by the IOM



The Swedish Migration Board
is a partner of the project



Contents

ARMENIA	3
AZERBAIJAN	4
BELARUS	7
ESTONIA.....	9
FINLAND	11
GEORGIA.....	13
HUNGARY	14
LATVIA	16
LITHUANIA	18
MALTA	20
MOLDOVA	22
NETHERLANDS	24
POLAND	26
ROMANIA	27
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	29
SWEDEN.....	31
UKRAINE	33

ARMENIA	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	<p>Yes. The State Migration Service of Armenia shall assess the following as evidence in asylum procedures: Applicant's statement on the reasons for making an asylum claim; Applicant's identity and travel documents; All documentation at the applicant's disposal; Interview records; Country of origin information; Other evidence submitted by the applicant in support of the claim; Any other documents on file, e.g. political party membership cards; Files relating to previous applications by the applicant or his/her relatives; Witness evidence.</p> <p>The instruction on assessing evidence in asylum procedure was approved by the State Migration Service of Armenia on 28 December, 2013.</p>
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<p>Taking into account the Article 42 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Fundamentals of Administrative Action and Administrative Proceedings, interview records shall assess as evidence.</p>
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	<p>No.</p>
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	<p>Using country information effectively is vital in ensuring that decisions are supported by up-to-date, accurate information, relevant to the individual claim. It is important to consider all the available evidence, avoiding selective or inappropriate use of COI, to reach an informed and well-reasoned decision.</p> <p>Country information is sometimes the only other evidence (in addition to the applicant's statements) available in asylum cases. The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Refugees and Asylum (Article 52(3)) also requires the use of country information in decisions on asylum claims.</p>
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	<p>The duty to ascertain and evaluate evidence to establish a claim is shared between the applicant and decision maker. The applicant bears the responsibility to furnish evidence, to substantiate the circumstances underlying his/her claim. The applicant does not have to prove each material fact with documentary or other evidence. What the applicant presents in writing and verbally at the asylum interview may be the primary evidence in support of the claim.</p> <p>The duty of administrative bodies to conduct comprehensive, full and objective examination of the facts of a case by revealing all the circumstances of the case, including those favourable to the applicant.</p>
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on	<p>According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Refugees and Asylum (Article 52(4)) insufficiency of evidence may not serve as a basis for a failure to make a decision or making a decision of rejection of asylum claim by the State Migration Service of Armenia. An asylum seeker shall be granted the benefit of the doubt for events which occurred outside the territory of the Republic of Armenia.</p>

<p>the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)</p>	
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>The subsidiary protection is not stipulated in the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Refugees and Asylum.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	<p>No.</p>

<h2 style="margin: 0;">AZERBAIJAN</h2>	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Yes. It should be mentioned that the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Status of refugees and IDPs (persons displaced within the country)” (Article 11) stipulates that “the person filed application for granting refugee status should provide necessary information to relevant body of the Republic of Azerbaijan for solving the issue on refugee status determination”. Moreover, “Regulation on processing applications on granting refugee status” (Item 8) envisages that “in the process of interview the person should inform about facts explaining reasons for his/her application on granting refugee status, as well as inform on places of his/her residence, routes of movement, reasons for staying in the territory of other countries, applications on granting him/her refugee status in those countries or absence of such applications, and other necessary facts”.</p> <p>While processing applications on granting asylum in Refugee Status Determination Department (RSDD) of State Migration Service (SMS), assessment of credibility of information lies on the basis of decision making in determination of refugee status. Key facts regarding the case are determined in the first place. During assessment of credibility it is defined that which claims can be taken into account in analysis, whether the applicant has well-founded fear of persecution in relation to 1951 Refugee Convention and whether there is a real risk of harm for applicant in relation to Directive 2011/95/EU of the</p>

	<p>European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted, Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status.</p> <p>Furthermore, during credibility assessment of information the following points are taken into consideration: Mutual obligation of parties in justification of the application, (obligation of RSDD to help the applicant in the stage of determination of application's key elements), individual assessment, objective and unbiased assessment, assessment based on evidences.</p> <p>Main attention is paid to key facts, possibility to comment on significant aspects of application which can lead to negative assessment of credibility, credibility assessment taking into account the whole complex of evidences, detailed and thorough analysis, benefit of the doubt, precise and definite results of credibility assessment, as well as structural approach.</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<p>The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Status of refugees and IDPs (persons displaced within the country)" and "Regulation on processing applications on granting refugee status" envisages that authorized employees of State Migration Service individually holds interview with the person that filed application on granting refugee status and its content is not announced.</p> <p>In the process of reviewing application employees inform applicants on the right to justify his/her application, he/she is given an opportunity to explain every moments which can negatively affect results in assessment of credibility, as well as to present document evidences and materials regarding the case. In all cases applicant is provided with interpreter. Documents presented by applicant is translated to Azerbaijani language and added to person's case.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>Yes. Factors such as gender characteristics, age, sex, sexual orientation, culture, social position, education, health condition, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are taken into consideration in the process of refugee status determination in relation to credibility.</p> <p>When PTSD is revealed the fact that such disorders can affect applicant's ability to remember past events, distort remembered information, as well as applicant can avoid mentioning an event from the fear of going through the event again is taken into account. In case of revealing symptoms of trauma and PTSD by employees of Refugee Status Determination Department of State Migration Service, applicants are sent to medical workers for examination.</p> <p>Depending on various situations principle of benefit of doubt is applied, psychological condition and reactions of the person to events happened in the past, as well as other facts which can affect credibility assessment are taken into account during processing of applications of persons with PTSD.</p> <p>Furthermore, facts such as gender characteristics, as well as cultural and educational level of asylum-seeker are taken into account while processing applications. When applications on granting refugee status are filed by women, interview is conducted by female employees of Refugee Status Determination Department of State Migration Service. When there is a need of participation of interpreter, as well as other male employees, agreement of applicant is required.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information</p>	<p>Country of origin information is used for assessment of applications on granting refugee status in the process of refugee status determination by RSDD of State Migration Service. During collection of information situation in the field of security and human rights, political situation and legislation, cultural and social aspects, events or accidents, geographic information are taken into account.</p>

<p>(COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>Assessment of credibility is based on all existing significant evidences provided by applicant and obtained by RSDD. Employee should analyze whether description of events provided by applicant is detailed and convincing, and reflects events experienced by the person that has been in such personal and situational conditions (taking into account age, sex, region of origin, education, etc. of applicant).</p> <p>“Internal succession” of narrated facts during interview, coherence of oral and written evidences of applicant, coherence of his/her claims with documents or other evidences provided by the applicant are taken into account while assessing credibility. Absence of difference, contradictions and deviation when providing information is determined. Employees assess credibility of key facts provided by applicant in the context of information about situation in the country of origin or place of permanent residence. Employee prepares his/her summaries on credibility based on independent, objective, trusted evidences relating to relevant period of time, avoiding subjective assumptions, premature conclusions, guess and hypothesis.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>Duty to provide information in support of application on granting international protection lies on applicant. But despite this aspect employees reviewing the case in some cases use existing opportunities for providing necessary evidences in support of application. Sometimes in case of lack of facts related with personal conditions of applicants RSDD can adopt additional duties on independent collection of evidences regarding the application. In such case employees of RSD Department undertake necessary steps for ensuring collection of all available evidences which can confirm facts of applicant.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the process of interview with the help of asked questions and using method of “arrangement of guidelines”, employees create favorable conditions for revealing key facts which can be taken as a basis for credibility assessment.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)</p>	<p>Credibility of facts and information which lie on the basis of decision making in refugee status determination are considered important.</p> <p>But in some cases despite the efforts to collect additional evidences related with key facts there may be some doubts regarding some claims of the applicant. In such case RSDD follows principle of benefit of doubt.</p> <p>Application of benefit of doubt principle allows employee to make a precise conclusion regarding recognition of provided key fact as credible in cases when there is an element of doubt.</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>No. Legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan does not envisage granting subsidiary protection to asylum-seekers.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes,</p>	<p>Yes. In RSD of SMS during processing of applications on granting refugee status according to attributes of ethnicity, religion, political conviction, and torture the educational and informational level of applicant is determined, psychological condition and signs of torture are checked.</p> <p>For instance, while processing application on religious attributes - the issues like applicants’ participation in the life of religious communities, following</p>

<p>please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <p>a. ethnicity</p> <p>b. religion and religious conversion</p> <p>c. sexual orientation</p> <p>d. political opinion</p> <p>e. torture</p>	<p>religious rituals, reading religious literature are clarified; on attributes of ethnicity – special attention is paid to issues like knowledge of language, customs and traditions of ethnic minorities and ethnic groups; In case of processing applications of persons which were subject to torture – medical examination is carried out and summary of the doctor is taken into account in credibility assessment.</p>
--	---

<h2 style="margin: 0;">BELARUS</h2>	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>According to provisions of the Instruction Manual of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus on Procedures of Processing Asylum Applications, decision-making on applications should be based on results of credibility assessment of the data provided by applicants. In particular, according to item 58, a foreign asylum seeker has to provide evidence to prove credibility of his/her claims. If claims of the foreign asylum seeker are not supported by documentary or other evidence, the claims should be recognised as trustworthy if they are logically coherent, credible, do not contradict to generally known facts and the available country of origin information. According to item 59, having reviewed and analysed the case materials, an officer of the Citizenship and Migration Unit of the Department should assess credibility of information submitted by the foreign asylum seeker, documentary and other evidence items provided, as well as should ascertain whether there are grounds to grant refugee status to the foreigners or to reject granting the status.</p> <p>According to item 61, in the course of assessing credibility of fears of prosecution expressed by a foreign asylum seeker, it is necessary to account for his/her personal history, particulars of personal and family life, participation in political, religious, cultural, civic and ethnic organisations. It is necessary to account for his/her attitudes to religion, his/her age and sex, his/her own perception of his/her situation, personal experience and other information provided by the foreigner to substantiate the fears underlying his/her application for asylum, as well as conformity of the provided facts with the country of origin information.</p> <p>In practice, an official in charge of decision making, applies the following credibility criteria in the course of deciding whether the reported substantial facts should be recognised as credible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a fairly detailed description of facts; - internal coherence of verbal and written presentation of substantial facts; - confirmation of the applicant's information by information provided by other family members (if the applicant is accompanied by his/her family members or other relatives); - confirmation of the applicant's statements by available general and specific information of relevance to his/her case, including country of origin information (COI); - plausibility; - behaviour of the applicant. <p>The credibility assessment includes two stages. At the first stage, relevant information is collected in connection with substantial facts of the application, in addition, recognition of the applicant's statements and other evidence is considered:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collection of information to substantiate the application submitted - identification of substantial facts - assessment of credibility of every substantial fact - analysis of the facts that may be interpreted in favour of the applicant - substantiation of recognition/rejection of the facts <p>At the second stage, well-grounded fears of prosecution and risks of serious harm are evaluated.</p>
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<p>In the course of interviews, the following safeguards for applicants are applied in relation to credibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applicants are informed on their duty to substantiate their applications and on available options to fulfil the duty (i.e. to provide all facts, to cooperate with migration authorities, etc.); - maintenance of a welcoming, calm and safe environment of the interview; - application of a sequential questioning technique, accounting for age, sex, cultural context, ethnicity, education, social status, sexual orientation or gender identity of the applicant; - a detailed review of facts that might be relied upon to assess credibility; - provision of opportunities to explain any contradictions and questionable statements and to comment on aspects that might adversely affect the credibility assessment; - maintenance of an unbiased and objective attitude in both verbal and non-verbal communication.
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	<p>Post-traumatic stress can complicate provision of information by applicants. They may experience consequences of psychological traumas, blame themselves, feel guilt and suffer from memory impairments. In the course of interviewing such persons, interviewers seek to ensure welcoming environment and confidentiality of their statements. In such cases, it is important to ensure that the interviewer is of the same sex as the applicant. Some applicants may need medical or psychological assistance, as well as specialised consultations.</p>
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	<p>In the course of assessing credibility of substantial facts provided by applicants, the generally available information on situation in their countries of origin/permanent residence are accounted for. It is necessary to account for precise, objective and relevant COI, as well as for any specific information or expert assessments (linguists, medical experts, etc.). COI should support results of individual, objective and unbiased evaluation of the application and should be independent, reliable, objective, based on multiple sources, precise and reliable. An official in charge of decision making on the case should evaluate statements of the applicant and other evidence items in the overall context of available information on a country of origin or permanent residence, accounting for all available evidence in the case.</p>
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the	<p>First of all, all the necessary facts should be provided by the applicant, while the responsible official in charge of decision making should evaluate all arguments and credibility of the applicant's statements. However, asylum seekers often enter the country without personal ID and other documents that might confirm the prosecution fears claimed. At the same time, if the facts provided by the applicant seem credible, the official in charge of</p>

burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	decision making should interpret doubts in favour of the applicant.
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)	Benefit of the doubt should be applied if information on the case has been collected and evaluated. and the official in charge of decision making is convinced in credibility of the applicant's statements. If statements of the asylum seeker are not supported by documentary or other evidence, the statements should be recognised as credible ones if they are logically coherent, plausible, and do not contradict to generally known facts and country of origin information.
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	No
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture	In such cases, assessments of credibility are based on the whole array of available information, including both the information provided by the applicant and information collected by the migration authority. In particular, if the application is associated with gender identity or sexual orientation matters, the applicant may be asked on situation of LGBT persons in his/her country, on legal provisions of relevance to such persons in his/her country of origin. If there are doubts on reported ethnicity or religion of the applicant, he/she may be asked on general associated matters (general information on his/her country, religious affiliations/conversion, etc.).

ESTONIA	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If	The Police and Border Guard Board (PPA) follow the principles of the EAC’s proof assessment module. We follow what is set forth in paragraph 5 of article 4 of the qualification directive. We differentiate between internal and external credibility: internal credibility is an assessment of the contradictions that arise in the applicant’s own statements and in connection with the proof they themselves have presented; external credibility is comparing the applicant’s

<p>yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>statements with COI and generally known facts, and thirdly, we assess the credibility or realism of the applicant's story in the general sense.</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<p>At the time of the interview, the individual's profile (cultural background, age, vulnerability) is taken into account as well as the data in the application presented by the applicant.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>In the procedure for applying for international protection, the PPA considers the vulnerability of the individual. If there is a suspicion or evidence of post-traumatic stress, the PPA will inform the accommodation centre, whose task it is to arrange for psychological and medical services. If needed, psychologists or other specialists can be involved in the proceedings.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>We compare the applicant's own statements and proof with COI results.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>In the procedure for applying for international protection, the responsibility to gather and evaluate evidence falls on the PPA, but the applicant is responsible for giving complete cooperation to help the proceedings to go efficiently and effectively.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the</p>	<p>We follow the principles conveyed at the EAC training. When internal credibility has been evaluated and the conclusion has been reached that there are no contradictions in the applicant's statements or the proof they presented, but the information from the country of origin disagrees with the applicant's proof, then the country of origin information (or COI) is primary that refutes the statements. If no COI refuting the applicant's statements is found, then the benefit of the doubt principle must be applied. From the standpoint of the assessment of the necessity of protection, significant proof (including statements) are distinguished from insignificant ones. If the applicant has given false statements or submitted false proof from the standpoint of necessity of protection in terms of so-called central facts or circumstances, then those carry significant weight. If the applicant has lied about insignificant facts as relates to necessity of protection, then that does not eliminate the necessity of protection.</p>

so called “benefit of the doubt”)	
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	No, in practice the assessment of proof for subsidiary protection applications does not differ from that for asylum applications in the PPA.
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture	Yes, we assess the credibility of such topics. The PPA itself has no specifically articulated methodology, but the assessment is based primarily upon the interview and other proof submitted, including the proof submitted by the applicant. A legal assessment of the applicant’s statements and other proof is given by the agent conducting the proceedings in conjunction with a medical evaluation. Tests must be administered so that the individual need not relive any trauma. We follow the principles of the UNHCR handbook (https://www.unhcr.org.hk/files/useful_resources/Important_documents/Handbook_on_Procedures_and_Criteria_for_RSD.pdf) and other publicly available material.

FINLAND	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	In the Finnish Immigration service we pay attention to credibility. If the story of the applicant is found lacking on credibility and there are no grounds for using benefit of the doubt, the decision will be negative. As the applicant will give grounds for his/her application only at the asylum interview, a lot of weight is given to the story, both the internal coherence and plausibility in the light of the relevant COI.
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	The applicant is first allowed to tell the story in his/her own words. After that there will be questions to probe the relevant issues and gather more facts. If there are discrepancies or gaps in the story, or it is contrary to relevant up to date COI, they are put to the applicant to give him/her a chance to explain them. If the applicant is considered vulnerable, the interviewer pays special attention on helping him/her understand the questions and the meaning of them. The protocol will be read to the applicant at the end of the interview, so he/she has a chance to comment on it before it is signed. A copy of the signed protocol is given to the applicant and the lawyer after the interview.
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for	The asylum interviewers receive EASO training on Interviewing Vulnerable Persons, so that they can pay special attention on possible symptoms of trauma etc. The interview will be conducted in a way that allows more time for the applicant to concentrate on the story and the interviewer will use

vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	<p>techniques that help the process of remembering. If there are gaps or discrepancies in the story of a vulnerable applicant, he/she is carefully guided to tell more about those issues. The benefit of the doubt (BoD) will be applied with a low threshold.</p>
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	<p>The Finnish Immigration Service has a COI database called Tellus available to all caseworkers. The case workers can also send a query to the COI investigators on particular points in question. The interviewer has to get acquainted with COI before making credibility assessment on a case, unless the basis of the claim are of such a nature, that COI has no bearing on them. The credibility will be assessed in the light of the relevant COI, after the applicant has been heard about possible discrepancies.</p>
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	<p>Applicant has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances. Caseworker has the responsibility to help at that e.g. by directing the applicant to tell about the relevant facts at the asylum interview. Also, if the caseworker has access to relevant information/documents, it is the officials duty to see that those will be taken into account when assessing the credibility.</p>
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)	<p>An asylum seeker rarely has any documentation with him/her, so the credibility assessment is done based on the asylum interview. If the story is coherent and plausible and it is supported by COI, it will be considered credible. If there is no COI to be found on the subject, BoD has to be applied. Also if the applicant is considered to be vulnerable, BoD is applied with a low threshold.</p>
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	<p>Basically all applicants coming to Finland apply for a refugee status or if they are vague with the terminology, they are supposed to be asking for refugee status. The credibility assessment is the same regardless of the outcome asylum/ subsidiary protection.</p>
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the	<p>The credibility of statements is basically established the same way regardless of the grounds for the application; internal and external credibility. In cases of religion and religious conversion emphasis will be more on the beliefs/conviction, how profound and absorbed it is. In cases sexual orientation it is expected that the applicant can tell a narrative of finding his/her sexual orientation/gender identity. The DSSH-method will be used as a guide.</p>

<p>following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	
--	--

GEORGIA	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Credibility assessment is a considerable part of the asylum procedures. Credibility assessment of material elements of the claim constitutes a separate part within the structure of the RSD assessment. Generally all relevant information provided by the applicant is being assessed and evaluated according to the well-established standards (internal consistency of verbal and written information including submitted documentation, consistency of the information with available COI, plausibility, sufficiency of the detail and specificity).</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<p>Applicants are able to comment on the contradictions that are being found by the case workers during the case review. All applicants are given opportunity to provide explanations before the decision maker makes the analysis.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>Vulnerability (victims or torture, mentally disturbed, victims of sexual violence) and the age (minors, elderly) of the applicant are the factors that decisions makers take into account while doing the credibility assessment. PTSD is also being considered while analysing the case. In terms of procedure there is no written regulation on the topic, but Ministry plans to draft the guidelines on adjudicating the vulnerable cases (provisions will be formulated explicitly in the Law as well as in the RSD procedure).</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>Credibility assessment is done using COI, which represents a considerable part of the analysis. COI is one of the tools that assists Georgian RSD specialist in deciding the credibility of the applicant.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared</p>	<p>Burden of proof is shared between the case worker and the applicant.</p>

<p>between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)</p>	<p>During the credibility assessment only material elements of the claim are being assessed. The claim is being substantiated by the information provided by the applicant, all the relevant documentation, COI. Benefit of the doubt concept is being used in case if there are no major problems with regards to the overall credibility of the applicant and certain aspects of the claim cannot be substantiated with the certainty.</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>Credibility assessment is done in the format of the RSD assessment form. The same form is being used for the refugee as well as humanitarian status assessment. Standard for the credibility assessment is the same, no differences in terms of analysis.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ethnicity – based on the documentation presented, considering the COI, asking questions with regards to the main features of the ethnic group the persons represents, what are the keys that the specific ethnicity is different from others in the specific country of origin. b. religion and religious conversion – during the interview process questions are asked about the religious issues, whether the person is aware of the traditions, rituals, religious holidays, reasons of conversion - in case if the denomination was at stake. c. sexual orientation – trying to observe correctness and avoid abusive questions about the sexual orientation, case worker tries to collect as much information as possible. Questions are carefully selected in order not to make the person feel uncomfortable. d. political opinion – questions related to the ideology of the specific political party/movement/government, what are person’s beliefs, what is it he/she wants to see in future, etc. e. torture – person is given a chance to talk about the life before and after he/she was tortured. Considering the psychological state of the applicant, case workers might ask more specific questions about the incidents or might refrain from doing it.

<h2>HUNGARY</h2>	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic</p>	<p>Yes – credibility is examined in the asylum process. When assessing credibility, only those statements are taken into account which are relevant for the claim. The claim can be not credible in general but it’s possible as well that certain elements of the claim are rejected due to lack of credibility.</p>

assumptions of your applicable policy.	
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<p>Each interview script is read back for the applicant at the interview, where the applicant has the opportunity to clarify details. The applicant has the opportunity to clarify the contradictions – the opportunity be given at the appeal phase at the administration court which has the opportunity to examine credibility and change the decision.</p>
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	<p>Special needs of an individual – as a general rule – are taken into account for all aspects of the asylum procedure.</p>
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	<p>Claims are verified or rejected based on COI if available. Contradictions may be resolved as well based on COI.</p>
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	<p>The duty is shared, initially the applicant has to substantiate the claim but for example COI and other information is principally gathered by the authority.</p>
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)	<p>The claim needs to be substantiated only, not verified.</p>
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee	<p>No, there is only one type of asylum application. The requirements for granting refugee status are examined in all cases, even if the asylum seeker’s application says it is only for subsidiary protection.</p>

status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture	Yes, for all of the below listed. a. ethnicity – relevant questions b. religion and religious conversion – relevant questions c. sexual orientation – relevant questions and in some cases expert opinion d. political opinion – relevant questions e. torture – medical expert opinion

LATVIA	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	<p>Yes, Latvia takes into due account the principle of credibility throughout the whole asylum procedure and it is done in the following way:</p> <p>The application of each asylum seeker is examined individually. When evaluating whether an asylum seeker is persecuted or may be persecuted, has suffered or may suffer serious harm, an official of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (hereinafter- Office) takes into account the facts which relate to the country of origin of the asylum seeker during the period when a decision is being taken regarding granting of refugee or alternative status or refusal to grant it. This includes regulatory enactments of the country of origin and the manner in which they are applied, the explanations provided and the documents submitted by the asylum seeker, the individual state and personal circumstances of the asylum seeker, whether activities of the asylum seeker since leaving the country of origin have not been aimed towards creating conditions for granting of refugee or alternative status and whether it is justifiably expected that the asylum seeker would accept State protection of such other country where he or she might request nationality. The fact that an asylum seeker has already been subjected to persecution or serious harm, or direct threats of persecution or harm and there is a well-founded reason to believe that such persecution or serious harm may recur, may indicate to justified fear of the asylum seeker of persecution or to justified possibility that he or she may suffer serious harm.</p> <p>If information indicated in the explanations of an asylum seeker is not justified by documents or other evidence, confirmation is not be necessary if the asylum seeker has submitted all information at his or her disposal, the explanations of the asylum seeker are plausible, not contradictory and conform with information at the disposal of the Office, the asylum seeker has submitted an application as soon as it was possible and the general credibility of the applicant has been established.</p> <p>The duty of the applicant is to participate in interview and provide all information, which is necessary in order to examine an application and take an appropriate decision, in person as soon as possible. Information can be provided at any time until the final decision regarding the application has been taken.</p>

<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the beginning of the interview the applicant is informed about his/her duties during an asylum procedure. - During the interview the applicant is guided through appropriate questioning. Individual and contextual circumstances are taken into account. Evidence bearing upon the claim is gathered. Questions to clarify specific circumstances or contradictions are asked the applicant by the interviewer. <p>For the applicant it is allowed to submit additional documents regarding his/her claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the end of the interview the interviewer always asks the applicant if he/she has additional information which has not been provided before. <p>Credibility assessment is done only after the interview when taking a decision regarding the application.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>There is no different approach or safeguards in relation to credibility in general, but at the same time all individual factors and circumstances are always taken under the consideration throughout the asylum procedures.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>It is the duty of the decision maker to assess if the information (including oral statements, documents, evidences) provided by the applicant regarding his claim is in compliance with the COI, but at the same time it is necessary to stress that all cases are assessed individually and in specific cases benefit of the doubt is applicable, because not all facts can be verified by the COI.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>Both the applicant and the determining authority must cooperate in the process. Cooperation implies that the applicant and the determining authority work together towards the common goal of gathering as much relevant evidence as possible in order to have basis to assess the credibility of the asserted material facts and determine the need for international protection.</p> <p>There is no clear proportion of the burden of proof between the applicant and the determining authority. The burden of proof for the applicant implies an obligation to deliver credible statement and to present all evidence possible and to cooperate with the authorities in the investigation of his/her claim.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")</p>	<p>For the refugee status the likelihood of the fear of persecution has to be proven at least at reasonable degree, but for the subsidiary protection – one must be able to reasonably assume that asylum seeker may be exposed to serious harm after return to the country of origin.</p>

<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>There is no difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection accept cases foreseen in Article 15 (c) of the QD when the situation in the country of origin is taken into account in general and less individually. In all other cases the credibility assessment is carried out on an individual basis as much as possible.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <p>a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture</p>	<p>a. Ethnicity- appearance, specific questions, COI; b. religion and religious conversion- specific questions and COI; c. sexual orientation- statements provided by the applicant are examined and verified with the COI; d. political opinion- previous experience in politics, publications and expression of political opinion publicly while residing in the country of origin, COI; e. torture- statements provided by the applicant, medical screening, health certificate and COI.</p>
<p>LITHUANIA</p>	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Yes, the credibility issue is addressed and assessed in each case. The assessment policy generally relies on the key principles outlined by the UNHCR, which may be summarized as follows (those are actually used as internal guidelines):</p> <p>a) it is the applicant who has the burden of establishing the veracity of his/her allegations and the accuracy of the facts on which the refugee claim is based. The burden of proof is discharged by the applicant rendering a truthful account of facts relevant to the claim so that, based on the facts, a proper decision may be reached;</p> <p>b) the adjudicator shares the duty to ascertain and evaluate all the relevant facts. This is achieved, to a large extent, by the adjudicator being familiar with the objective situation in the country of origin concerned, being aware of relevant matters of common knowledge, guiding the applicant in providing the relevant information and adequately verifying facts alleged which can be substantiated;</p> <p>c) where there is corroborative evidence supporting the statements of the applicant, this would reinforce the veracity of the statements made. On the other hand, failure to produce documentary evidence to substantiate oral statements should, therefore, not prevent the claim from being accepted if such statements are consistent with known facts and the general credibility of the applicant is good;</p> <p>d) credibility is established where the applicant has presented a claim which is coherent and plausible, not contradicting generally known facts, and therefore is, on balance, capable of being believed;</p>

	<p>e) where the adjudicator considers that the applicant’s story is on the whole coherent and plausible, any element of doubt should not prejudice the applicant’s claim; that is, the applicant should be given the “benefit of the doubt”;</p> <p>f) specific needs of the applicants should be given all necessary consideration when assessing credibility of applicant’s statements. Hence, e.g. when dealing with mentally disturbed persons, investigation have to be more searching than in a “normal” case and will call for a close examination of the applicant's past history and background, using whatever outside sources of information may be available, and children cannot be expected to provide adult-like accounts of their experiences.</p>
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	Apart from the policy outlined above, there is a general requirement for the adjudicator to provide the applicant with an opportunity to comment on discrepancies established while assessing credibility, guiding the applicant in providing the relevant information and adequately verifying facts alleged which can be substantiated.
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	Apart from the policy outlined above, in cases involving past persecution or serious harm, notably where there are indications that the applicant could have experienced torture in the past, the burden of proof shifts to the asylum authorities in the sense that they must ascertain all relevant facts, including, where there is a strong indication of possible past ill-treatment, obtaining a medical certificate (report) to establish signs and symptoms of torture. Trauma, age and gender implications as well as cross culture communication challenges are given due consideration when assessing applicant’s credibility.
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	COI is assessed thoroughly establishing external credibility of the claim. When verifying particular elements of the applicant’s account vis a vis COI, it is not only relied on general country conditions, but also the specific COI relevant to a particular circumstance is made use of.
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	In general, the burden of proof is distributed between the applicant and the adjudicator hence giving the applicant the opportunity to articulate his / her individual circumstances and/or inviting him/her to elaborate on particular issues or clarify inconsistencies or omissions. The burden of proof is discharged by the applicant (and shifts to the adjudicator) when he / she provides all necessary explanations and documents in his/her possession relevant to the claim. As a rule, when establishing the facts the applicable standard of proof is set at balance of probabilities level.
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof	While assessing the credibility, the facts claimed by the applicant are usually examined “one by one” and not as a whole. Those that are coherent, plausible and not contradicting generally known facts are considered “established” and thus constituting ‘the core’ of the claim, while those elements which “failed” the credibility test are discarded and not considered. As a rule, the mere existence of discarded elements (especially those which are not essential or central to the material facts of the claim) does not affect the “benefit of the doubt” given in respect of plausible elements. During the qualification phase only the “established” elements are considered in light of the status determination requirements.

vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)	
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	No, claims are assessed under one common procedure; credibility issue is addressed while establishing all the material facts of the claim, i.e. before the qualification phase.
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture	<p>a. Ethnicity Verifying particular elements of the applicant’s account vis a vis COI; also, where applicable, linguistic analysis.</p> <p>b. religion and religious conversion The applicant is expected to demonstrate general knowledge of the relevant religion (canons of scripture, saints, prophets, religious rites etc.), also, where applicable, the behavior and general appearance of the applicant is observed and assessed vis a vis the available information on the relevant religion.</p> <p>c. sexual orientation No specific methods are used.</p> <p>d. political opinion The applicant is expected to demonstrate general knowledge regarding at least the political environment in the country of origin; also, where the alleged political opinion is related to membership in a particular organization, a more detailed assessment is made regarding the applicant’s knowledge of that particular organization (structure, leaders, agenda, headquarters etc.) vis a vis the available COI.</p> <p>e. Torture Obtaining a medical certificate (report) to establish signs and symptoms of torture.</p>

MALTA	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	Credibility assessment is the cornerstone of the asylum procedure and is undoubtedly one of the most challenging aspects of this procedure. The Office of the Refugee Commissioner notes that credibility is assessed both internally (with regards to contradictions in the applicant’s statements and evidence) and externally (with regards to consistency between what the applicant provides and the country of origin information). Plausibility and coherency are also taken into consideration.
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in	The applicant’s individual and contextual circumstances are taken into consideration in view of their effects on credibility. The applicant has a right for an individual and impartial decision and also a right of defense. The benefit of the doubt may also be adopted.

<p>place in interviews?</p>	
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>The Office of the Refugee Commissioner notes that the applicant's individual circumstances (including traumatizing experiences) are taken into consideration during the asylum procedure due to the fact that these can affect the credibility. Vulnerability is one of such circumstances and it is of extreme importance that such vulnerability is detected at an early stage of the asylum procedure and if need be the applicant is referred to the necessary experts who will then determine whether the applicant is fit for the interview. In such cases, sufficiency of details as a credibility indicator should be carefully applied. Furthermore, different interview techniques are applied in such cases. For instance, specific questions on the traumatizing event should be avoided as much as possible.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>The consistency between the applicant's statements and the available country of origin information is analyzed in external credibility assessment.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>A shared duty to substantiate the asylum application is adopted at the Office of the Refugee Commissioner. The burden of proof is a shared responsibility between the applicant and the case worker. The applicant provides the case worker with all the details while the case worker conducts country of origin information, checks facts and confronts the applicant with contradictions and applies the benefit of the doubt if necessary.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")</p>	<p>If a general credibility has been established and the applicant's statement is coherent, plausible and consistent with country of origin information and a genuine effort is made by the applicant to substantiate his claims, then the benefit of the doubt can be applied even though for example if no documents or other evidence is presented.</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>The Office of the Refugee Commissioner has a single procedure. It first examines whether the applicant fulfils the eligibility criteria for refugee status and, only if he/she does not, subsequently it examines whether he/she is eligible for subsidiary protection status. In this single procedure, the same level of credibility assessment is adopted.</p>

<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <p>a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture</p>	<p>a. ethnicity – Credibility assessment is based on the consistency between the applicant’s oral statements and the available country of origin information.</p> <p>b. religion and religious conversion - Credibility assessment is based on self-reflection together with the consistency between the applicant’s oral statements and the available country of origin information.</p> <p>c. sexual orientation – Credibility assessment is based on self-reflection and available country of origin information.</p> <p>d. political opinion - Credibility assessment is based on the consistency between the applicant’s oral statements and the available country of origin information.</p> <p>e. torture - Credibility assessment is based on internal and external consistency.</p>
---	--

MOLDOVA

<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Moldova pays attention to the determination of the credibility and to evaluate the evidence provided by asylum seeker first and then if is necessary, depending on case is analyzed the benefit of doubt.</p> <p>According to the Asylum law, art. 6 point e), the decision maker is responsible for the determination of the credibility. According to art. 44 from Asylum law, the responsible authority can examine the benefit of doubt.</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An asylum seeker can present the proves regarding his fear of persecution after the interview to decision maker; - Asylum seeker can submit a repeated asylum application when his/her new reasons are considered to be credible. Based on credibility, he/she receives a new access to asylum procedure then the application is examined in ordinary procedure. In case he/she is not credible, a decision on the rejection of the access to a repeated asylum application is communicated.
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>Yes, according to the procedural guarantees for unaccompanied minors, the authority can initiate the procedure of the medical examination for age determining. This procedure was never applied and unaccompanied minor were considered to be credible regarding their age. A special attention is attracted to vulnerable groups during the interview (persons with physiological disorders and victims of torture), is allowed to assist at the interview the psychologist, doctor or social assistant.</p> <p>According to Asylum Law, for vulnerable group, a special asylum procedure is applied based mostly on credibility.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum</p>	<p>Credibility assessment is made according to COI as credibility has 5 indicators in our decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient details and specificity; - Internal Consistency; - The consistency of the applicant claim with the information provided by family members or witnesses; - Applicant claims consistency with the general and specific COI available;

procedure of your country.	- The plausibility.
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	The duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances has the decision maker according to art. 6 from Asylum Law. The proof is shared 50/50 %, a half is the responsibility of the decision maker to determine the credibility and another half is the obligation of the asylum seeker to make effort to support his/her declaration with any available proofs and offer justifications for the absence of the proofs (art. 31 Asylum Law).
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")	If credibility is stabled, then at the qualification phase an asylum seeker can receive a form of protection. In case not all the elements of the credibility were analyzed then, decision maker is analyzing the benefit of doubt. And the last version, in case the credibility of the fear to be persecuted is not stabled and at the same time there is a risk to send back in his country of origin, then is analyzed under the subsidiary protection.
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	No difference, bse in R. Moldova the responsible authority is obliged to analyze all the elements even were not declared by the applicant. So, there is only one structure of decision, outside of his country of origin, credibility, well founded fear of persecution, persecution, agents of persecution, acts of persecution, internal replacement, benefit of doubt, serious risk of his return in the context of art.15, Qualification Directive 95.
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture	The only method to establish the credibility is the interview with using all the possible interviewing techniques.

NETHERLANDS	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	Yes. The basic assumptions are in article 4 of the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) and article 31 of the Dutch Aliens Act. The general assumption is that the applicant does not have to prove, but that his statements have to be plausible.
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All interviewers are trained in interview techniques. - The applicant can make corrections and additions to the report of the interview afterwards. - A medical advice about the applicant is taken into account during the interview, with regard to circumstances that can influence the ability to give clear statements (for example if the applicant has concentration problems). - The general assumption is that the applicant does not have to prove, but that his statements have to be plausible. - The interview is structured: it starts with the free narrative and after that questions will follow to collect more information and/or to ask for clarification. - The background of the applicant (such as age, sex and education level) is taken into account during the interview. - The applicant's representative or social worker from the Refugee Counsel can join the applicant during the interview.
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	Yes. As mentioned under (2), a medical advice is taken into account. The medical expert checks whether the applicant is able to do the interview and whether there are circumstances that can influence the ability to give clear statements, such as PTSD. Furthermore, the background of the applicant (such as age, sex, medical condition and education level) is taken into account during decision making.
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	All relevant facts are assessed as how they relate to the country of origin information, at the time of taking a decision on the application, including laws and regulations of the country of origin and the manner in which they are applied. It is assessed whether the applicant's statements do not run counter to available specific and general country of origin information relevant to the applicant's case.

<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>It is the duty of the applicant to submit as soon as possible all the elements needed to substantiate the application for international protection. In cooperation with the applicant, it is the duty of the Member State to assess the relevant elements of the application, for example to start further investigation or provide relevant country of origin information.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)</p>	<p>The applicant has to make a plausible case, he does not have to prove his case. There is no certain degree in credibility: as statement is accepted or rejected as credible, if necessary when applying the principle of the benefit of the doubt. After the credibility phase, the qualification phase starts.</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>No. The credibility phase comes before the qualification phase. For the elements that are considered to be credible, the risk upon return will be assessed. Firstly it is assessed if the Refugee Convention is applicable, if not then subsidiary protection will be assessed. It is also possible that the risk upon return is not of enough weight to qualify for international protection.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <p>a. ethnicity</p> <p>b. religion and religious conversion</p> <p>c. sexual orientation</p> <p>d. political opinion</p> <p>e. torture</p>	<p>a. Ethnicity Yes, through questions during the interview or in some cases language analysis</p> <p>b. religion and religious conversion Yes, through questions during the interview</p> <p>c. sexual orientation Yes, through questions during the interview</p> <p>d. political opinion Yes, through questions during the interview</p> <p>e. torture Yes, through questions during the interview. At this moment, we do not initiate a medical assessment to collect evidence for serious harm in the past, but the applicant can do such an assessment on his own initiative. Such an assessment will be taken into account when assessing the credibility.</p>

POLAND	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	Yes. Credibility of an applicant is always taken into account in the asylum procedure. This is the reason why interview of the applicant can be omitted only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is also evidence assessment without proofs, as laid down in Art. 37a of the Act on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of Poland implements Art.4 section 5 of the Qualification Directive.
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	Before the interview, each applicant is informed about criminal liability for false testimony. (S)he is also informed that his/her testimony is confidential and may not be disclosed to the authorities in his/her country of origin. After the interview, the applicant has access to the protocol from the interview and may make his/her corrections. Moreover, (s)he is allowed to consult his/her dossier and request completing the evidence, including conducting interviews with other persons.
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	Regarding a foreigner who is a victims of violence or who is disabled, the asylum procedure provides for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. conditions granting a freedom of expression, tactful interviews adapted to psychological and physical state of the applicant b. dates adapted to his/her psychological and physical state which take into consideration the dates when (s)he is having medical treatments. c. presence of a psychologist or a doctor and, if possible, presence of an interpreter having the sex indicated by the applicant. The above provisions provide for freedom of expressions and help access credibility correctly.
4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.	The differences between the information gathered by the COI unit and the one presented by the applicant may indicate that his/her credibility is low. This is the reason why this relationship is always taken into consideration during the decision-making.
5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?	The applicant is responsible for substantiating proofs for his/her declarations. If s(he) is not able to do it, the case officer may decide to apply Art. 37a of the Act on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of Poland (as explained in question 1).
6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification	If general credibility of the applicant is sufficient, proofs are not always necessary. If the testimonies of the applicant are coherent, relevant and probable and include current situation in his/her country of origin, it may be decided that presented circumstances are proved. However, if there are doubts concerning credibility assessment, “benefit of the doubt” principle is used.

<p>phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called “benefit of the doubt”)</p>	
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>Poland has a single asylum procedure. This is why the asylum application is also an application for subsidiary protection. For this reason there are no distinction in relation to credibility assessment.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	<p>There are no guidelines concerning the assessment of the above themes.</p>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">ROMANIA</h2>	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Yes, the Romanian policy on RSD is in line with both EU law and UNHCR guidelines related to credibility assessment.</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<p>Procedural safeguards, such as access to legal information and advice, confidentiality, appropriate interpretation, trained personnel.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific</p>	<p>Specific safeguards for vulnerable persons, such as appropriate reception conditions, access to psychological services, a proper environment for</p>

<p>approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>interviewing, sufficient time.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>The role of COI is to put into context the applicant's statements and other evidence.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>The duty to substantiate is shared between the applicant and decision maker. The applicant should make a genuine effort to substantiate the application; the decision maker provides guidance to the applicant and applies the benefit of doubt rule.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")</p>	<p>A reasonable possibility of persecution is sufficient.</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of</p>	<p>n/a</p>

<p>statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	
<p>1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.</p>	<p>Yes, the credibility assessment is seen on two levels, internal and external. Inner credibility is represented by testimony of applicant, from which any contradictory or incoherent statements are eliminated by additional interview. On the other hand, external means a confrontation of the applicant's statements with external sources (COI and known facts from objective sources).</p>
<p>2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?</p>	<p>In the Slovak asylum act, there are no specific provisions concerning the credibility assessment of applicants. Exception (section 12 paragraph 2 letter d): The applicant is on the basis of his/her incoherent, contradictory, improbable or insufficient statements regarded as untrustworthy person and this may be the reason for the rejection of his/her application as manifestly unfounded.</p>
<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>Asylum Act does not contain provisions related to the credibility of vulnerable applicants, but in the spirit of an individual approach to each application the special treatment is used. Decision maker has the duty to take into account the proven influences/circumstances (e.g. PTSD, trauma) that can affect the statements of applicant and can cause the incoherent or contradictory testimony.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>COI and credibility assessment are closely related; see the answer 1.</p>

<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>The obligation is on both procedural sides. The applicant's obligation is to provide truthful and complete testimony, and if it is possible also submit all evidence to support her/his claims. Decision maker, on the other hand, has to secure the current evidence on the reasons mentioned by the applicant, country of origin information and other (e.g. internet sources, comparison of fingerprints Eurodac, European/national law etc.) The burden of proof is so shared equally on both sides.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")</p>	<p>The credibility assessment is crucial during the qualification phase in order to settle the fact. There is no need to require 100 percent credibility of every claim, the case is considered as a whole and takes into account mainly the applicant's genuine effort to substantiate application. To determine the credibility, it is sufficient that the testimony and other evidence are evaluated as probably true, it means assigned by the certain level of credibility. In case internal applicant's statements are treated as reliable and consistent (recognized as logical, acceptable, statement for coherent and internally consistent), but could not be supported or refuted by COI/other evidence and documents, the principle "benefit of the doubt" is applied (section 19 paragraph 3 of the Law on Asylum).</p>
<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>No, because both types of international protection are covered by one procedure. Application is primarily examined in the way of fulfilment of the conditions for granting asylum and if the conditions are not met, automatically the same application is considered in the way of provisions relate to subsidiary protection. The credibility assessment of applicants is therefore under uniform procedural standards.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <p>a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture</p>	<p>a. ethnicity - checklist, linguistic analysis, specific questions. b. religion and religious conversion - Specific questions – especially used for converts (e.g. tests with targeted questions about certain religion). c. sexual orientation - Psychological assessments (inaccurate) and general credibility claim of the applicant. d. political opinion - Specific questions. e. torture - Medical reports, psychological reports, specific questions.</p>

SWEDEN	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The analysis of the credibility in an asylum case should be done in each case, The following questions are important when doing this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the story coherent or fragmented? - Has the applicant provided a concrete and detailed story or is it vague and undetailed? - Has the story inconsistencies or has it essentially remained unchanged during the interview or between the interviews? - Is the story supported by generally known facts and up-to-date COI or is some parts of the story contrary to such information.
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<p>Procedural safeguards of importance in this context are e.g. sufficient time and an interview transcript. In addition, there must be true communication between the applicant and the interviewer. This means, when it comes to credibility issues, a good mixture of initial free narrative from the applicant followed by specific questions from the interviewer. The possibility to have a judicial review in a higher instance is of course also of crucial importance.</p>
3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?	<p>At the moment we apply a case-by-case approach, but we are planning for a more comprehensive approach towards all vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>The new Asylum Procedures Directive (recast) talks of "applicant in need of special procedural guarantees", an applicant whose ability to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided for in this Directive is limited. Vulnerable migrants and applicants in need of special procedural guarantees" are the same target groups.</p> <p>There could be tricky credibility aspects when it comes to individuals that are vulnerable due to,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age - Gender - Sexual orientation or gender identity - Disability - Serious illness - Mental disorders - Consequences of torture, rape or other serious forms of violence <p>Sweden applies a free evaluation of evidence in asylum cases. This means eg a free evaluation of all evidence. Free evaluation of the evidence means that the decision maker is free to determine the value of the evidence presented in an asylum case. Evidence requirement should not be applied too strict, especially when there is aspects of vulnerability involved.</p> <p>In case of asylum-seekers, with traumatic experiences, these events usually play a crucial role in the credibility assessment. It is evident that if the victim is unable to remember due to amnesia, this fact will constitute a major obstacle to the application of credibility indicators. Such cases will have to be examined both medically and psychologically of expertise in an early phase of the asylum process. It is important to try to identify this category at an early stage of the asylum procedure, eg if an asylum-seeker is suffering from PTSD, and what the concrete symptoms are.</p> <p>When it comes to unaccompanied minors (UAM) you could say that exists a general aspect of vulnerability. Sweden prioritises applications made by this</p>

	<p>category of applicants and we try to process these cases within a period of three months.</p> <p>The following procedural arrangements are made as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A representative is appointed by the municipality's chief guardian's office to represent the UAM and protect his/her interests; - Asylum interviews are conducted by special trained staff, who use a special interview guide and adjust the questions to the UAM's age and maturity level; - If a residence permit cannot be granted on other grounds, a permit may be granted if there are "special distressing circumstances". Such circumstances may include health, adaptation to Sweden and the person's situation in the country of origin. Children may be granted residence permits under this section even if the circumstances that come to light do not have the same seriousness and weight that are required for a permit to be granted to adults under the same provision; - A minor is not returned to the country of origin if he or she cannot be received by a member of his or her family or a nominated guardian, or if there are no adequate reception facilities in the State to which he or she is to be returned.
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>The role of COI is to corroborate the applicant's statements and other evidence.</p> <p>COI may also help reduce errors in decision-making.</p> <p>COI should be relevant, reliable and balanced. In addition COI should be accurate and up-to-date. This means that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COI has to be obtained and corroborated from a variety of sources; with due attention paid to finding and filtering the relevant and up-to-date information from the sources chosen and without any distortion of the content. - COI must be closely related to the legal substance of an asylum claim (i.e. fear of being persecuted/risk of suffering serious harm and lack of protection) and must objectively reflect (confirm or disprove) the important facts related thereto. - COI has to rely on a variety of different types of sources, bearing in mind the political and ideological context in which each source operates as well as its mandate, reporting methodology and the intention behind its publications. - COI has to be made available for all parties involved in refugee status determination, principally through the use of a transparent method of referencing. Original sources and reports should therefore be retrievable and their content and meaning should not be distorted in the process of paraphrasing or translating.
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>The applicant should invoke the asylum grounds and has the initial burden of proof for asylum. The burden to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances lies jointly on the applicant and the competent interweaving authority (the Swedish Migration Board (SMB). The SMB is obliged to assess the reliability and credibility of the narrative and other evidence.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the</p>	<p>When interviewing and taking decisions in asylum cases the following steps should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant facts; - Consider all of the facts, including the facts with low proof value; - Analyse the relevant evidence; - If any information is not reliable assess if these affects the very core of the information given by the applicant; - Give the applicant an opportunity to explain possible gaps in the narrative; - Assess the explanations; - Make an overall assessment of all the evidence;

doubt")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If applicable, apply the benefit of the doubt; - Motivate reliability deficiencies and credibility gaps thoroughly and objectively.
7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?	<p>No, not in practice, but there exists a difference in the standard of proof. In the Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716) chapter 4, section 1, it says that with a 'refugee' means an alien who – is outside the country of the alien's nationality, because he or she feels a well-founded fear of persecution. In chapter 4, section 2 it says that in this Act, a 'person eligible for subsidiary protection' is an alien who in cases other than those referred to in Section 1 is outside the country of the alien's nationality, because</p> <p>1. there are substantial grounds for assuming that the alien, upon return to the country of origin, would run a risk.</p> <p>There is thus a difference in the standard of proof that also could have an effect on the credibly assent when not having so high standard of proof in chapter 4, section 2 (substantial grounds for assuming) compared to section 1 (well-founded fear of persecution). in the same chapter.</p>
8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	<p>Sweden applies free evaluation of evidence in asylum cases. This consists of two parts: Free production of evidence and free evaluation of evidence. This means that that in principle there are no restrictions regarding the sources that may be used to ascertain the truth. Free evaluation of evidence in turn means that the decision maker is free to determine the value of the evidence presented in an asylum case.</p> <p>Evidence requirement should not be applied too strict, given the difficulties of proof terms arising from the particular situation of the applicant is in.</p> <p>Factors as ethnicity, religion and religious conversion, sexual orientation, political opinion torture are of course factors that make the credibility assessments more complicated, especially when the interviewer lacks experience assessing these factors.</p> <p>Factors as age, urban or rural background, profession, and socio-economic status for both the applicant and the interviewer play also an important role in the assessment process.</p>

UKRAINE	
1. Does your country pay attention to credibility in the asylum procedure? If yes, please outline briefly the basic assumptions of your applicable policy.	<p>Yes. In the procedure of recognition of refugees or persons in need of subsidiary protection, credibility assessment is of major importance. Key provisions in the sphere include: the applicant's duty to substantiate his/her claims; duties of the Migration Service official to assist the applicant in substantiation of his/her claim at the stage of ascertaining substantial elements of the claim; an individual evidence-based approach to credibility assessment, accounting for personal and situational circumstances of the applicant; objective, unbiased and throughout analysis of the substantial facts reported.</p>
2. What procedural safeguards for the applicants in relation to credibility are in place in interviews?	<p>At the beginning of an individual interview, the official should inform the applicant on his/her duty to substantiate his/her claim and should advise him/her how to fulfil the duty. In the course of the interview, the official poses guiding questions and maintains objective and unbiased approach, both in verbal and non-verbal communication. While posing questions and analysing answers, the official should account for age, sex, cultural peculiarities, ethnicity, education, social status, sexual orientation and gender identity of the applicant. The official should provide opportunities to the applicant to explain information gaps, omissions, contradictions and poorly credible statements.</p>

<p>3. Do you have a specific approach or safeguards for vulnerable migrants during the asylum procedures in relation to credibility, for example in case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)?</p>	<p>In the course of procedures of granting protection in connection with vulnerable applicants, at the beginning of the interview, the Migration Service official should ask the applicant on his/her preferences associated with involvement of an interpreter (e.g. sex of the interpreter, his/her affiliation with a certain social, ethnic or religious group). In the majority of cases, Muslim female applicants are interviewed by female officials.</p> <p>In the case of procedures of granting refugee status or subsidiary protection in connection with unaccompanied children, a lawyer, a psychologist and an educator should be involved.</p>
<p>4. Please outline briefly the relationship between Country of Origin Information (COI) and credibility assessment in the asylum procedure of your country.</p>	<p>In the course of assessing credibility of substantial facts provided by the applicant, well known facts on situation in his/her country of origin or permanent residence should be accounted for. Besides that, statements of the applicant are checked for coherence with county of origin information, known facts and other evidence items provided by the applicant. Therefore, country of origin information should support results of individual and objective assessment of the application.</p>
<p>5. Who has the duty to substantiate the relevant facts and circumstances? How is the burden of proof shared between the asylum applicant and the case worker/decision maker?</p>	<p>In principle, the applicant has the duty to substantiate his/her claims, but the Migration Service official has to support the applicant at the stage of ascertaining substantial elements of the application.</p> <p>According to UN Position Paper on Duties and Standards of Proof in Applications of Refugees of December 16, 1998, facts in refugees' applications are substantiated by provision of evidence or proof of the claims stated. The evidence may include both verbal statements and documents. The duty to provide evidence in support of the facts stated is a "burden of proof" and - in line with general legal provisions on substantiation matters - it should be imposed on a party that makes a claim.</p> <p>Therefore, in his/her application for refugee status or for subsidiary protection the applicant should substantiate credibility of his/her claims and accuracy of the facts referred to in the application, and the applicant should convince the official in credibility of his substantive statements.</p> <p>At the same time, accounting for particular situation of refugees, the official shares the duty to substantiate or evaluate all facts of relevance to the application.</p>
<p>6. Please outline briefly how the degree of credibility of the statement is taken into account in the qualification phase, when the decision on the status is taken (e.g. proof vs. to substantiate a claim and the so called "benefit of the doubt")</p>	<p>When the official has collected all facts on the case, he/she should identify the facts that can substantiate provision of protection and should evaluate credibility of every substantial fact. In the case of facts that were not substantiated by documents or other evidence items, or still doubtful facts, possibility of application of benefit of the doubt should be considered for every such fact. Benefit of the doubt is applied if statements of the applicant are coherent, generally credible and do not contradict to country of origin information, while the applicant's explanations on identified contradictions, deviations and omissions seem logical.</p>

<p>7. Does your country make a difference between those applying for a refugee status and those looking for subsidiary protection, in relation to credibility assessment? How?</p>	<p>No. An asylum seeker submits his/her application on recognition as a refugee or a person in need of subsidiary protection. At the first stage, relevant information on the case is collected, substantial facts of the application are identified and the issue is considered whether statements of the applicant and other evidence items (and which ones) should be recognised (and which ones). At the second stage, well-grounded fears of prosecution and serious harm risks are analysed.</p>
<p>8. Does your country establish the credibility of statements with respect to the following themes? If yes, please specify briefly the methods that are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ethnicity b. religion and religious conversion c. sexual orientation d. political opinion e. torture 	<p>Yes. In the course of interviews, interviewers account for communication language of the applicant, his/her knowledge of ethnic traditions, customs and culture, religious specifics, postulates and attributes, they account for his/her general appearance, signs of injuries, medical records, in connection with political opinion the interviewers check whether the applicant has some knowledge about the party reported, knows its leaders, structure, a founding year, whether he/she has any material evidence of membership in the political party or of his/her active participation in political life.</p>