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Did You Know...?

- According to [Eurostat](#), in 2015, 88,254 unaccompanied minors (UAMs) sought asylum in the EU Member States (35,250 in Sweden alone).
- Only 3,045 UAMs sought asylum in the UK in 2015, significantly less than other EU countries – only 23 % were granted [refugee status](#).
- In 2015, 9,835 decisions were made relating to the [dependants](#) of asylum seekers in the UK. Only [28 % of dependants](#) were granted asylum or another form of protection.

The EU offers vital support to the UK to enable it to protect unaccompanied migrant children and to tackle human trafficking and smuggling.

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The Impact of Brexit on Forced Migrant Children



Who are forced migrant children?

Forced migrants include asylum seekers, refugees or trafficked persons. In this context EU Law defines children (persons under 18) as particularly "vulnerable".

How does EU Law regulate the position of forced migrant children?

EU law does not completely determine the content of national immigration laws, but it does impose minimum, harmonized standards relating to the entry, residence and treatment of forced migrants. These instruments all offer special protection to children, particularly unaccompanied children, and require Member States to act in their best interests.

What rights do forced migrant children have in the UK according to EU Law?

Third-country national children in the EU do not enjoy the same rights as EU citizens.

Forced migrant children do have the right to claim asylum and to international protection. They have the right to legal representation, to appropriate care and accommodation and to access education and health services. For most unaccompanied children, these rights expire as soon as they reach 18.

The UK has opted out of a lot of EU immigration law, including laws that grant family reunification rights to immigrants. Unaccompanied minors, in particular, have very limited family reunification rights. There is no evidence whatsoever to support claims that unaccompanied children are seeking asylum in the UK merely to provide their parents with residence rights later.

What will happen if the UK stays in the EU?

The recent refugee crisis has demonstrated the need for cooperation among different EU Member States and neighbouring non-EU countries. It has also demonstrated that the UK cannot be forced to take in asylum seekers, including unaccompanied children, unless they already have a family member living lawfully in the UK.

And if the UK leaves the EU?

If the UK were to leave the EU, it would not significantly impact upon the law relating to forced migrant children since their rights are largely defined by domestic immigration law. However, the UK would no longer directly benefit from EU support that seeks to achieve equal burden sharing between the Member States and that resources [resettlement](#), [training](#), [research](#), data collection, [law enforcement](#) and [intelligence sharing](#) on immigration issues.