

Abstract

Persons who seek international protection in the European Union are entitled to number of rights contained in the EU law, international law and national law. Some applicants for international protection are entitled to additional rights and guarantees due to their weakened position. This thesis analyses the legal position of vulnerable applicants for international protection (or more precisely applicants with special needs). The position of minor applicants is dealt with in more detail. The thesis further deals with the legislation of the Common European Asylum System, attention is also paid to the European Court of Human Right's case-law, to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to other relevant documents.

All applicants for international protection can be seen as vulnerable. In the view of the European Court of Human Rights applicant for international protection is *„as such, a member of a particularly underprivileged and vulnerable population group in need of special protection“*.

The EU law does not explicitly describe applicants as vulnerable, but it entitles them to a certain standard of rights by which it reflects their difficult position. Furthermore, the Reception Conditions Directive and Asylum Procedures Directive define applicants with special needs (more precisely applicants with special reception needs and applicants in need of special procedural guarantees). Applicants with special needs are entitled to special guarantees, e.g. related to detention and personal interview. Their vulnerability may also affect the option of their transfer according to the Dublin Regulation.

The asylum *acquis* does not describe the assessment of special needs in great detail and therefore it is up to the Member States to establish appropriate mechanism, which will enable them to identify and address the special needs of applicants in a timely manner.