

<b>Title</b>	<b>Global Report – Statistical study of applications made in 2021 under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention</b>
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<b>Author</b>	Professor Nigel Lowe and Victoria Stephens, in consultation with the PB
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<b>Appendix</b>	Global Report & Annexes
<b>Related Documents</b>	<u>Prel. Doc. No 3 of January 2023</u> – Statistical study of applications made in 2021 under the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention – Questionnaire and guidelines

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# **Global Report – Statistical study of applications made in 2021 under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention**

## **Cover Note**

In preparation for the Eighth Meeting of the Special Commission (SC) on the practical operation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention (1980 Convention) and the 1996 Child Protection Convention (1996 Convention), the Permanent Bureau (PB) of the HCCH commissioned a Statistical Study to gather and analyse available data on return and access applications falling within the scope of the 1980 Convention.

This Fifth Study, carried out by Professor Nigel Lowe of Cardiff University and Victoria Stephens, analyses data received concerning applications made under the 1980 Convention in 2021. Previous Studies analysed data from applications made in 2015 (Fourth Study), 2008 (Third Study), 2003 (Second Study) and 1999 (First Study).

The Fifth Study has been made possible with the collection of information from 77 States, thus, covering many jurisdictions in which applications under the 1980 Convention were made in the referenced period. The PB wholeheartedly thanks the Central Authorities of the participating Contracting States that have kindly contributed with their efforts and time by providing information to the Consultants to make the results of the Study possible.

The PB also thanks the People's Republic of China, Germany, the Philippines and the United Kingdom, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) and the US Friends of the Hague Conference Foundation for their kind voluntary contributions to this Study.

At its last meeting, in 2017, the SC reaffirmed the utility of accurate statistics for the effective evaluation of the operation of the 1980 Convention (C&R Nos 2 and 76). This Fifth Study, therefore, provides timely useful information in connection to the discussions that will take place during the upcoming SC meeting.

## **APPENDIX**

# Appendix I – Global Report

## PART I: GLOBAL REPORT

### A. INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Background and rationale of the project

1. This is the fifth statistical study (“2021 study”) to look into the operation of the *Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* (“the 1980 Child Abduction Convention or the 1980 Convention”). The study has been conducted by Professor Nigel Lowe and Victoria Stephens, in consultation with the Permanent Bureau. *Special thanks are given to the People’s Republic of China, Germany, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), and the US Friends of the Hague Conference Foundation which generously funded the project.*

2. This study analyses all the 1980 Convention applications received by the participating Central Authorities in 2021. Use is made of the findings of previous studies of 1999, 2003, 2008 and 2015 to provide an analysis of statistical trends over a 22-year period.

3. We received responses from 77<sup>1</sup> of the then 101 Contracting States.<sup>2</sup> We estimate that this captures 95% of all applications received and sent in 2021 under the 1980 Convention. This estimation is based on an analysis of the incoming cases received by the responding Central Authorities (‘the incoming database’), using their reports on outgoing applications made to the Central Authorities that did not respond to the questionnaire (‘the outgoing database’) and adding a broad estimate of applications between the 24 Contracting States that did not respond.<sup>3</sup>

4. When considering this global estimate of the number of applications it is worth bearing in mind that the above figures only relate to applications under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention *routed through Central Authorities* and not to child abduction overall. The global estimate does not include abductions *within* State boundaries, nor all abductions even as between Contracting States to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. Some applications may have been made directly to the national courts concerned without the knowledge or involvement of Central Authorities,<sup>4</sup> and others may have been made using different international instruments (e.g., the *Inter-American Convention on the International Return of Children*). The statistics do not, of course, include abductions involving States that are not party to the 1980 Convention.

5. We have experienced generous co-operation from Central Authorities who have given their time to provide us with their information and to answer subsequent queries. In producing this report, we are indebted to the Central Authorities for their hard work and co-operation.

#### 2. Methodology

6. The questionnaire was circulated to all Central Authorities to collect data concerning all applications received and sent by between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021 (i.e., all cases that commenced in 2021). However, in line with the four previous studies, outcomes of applications were recorded up to 30 June 2023 so as to allow for the elapse of 18 months after the last possible application could have been received (i.e. on 31 December 2021). Applications unresolved after that date have simply been classified as “pending”. Accordingly, 2021 was chosen to give as contemporaneous a view as possible in relation to the holding of the Eighth Meeting of the Special Commission in

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<sup>1</sup> The 77 States which responded to the Study were: Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China (Hong Kong and Macao), Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom (Bermuda, England and Wales, Isle of Man, Jersey, Northern Ireland and Scotland), United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

<sup>2</sup> Currently, there are 103 Contracting States, but the accessions of two Contracting States, Botswana and Cabo Verde did not come into force until 2023 and were therefore not included in the 2021 study.

<sup>3</sup> The overall estimated 2,720 applications comprised 2,300 return applications (i.e the aggregate of 2,191 applications on the incoming database, 79 applications on the outgoing database made to non-responding States, and an estimated maximum of 30 applications made between non-responding States) and 420 access applications (ie the aggregate of 399 applications on the incoming data base. 11 applications on the outgoing data base made to non-responding States, and an estimated maximum of 10 applications made between non-responding States).

<sup>4</sup> As permitted by Art. 29 of the 1980 Hague Convention.

October 2023. The questionnaire and guidelines for responding to the questionnaire are available on the website of the Permanent Bureau.<sup>5</sup>

7. For the first time information was requested on the overall number of applications in the years preceding and following the year of study (2019, 2020 and 2022). This was to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of applications received and sent in each year. For more information on this, see the Addendum at paras 158 et seq.

8. Previously the online database, INCASTAT,<sup>6</sup> was used for the collection of data. For this present study, at the request of Central Authorities, the information was collected through a questionnaire in Excel format. Further, in an attempt to make completing the questionnaire as easy as possible for Central Authorities, some questions were removed where they had been found to provide consistent data if compared to previous studies, for example, those about the nationality of the taking person and the gender of the children involved in applications.

9. As in previous studies, the analysis is based on information provided by Central Authorities in particular in relation to: the number of applications they received; the “taking persons” in return applications and the “respondents” in access applications; the children involved; the outcomes of the applications; and the length of time it took to reach a final outcome.

10. The data contained in this report was submitted by the participating Central Authorities from their own records. We have primarily relied upon the data from incoming applications to make the statistical analysis but have also used the data from outgoing applications to calculate overall numbers.

11. Throughout the Study all percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

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<sup>5</sup> Prel Doc 3 available at: <https://www.hcch.net/en/publications-and-studies/details4/?pid=8488&dtid=57>

<sup>6</sup> At its meeting of 2021, according to Conclusion & Decision No 19, Council of General Affairs and Policy (CGAP) mandated the discontinuance of INCASTAT.

## B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

12. Replies have been received from 77 of the 101 Contracting States that were Party to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in 2021 (as of 1 September 2023 there are now 103 Contracting States following the accession of Botswana and Cabo Verde).<sup>7</sup> Detailed information has been provided on a total of 2,590 incoming applications, comprising 2,191 return and 399 access applications. We estimate that this captures 95% of all applications made to Central Authorities in 2021.<sup>8</sup>

13. Making a direct comparison with the 2015 study (that is by comparing data from 2021 with those from 2015 only in relation to the States that responded to both studies)<sup>9</sup> there has been a 4% decrease in return applications and a 1% increase in access applications, but this finding should be treated with some caution, as the 2021 figures seem likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, as in previous Studies, it remains the case that the vast majority of applications (85%) made under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in 2021 were for return, with 15% for access.

### 1. Return applications

14. 75% of taking persons were mothers, a higher proportion than the 73% recorded in 2015, 69% in 2008, 68% in 2003 and 69% in 1999. In 2021, 23% of the taking persons were fathers and the remaining 2% comprised grandparents, institutions or other relatives.<sup>10</sup>

15. Where the information was available, the large majority (88%) of taking persons were the “primary carer” or “joint-primary carer” of the child. Where the taking person was the mother, this figure was 94% but only 71% where the taking person was the father.

16. At least 2,783 children were involved in the 2,191 return applications, making an average of 1.3 children per application. A large majority of applications (74%) involved a single child. The average age of a child involved in a return application was 6.7 years.

17. The overall return rate was 39%, lower than previous Studies, with 45% in 2015, 46% in 2008, respectively, 51% in 2003 and 50% in 1999. This return rate comprised 16% voluntary returns and 23% judicial returns.

18. In 2021, 38% of return applications were decided in court (43% in 2015, 44% in 2008, 44% in 2003 and 43% in 1999). 59% of court decisions resulted in a judicial return order being made compared with 65% in 2015, 61% in 2008, 66% in 2003 and 74% in 1999.

19. In 2021, 283 return applications (13% of the overall total and 35% of those determined by a court) ended in a judicial refusal. Some cases were refused for more than one reason and if all reasons are combined, the most frequently relied upon ground for refusal was Article 13(1)(b), cited in 46% of refused applications.

20. In 2021, return applications were generally resolved more slowly, compared with the 2015 Study. The overall average time taken to reach a final outcome from the receipt of the application by the Central Authority was 207 days compared with 164 days in 2015 and 188 days in 2008. The average time taken to reach a decision of judicial return was 197 days (compared with 158 days in 2015, 166 days in 2008, 125 days in 2003 and 107 in 1999) and a judicial refusal took an average of 268 days (compared with 245 days in 2015, 286 days in 2008, 233 days in 2003 and 147 days in 1999). For return applications resulting in a voluntary return the average time taken was 130 days, compared with 108 days in 2015, 121 days in 2008, 98 days in 2003 and 84 days in 1999. For discussion of the possible effect of the COVID-19 pandemic upon timing, see the Addendum at paras 158 et seq.

21. 42% of return applications that went to court involved an appeal, compared with 31% in 2015 and 24% in 2008. In 81% of the return applications, the same outcome was reached on appeal as at first instance, compared with 67% in 2015 and 80% in 2008.

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<sup>7</sup> This can be compared with responses from 76 Contracting States for the 2015 Study, 60 Contracting States in 2008, 58 Contracting States in 2003 and 39 Contracting States in the 1999 Study. It may be noted that in 3 Contracting States (Gabon, Guyana and Iraq), the Convention is not operational (although according to our outgoing database one access application was made to Iraq in 2021).

<sup>8</sup> For the basis upon which the calculation is made see footnote 3 above.

<sup>9</sup> I.e. Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China (Hong Kong and Macao), Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom (England and Wales, Isle of Man, Jersey, Northern Ireland and Scotland), United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

<sup>10</sup> Note that different Central Authorities responded in each year and so the following analysis is not a direct comparison between the same States.

## 2. Access applications

22. In the 399 access applications made under Article 21 in 2021, 78% of respondents were mothers (74% in 2015, 79% in 2008, 79% in 2003 and 86% in 1999).

23. At least 484 children were involved in the 399 access applications received in 2021,<sup>11</sup> making an average of 1.2 children per application. 74% of access applications concerned a single child and the overall average age of a child involved was 8.1 years.

24. The overall rate at which access was agreed or ordered was 27%, compared with 27% in 2015, 21% in 2008, 33% in 2003 and 43% in 1999.

25. Access applications took longer to resolve than return applications. The average time taken to reach a final outcome was 301 days from its receipt by the Central Authority, 252 days if there was a voluntary agreement for access, 358 days if access was judicially ordered and 333 days if access was refused. These timings can be compared with 254 days in 2015, and 339 days in 2008.

## C. THE OVERALL FINDINGS

26. Replies have been received from 77 of the 101 Contracting States that were party to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in 2021 (as of 1 September 2023 there were 103 Contracting Parties following the accession of Botswana and Cabo Verde).<sup>12</sup> These responding States provided information on a total of 2,590 incoming applications, comprising 2,191 return and 399 access applications. Annex 1 shows these applications in more detail.

27. By way of comparison, in the 2015 study, information was provided on 2,652 incoming applications by 76 States. In 2008, information was provided by 60 States on 2,321 applications; in 2003 on 1,479 applications by 58 States, while in 1999, 39 States provided information on 1,151 applications. The Table below shows how these applications broke down between return and access applications.

**The total number of applications received by Central Authorities 1999 - 2021**

	Incoming return	Incoming access
1999	984	205
2003	1,259	232
2008	1,961	361
2015	2,270	382
2021	2,191	399

28. Comparing the data from the States which responded to both the 2021 and 2015 studies there has been an overall 4% decrease in return applications but a 1% increase in access applications.<sup>13</sup> This is the first time over the five Studies that a decrease in the number of return applications has been recorded. However, a note of caution needs to be sounded about this finding as the number of applications made in 2021 seems likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

29. As already explained, (see para. 6 above) given that previous studies have always allowed for outcomes to be assessed up to 18 months after the last application could have been made, 2021 was chosen as the study year for the fifth study to provide the most contemporaneous view relative to the October 2023 Special Commission. 2021, however, was a COVID year and it seemed likely that its accompanying lockdowns, travel restrictions and limited court functioning would have affected the overall number of abductions inasmuch as removals would have been more difficult although this could have been counterbalanced by more retentions, which in turn could have had a knock-on impact on the number of access applications (see further the discussion in the Addendum, at paras 158 et seq). Consequently, to

<sup>11</sup> Data was available in 304 of the 399 access applications involving 389 children and at least one child must have been involved in the remaining 95, making a total of 484 children.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of the 76 States which responded to the Study see n 1 above.

<sup>13</sup> To gain a direct comparison, data from 2015 has been compared with that from only the States that responded to both Studies. For details, see n. 8 above. and Appendix 2



investigate in terms of overall numbers how typical 2021 was, the 2021 study asked for the overall number of applications received and sent in the years surrounding the main study year (i.e., for 2019, 2020 and 2022).

#### The number of applications received by Central Authorities in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022<sup>14</sup>

	Incoming return	Incoming access
2019	2,603	464
2020	2,129	404
2021	2,191	399
2022	2,359	411

30. These figures show that there was marked decline (-18%) in the number of return applications after 2019 but that since then those numbers have increased but not yet to 2019 levels. Access applications also markedly declined (-13%) in 2020 and only started to increase in 2022.

31. Although not all Contracting States responded to the 2021 Study, we estimate that the replies received capture 95% of all applications to Central Authorities (but not necessarily those made directly to courts – see para.4, above) in 2021.<sup>15</sup> We estimate that in 2021 there were a maximum of 2,720 applications, comprising 2,300 return and 420 access applications made to Central Authorities under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention.<sup>16</sup> This can be compared with the estimated total of 2,730 applications in 2015, 2,460 applications in 2008, 1,610 in 2003 and 1,062 in 1999.

32. The workload varied between Central Authorities. Combining both incoming and outgoing applications the United States of America (USA) handled the greatest number with 517 applications, followed by England and Wales with 479 applications, Germany with 397 applications, France with 285 applications, Mexico with 234 applications, Colombia with 217 applications, Poland with 199 applications, Italy with 176 applications, and Spain with 175 applications.

33. By contrast, some Central Authorities handled no applications at all in 2021, namely: Andorra, Canada (North West Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Yukon), China (Macao) Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles and UK (Isle of Man).

## D. RETURN APPLICATIONS

### 1. The number of return applications

34. Out of the 77 States that responded to the Study, 73 States<sup>17</sup> reported 2,191 return applications received by their Central Authorities. This can be compared with 2,270 return applications received by 72 States in 2015, 1,961 return applications received by 54 States in 2008; 1,259 return applications received by 45 States in 2003 and 954 applications received by 30 States in 1999.

35. Comparing the data from the States which responded to both the 2021 and 2015 studies,<sup>18</sup> there has been a 4% decrease in the number of return applications, though a 3% increase in the number of return applications to States who responded to both the 2021 and 2008 studies.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Note: information was not available from Belize, Greece, Honduras, Poland, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Seychelles for 2019, 2020 and 2022.

<sup>15</sup> This was calculated using information from outgoing cases (Forms A1 and B1) and an estimate of applications between States that did not respond to the Study. This can be compared with responses from 76 Contracting States for the 2015 Study, 60 Contracting States in 2008, 58 Contracting States in 2003 and 39 Contracting States in the 1999 Study.

<sup>16</sup> As we did not receive responses from all the Contracting States, we have estimated the total number of applications actually made in 2021. To do this we have used the data collected on outgoing applications which were sent to the Contracting States who did not respond to this Study and added to this an estimate of the number of applications between Contracting States for whom we have no information.

<sup>17</sup> 4 States, Andorra, Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Seychelles, reported having received no return applications in 2021.

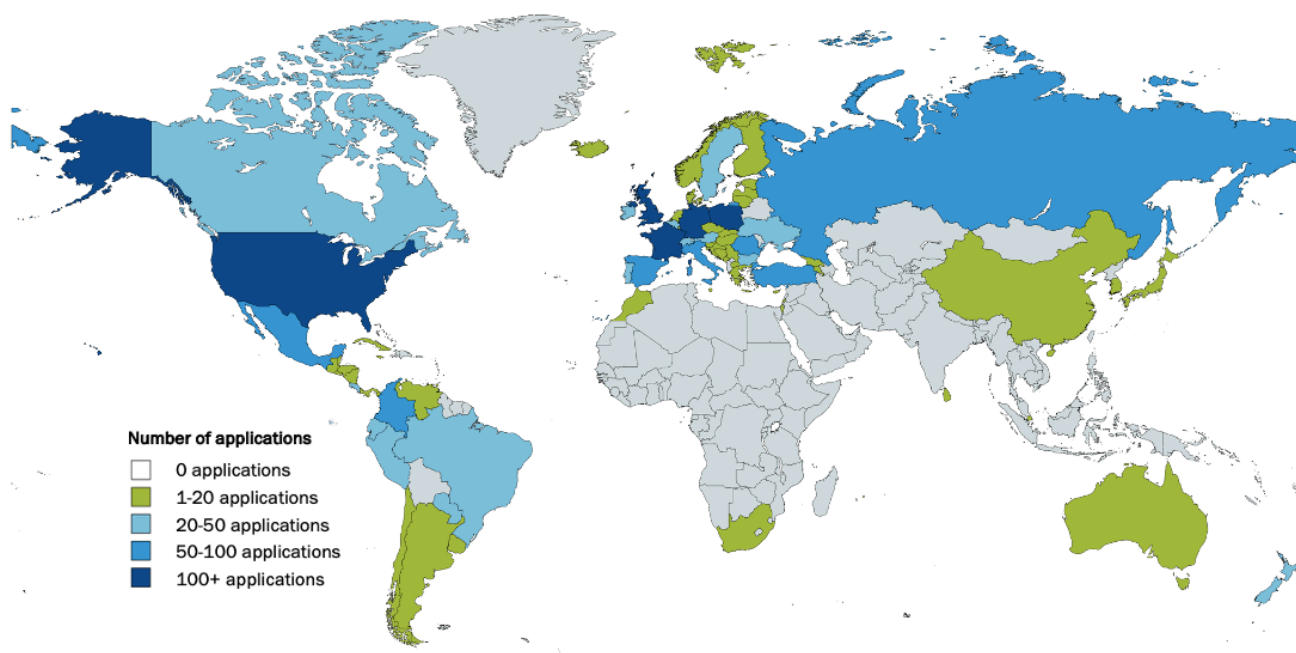
<sup>18</sup> Namely, those States listed at n. 8 above.

<sup>19</sup> Namely: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China (Hong Kong and Macao), , Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, , Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom (England and Wales, Isle of Man, Jersey, Northern Ireland and Scotland), Saintand United States.

36. Previously, the 2015 Study had found a marked decline in the rate of increase in return applications, with a 3% increase from 2008, in contrast to the 45% direct increase between 2003 and 2008.

37. Annex 2 compares the number of return applications received by States in 2021 with previous Studies. The States which received applications in 2021 can also be seen in the map below. It is worth highlighting the notable decline of return applications received by England and Wales (92 fewer applications in 2021 compared with 2015), Germany (55 fewer applications in 2021 compared with 2015) and Australia (30 fewer applications in 2021 compared with 2015). In contrast in 2021, Poland received 67 additional return applications, Costa Rica 25, and France 22 compared with 2015.

**The number of return applications received by each State in 2021**



38. As found in previous Studies, more return applications were received by the USA than by any other Central Authority (313 applications). Similarly reflecting previous Studies, England and Wales received the second highest number with 261 applications).<sup>20</sup> However, it is interesting to note that far fewer applications were sent than were received by the US Central Authority. In 2021 only 144 return applications came from the USA compared with 220 from Germany and 194 from UK – England and Wales.

39. By contrast, no incoming return applications were received by Andorra, by the Canadian Central Authorities of New Brunswick, North West Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, China (Macao), Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles, nor by the United Kingdom Central Authorities of Bermuda, Isle of Man and Jersey.

40. In 2021, 43% of the participating States received fewer incoming return applications than in 2015, 7% received the same number and 49% received more return applications. This can be seen in Annex 2. The States with the biggest changes in the number of incoming return applications were Poland (67 additional return applications) and the United Kingdom Central Authorities (106 fewer applications). In 2015, 39% of the responding States received an increased number of applications compared with 67% in 2008.

## 2. The taking person

### a. *The relationship between the taking person and the child*<sup>21</sup>

41. In 2021, 75% of taking persons were the mothers of the children involved in the application. This marks an increasing trend when compared with the 73% recorded in 2015, 69% in 2008 and 68% in 2003. 23% were fathers (compared with 24% in 2015, 28% in 2008 and 29% in 2003) and the remaining 2% involved grandparents, institutions

<sup>20</sup> The applications to England and Wales have been considered separately as the Central Authority received a considerably higher number of applications (169) compared with the Central Authorities in Scotland (12 applications) and Northern Ireland (7 applications).

<sup>21</sup> Information on the relationship between the taking person and the child was available in 2,065 applications.

or other relatives, such as step-parents or siblings. 17 return applications involved a same sex couple, comprising 5 female couples and 12 male couples compared with 7 such applications in 2015.

42. The proportion of applications involving taking mothers varied between States. Annex 3 shows this information in more detail.

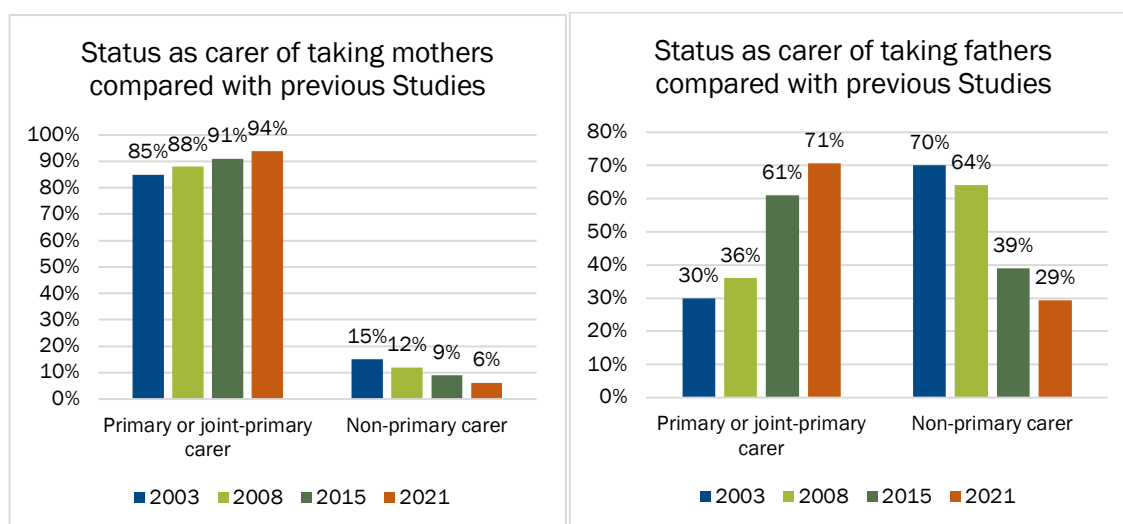
*b. The status of the taking person as carer to the child*

43. In line with the previous three Studies, the 2021 Study included a specific question on the status as carer of the taking person – whether they were the primary carer of the child, a joint-primary carer or non-primary carer.<sup>22</sup>

44. Not all participating Central Authorities recorded this information but for the 1,522 return applications in which it was available, 15% of the taking persons were said to be the child's sole primary carer, 73% a joint primary carer and 12% a non-primary carer.

45. Overall, 88% of taking persons in 2021 were the primary or joint-primary carer of the children involved. This can be compared with 80% in 2015, 72% in 2008 and 68% in 2003.

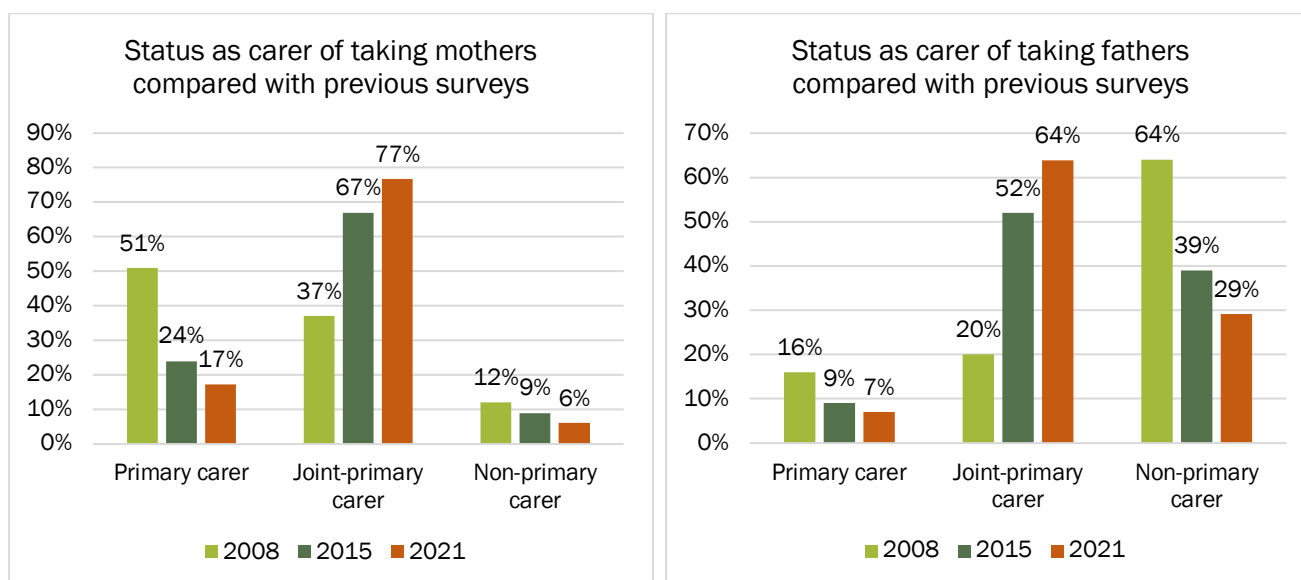
46. In earlier Studies a clear trend emerged that most taking mothers were primary or joint-primary carers of the children, whereas most taking fathers did not have primary care responsibilities.



47. However, in 2015 and 2021 there was a large decrease in taking fathers being non-primary carers. As can be seen in the graph below, this was due to a large increase in both parents being joint primary carers.

48. In 2021, 77% of the taking mothers were joint primary carers as against 67% in 2015 and 37% in 2008, while 64% of taking fathers were joint primary carers as against 52% in 2015 and 20% in 2008. This finding reflects a growing trend, at least in legal terms, of joint caring responsibilities between parents. Another way to read this new and most significant trend is that 77% of the left behind fathers were joint primary carers as against 67% in 2015 and 37% in 2008.

<sup>22</sup> The Guidance note accompanying the questionnaire advised 'The "non-primary carer" option will include the spectrum of individuals who have, for example, limited access rights to those with no care or contact nexus with a child. The 'caring status' refers to both that resulting from custody decisions and the de facto position (e.g. if the child lived with one parent the vast majority of the time they would be counted as the primary carer).



c. *The nationality of the taking person*

49. Previous studies found that a majority of taking persons travelled to a State of which they were a national. In such cases it is likely, although not necessarily so, that they are going to the State in which they were brought up or in which they have family ties.

50. The findings were relatively consistent in this regard, with 58% of applications involving a taking person who was “going home” in 2015, 60% in 2008, 55% in 2003 and 52% in 1999. It was therefore decided that in the interests of streamlining the questionnaire, the 2021 Study would not enquire about the nationality of the taking persona.

### 3. The children

51. It is estimated that at least 2,783 children were involved in the 2,191 return applications.<sup>23</sup> This equates to an average of 1.3 children per application, the same figure as in 2015 and compares with 1.4 children in 2008 and 2003 and 1.5 children in 1999.

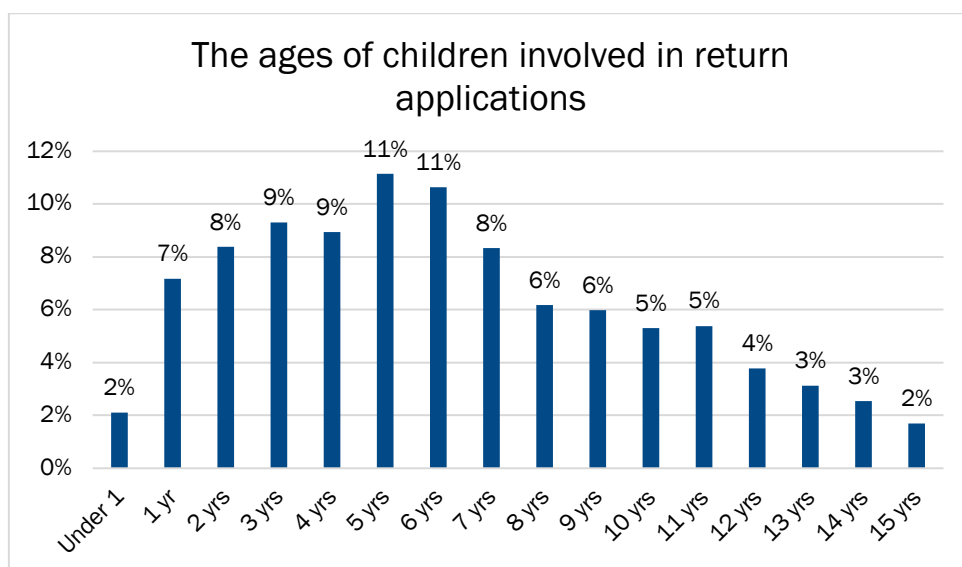
52. In 2021 the majority of applications involved just one child (74%) compared with 70% in 2015, 69% in 2008, 67% in 2003 and 63% in 1999.

a. *The age of the children*

53. In 2021 the average age of a child involved in a return application was 6.7 years. The table below shows the age distribution, with the greatest proportion of children aged 5-7 years.

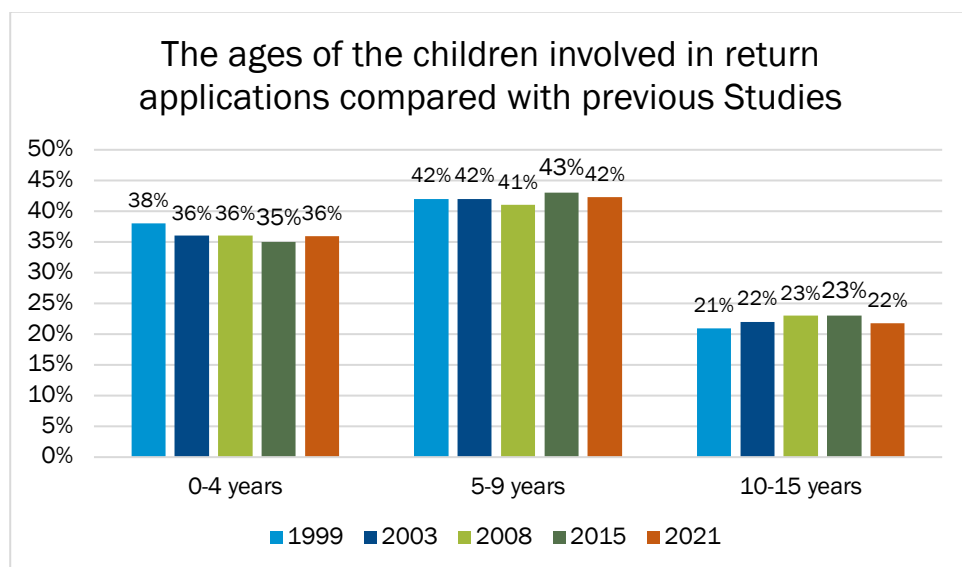
54. In 8 return applications the child was aged 16 or 17. These all ended in a rejection by the Central Authority, a refusal by the court or in the application being withdrawn.

<sup>23</sup> Data was available in 1,943 of the 2,191 return applications involving 2,534 children and at least one child must have been involved in the remaining 248 applications, making an estimated total of at least 2,783 children.



55. As can be seen in the table below, the average age of the children involved in return applications has remained relatively constant over past Studies. The average of 6.7 years in 2021 can be compared with 6.8 years in 2015, 6.4 years in 2008 and 6.3 years in 2003.

56. These findings are not without significance with regard to listening to children in child abduction proceedings and having regard to children's objections to returning.



57. Where the taking person was the mother of the child the average age was lower (6.4 years) compared with cases where the taking person was the father of the child (7.5 years). This was also the case in 2015 when the average ages were 6.1 years and 7.7 years and in 2008 when the averages were 6.0 years and 7.2 years, respectively.

*b. The gender of the children*

58. In previous Studies data was collected on the gender of the children involved in applications. In each year the results showed a more or less equal proportion of male and female children which remained relatively constant in each surveyed year (53% male and 47% female in 2015, 51% and 49%, respectively, in 2008, 49% and 51%, in 2003 and 53% and 47% in 1999.) Due to this consistency, this data was not requested in the 2021 Study.

#### 4. Outcomes

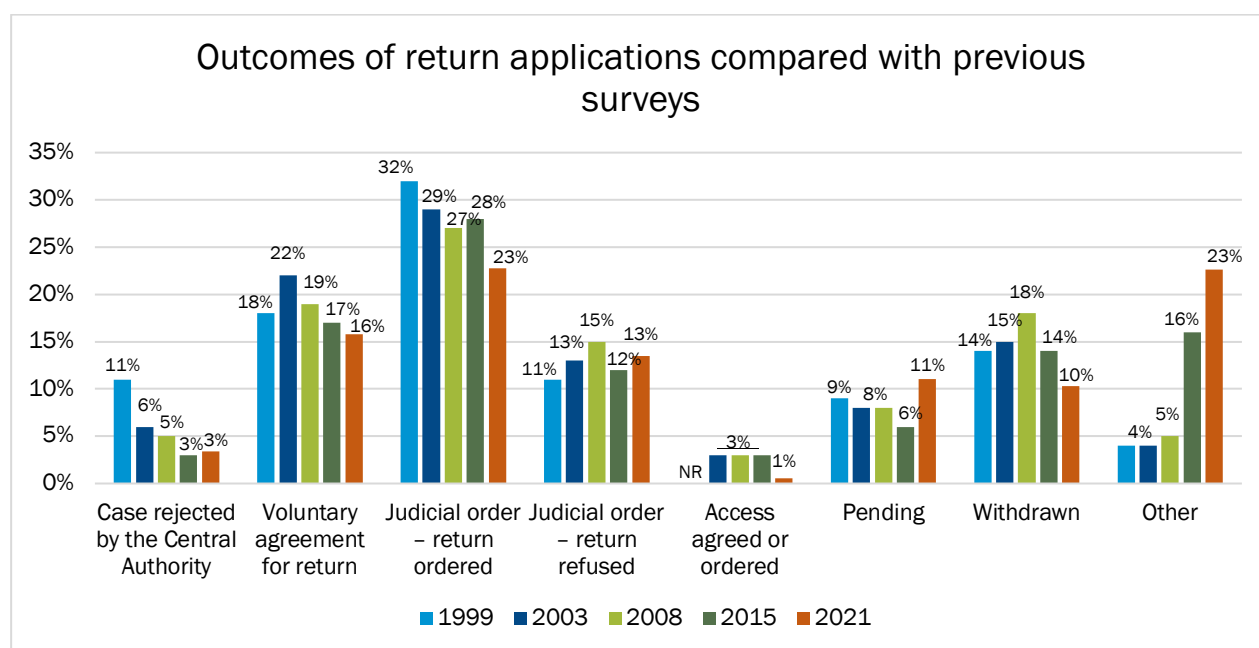
59. The following is an analysis of all return applications received by the participating Central Authorities in 2021, regardless of whether the outcome was reached in that year, or later, or even at all. Applications that were still unresolved on 30 June 2023 have been classed as "pending".

a. Overall outcomes

The outcomes of return applications received in 2021

	Frequency	Percentage
Case rejected by the Central Authority	71	3%
Voluntary agreement for return	333	16%
Judicial order – return ordered	481	23%
Judicial order – return refused	283	13%
Access agreed or ordered	12	1%
Pending	233	11%
Withdrawn	217	10%
Other	476	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,106</b>	<b>100%</b>

60. Detailed information on the outcome was available for 2,106 applications. The overall return rate was 39% comprising 333 voluntary agreements (whether or not as a result of a formal agreement and which could have been made prior to, during or outside of court proceedings) to a return and 480 judicial orders for return.



61. This overall return rate of 39% is a marked decrease on the rate recorded in previous Studies, namely, 45% in 2015, 46% in 2008, 51% in 2003 and 50% in 1999. This overall decline comprises both a decline in judicial returns (23% as against 28% in 2015, 27% in 2008, 29% in 2003 and 32% in 1999) and in voluntary returns (16% as against 17% in 2015, 19% in 2008, 22% in 2003 and 18% in 1999). On the other hand, an additional 6% (117 applications) ended in a voluntary agreement between the parties for the child to remain in the Requested State. These 'voluntary agreements for non-return' have been recorded as 'Other'.

62. A significantly higher proportion of applications remained pending at the cut-off date of 30 June 2023 (11% as against 6% in 2015, 5% in 2008 and 9% in 2003 and 1999). A significant proportion of applications ended in "other" outcomes (23% compared with 16% in 2015). These applications ended in a range of outcomes. As mentioned above, 117 applications (6% of all applications) ended in a voluntary agreement for non-return, 178 applications were closed due to inaction from the applicant (8%), and in 85 applications the child was not traced, traced to another Contracting State or a non-Contracting State (4%). The outcome of the remaining applications described as 'other' were varied, including a substantive judgment being reached by a court in the State of habitual residence, the child reaching the age of 16, the applicant's death, multiple outcomes for different children, or a judicial order that was neither a return nor a refusal to return (for example, an agreement for the child to spend 6 months in each country per year).

63. Previous Studies collected information on whether judicial orders were made with the consent of the parties. This question applies mainly to common law jurisdictions and so was not possible to answer for many States. As a result, the question was dropped from the 2021 Study. In 2015 it was found that 21% of judicial orders for return were made with the consent of the parties, 57% involved an order without consent, and in the remaining 22% the consent of the parties was unknown. This can be compared with 24%, 55% and 20%, respectively, in 2008.

*b. The final outcomes in which there was an agreement concerning the return or non-return of the child*

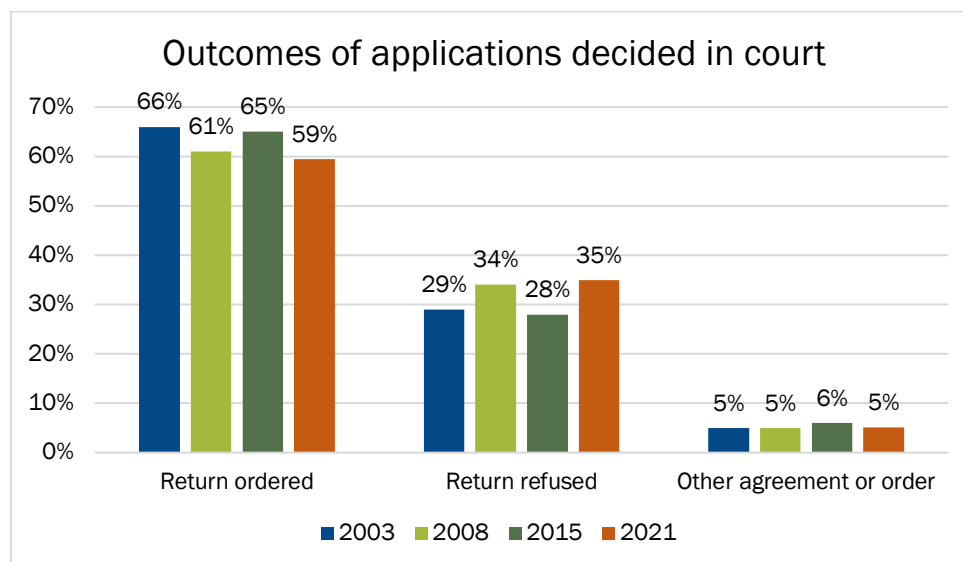
64. In total, 22% of all return applications reported ended in an outcome with the agreement of the parties.<sup>24</sup> In reality this figure is probably even higher as some cases will have been withdrawn due to the parties reaching a settlement without the knowledge of the Central Authority. Further orders for return may have been made with consent.

65. An important point that became clear in this Study was that not all voluntary agreements are for the return of the child. In 2021, 333 applications ended in a voluntary agreement to return but a further 12 ended in an agreement granting access to/contact with the child (including agreements and court orders for access) and 117 ended in an agreement to remain in the Requested State (recorded as “other”). Although agreements for the child to remain in the requested State were referred to the 2015 Study, no specific figures were given, but it is clear that this finding in the 2021 Study represents a sizeable increase in such agreements.<sup>25</sup>

*c. The return applications which went to court*

66. 808 return applications reported by the Central Authorities were decided in Court (38% of all return applications in which information on the outcomes was available). This is lower than in past Studies compared with 43% of applications being decided in court in 2015, 44% in 2008 and 2003 and 43% in 1999.

67. Of the return applications received in 2021 that were decided in court, 59% ended in a return, 35% in a refusal and 5% in other voluntary agreements or judicial orders. An additional 3 applications went to court but were closed due to the applicant’s inaction and two ended because the court found that the child was not present/located in the Requested State. As the graph below shows, when comparing these findings with previous Studies, it can be seen that in 2021 the return rate was the lowest and the refusal rate, the highest.



68. In 1999, information was not recorded on outcomes ending in access orders but for the applications that were decided in court 74% ended in a return and 26% in a refusal.

*d. Variation of outcomes per participating Central Authority*

<sup>24</sup> This proportion is based on the number of applications which the outcome was a voluntary agreement to return or where it was specified by the Central Authorities that the agreement was consensual (e.g. both parties agreed to withdraw the application or for the child not to return to the state of habitual residence.)

<sup>25</sup> Instead, they were included in a general group of 84 return applications which ‘mostly’ comprised agreements for the child to remain in the Requested State, see para.61 of the 2015 Global Report (Prel Doc 11A of February 2018).



69. Annex 4 shows the variation of outcomes of applications for each participating Central Authority. For example, compared with the global 39% return rate, there was a notably high proportion of returns in Canada – Alberta (88%, 7 out of 8 applications the received), Slovenia (86%, 6 out of 7), South Africa (75%, 9 out of 12), Iceland (71%, 5 out of 7), New Zealand (71%, 17 out of 24) and Austria (70%, 19 out of 27).

70. Regarding judicial refusals, a high proportion of applications were refused by the courts in, for example, Serbia (53%, 9 out of 17), Bulgaria (44%, 11 out of 25) and Lithuania (38%, 6 out of 16).

71. In 43 participating Central Authorities, all applications had reached a final outcome by the cut-off date of 30 June 2023. However, for others, a high proportion of applications were still pending, including 86% in Ecuador (25 out of 29 applications received), 56% in Guatemala (5 out of 9) and 42% in Mexico (40 out of 96).

e. *Return applications where access was agreed or ordered*

72. Relatively few applications were recorded as ending with an access order or agreement for access. In 2021, 12 applications (1%) ended this way, as against 3% in 2015, 2008 and 2003.

f. *Withdrawn return applications*

73. The proportion of applications that was withdrawn was 10% in 2021. This was the lowest recorded in the five studies compared with 14% in 2015, 18% in 2008, 15% in 2003 and 14% in 1999.

74. The reasons for withdrawal were not always stated but, where they were given, they were varied, for example, the taking person had left the Requested State; a custody award was made by the Requesting State's domestic court; or the child was returned to the Requesting State.

g. *The reasons for rejection of applications by the Central Authority*

75. Under Article 27 Central Authorities are not bound to accept applications where the requirements of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention are not fulfilled (e.g., the child involved is over 16) or if the application is otherwise not well founded.

76. In 2021, 71 applications were rejected by the participating Central Authorities in the Requested State (3% of all applications). This can be compared with 3% in 2015, 5% in 2008, 6% in 2003 and 11% in 1999.

77. Rejection rates vary between States and practices regarding rejections may depend on individual Central Authority policy, as well as experience with the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. For example, 46 of the participating Central Authorities did not reject any of the return applications they received in the period tracked, but a significant proportion of applications were rejected by the Spanish Central Authority (30%, 21 out of 71 applications).

78. Detailed reasons for rejection were not recorded in the questionnaire though some Central Authorities stated the reasons in the comments section, these included: the child being located in other country, the Convention not being in force between the Requesting and Requested States, the applicant not providing all necessary documents, the child reaching the age of 16, the left behind parent having no rights of custody, or the fact that the child and mother had already been living in requested state for over 3 years at the time of the application.

79. Further, some Requesting Central Authorities may reject applications before sending them to the Requested Central Authority, though we do not have any information on such cases.

h. *The reasons for judicial refusal*

80. The 1980 Child Abduction Convention provides in Articles 3, 12, 13 and 20, conditions for and exceptions to the obligation to make a return order by which *judicial* authorities may rely upon.

81. The reasons for refusal were known in 240 of the 283 refused return applications. Before analysing the data, it should be pointed out that information was only sought on the reasons cited in return applications that ended in a refusal. In other words, the data does not reveal how often the exceptions were argued unsuccessfully nor do they include those cases where an exception was made out, but the court nevertheless exercised its discretion to make a return order.

82. The table below shows the reasons for which applications were refused in 2021 (as a percentage of the 240 applications in which the reasons for refusal were informed). The most common sole reason for refusal was Article 13(1)(b) (29%) followed by the child not being habitually resident in the Requesting State (13%).



**The sole reason for judicial refusal per application in 2021**

	Frequency	Percentage
Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	33	14%
Applicant had no rights of custody	9	4%
Art. 12 (settlement of the child)	28	12%
Art. 13(1)(a) (applicant not exercising rights of custody)	1	0%
Art. 13(1)(a) (consent)	13	5%
Art. 13(1)(a) (acquiescence)	5	2%
Art. 13(1)(b) (grave risk)	66	28%
Art. 13(2) (child's objections to return)	26	11%
Art. 20 (human rights)	2	1%
More than one reason	57	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100%</b>

83. As can be seen from the table above, a significant proportion of applications that ended in judicial refusal were refused for multiple reasons (24%). The table below combines all these reasons for refusal to show the frequency at which each exception to return was cited.

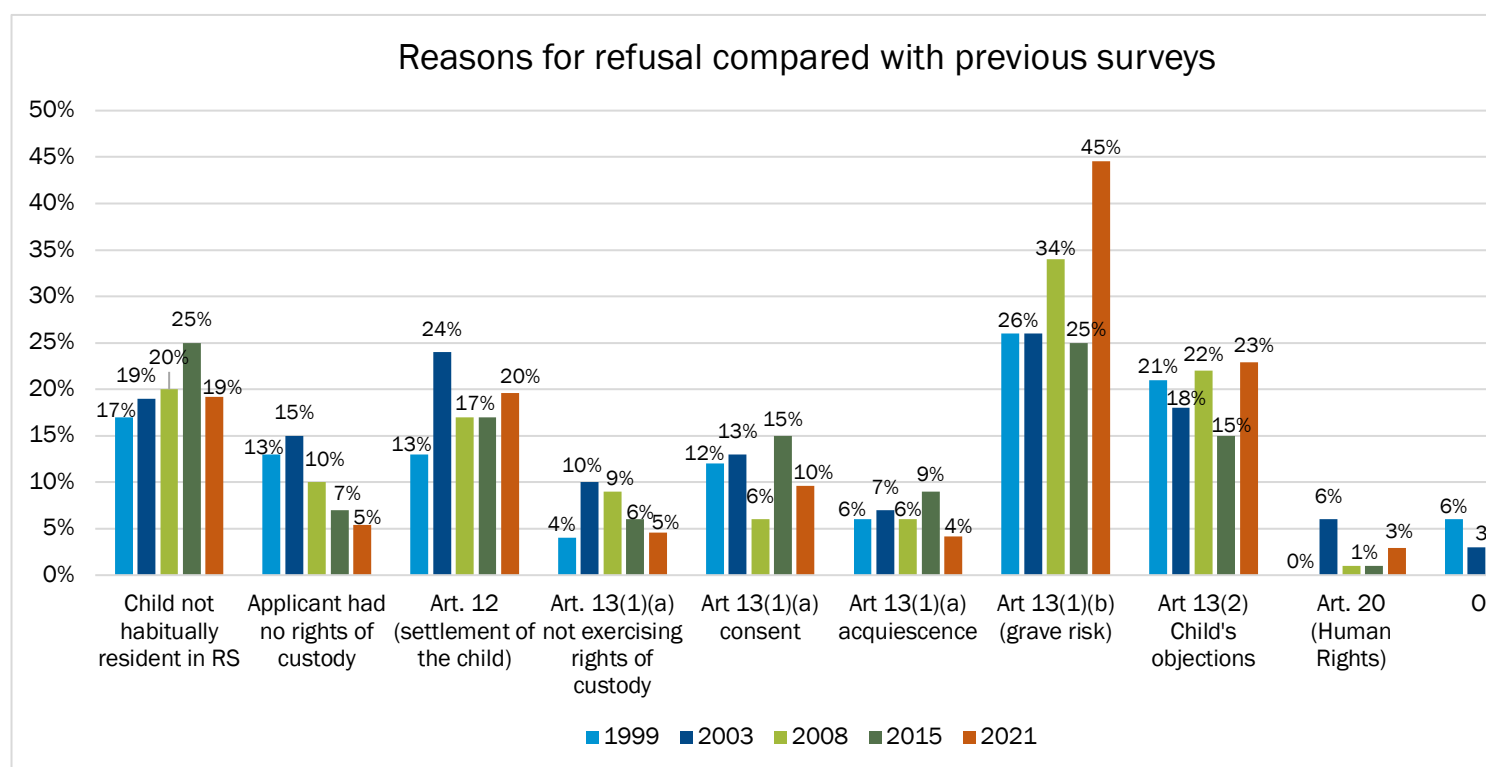
**The combined sole and multiple reasons for judicial refusal**

	Frequency	Percentage
Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	46	19%
Applicant had no rights of custody	13	5%
Art. 12 (settlement of the child)	47	20%
Art. 13(1)(a) (applicant not exercising rights of custody)	11	5%
Art. 13(1)(a) (consent)	23	10%
Art. 13(1)(a) (acquiescence)	10	4%
Art. 13(1)(b) (grave risk)	107	45%
Art. 13(2) (child's objections to return)	55	23%
Art. 20 (human rights)	7	3%
<b>Total number of reasons</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>133%</b>
<b>Total number of Applications</b>	<b>240</b>	

84. The table and graph below compare these findings with previous Studies. It is clear that there was a large increase (45% as against 25% in 2015, 34% in 2008 and 26% in each of 2003 and 1999) in the proportion of cases in which Article 13(1)(b) was relied upon in whole or in combination with other reasons.

## The combined reasons for refusal (sole and multiple reasons) in applications received in 2021 and previous Studies

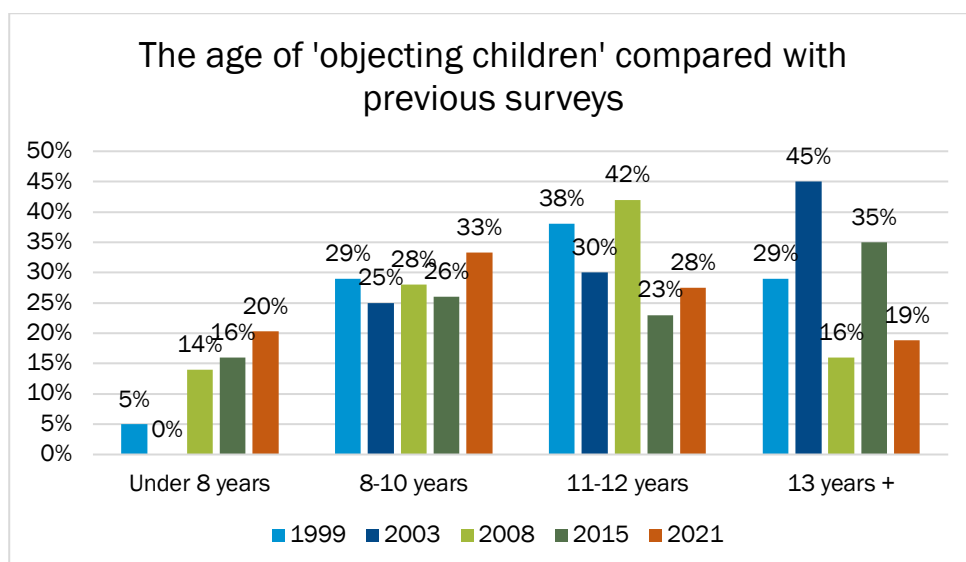
	1999		2003		2008		2015		2021	
Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	17	17%	27	19%	53	20%	46	25%	46	19%
Applicant had no rights of custody	13	13%	22	15%	28	10%	13	7%	13	5%
Art. 12 (settlement of the child)	13	13%	34	24%	46	17%	32	17%	47	20%
Art. 13(1)(a) (applicant not exercising rights of custody)	4	4%	15	10%	23	9%	11	6%	11	5%
Art. 13(1)(a) (consent)	12	12%	19	13%	16	6%	28	15%	23	10%
Art. 13(1)(a) (acquiescence)	6	6%	10	7%	17	6%	16	9%	10	4%
Art. 13(1)(b) (grave risk)	26	26%	38	26%	91	34%	47	25%	107	45%
Art. 13(2) (child's objections to return)	21	21%	26	18%	58	22%	27	15%	55	23%
Art. 20 (human rights)	0	0%	8	6%	2	1%	2	1%	7	3%
Other	6	6%	5	3%	8	3%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Number of reasons</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>119%</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>142%</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>127%</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>120%</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>134%</b>
<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>99</b>		<b>144</b>		<b>269</b>		<b>185</b>		<b>240</b>	



### i. The child's objections and the age of the child

85. In 2021, at least 77 children were involved in the 55 return applications in which the child's objections were the sole or partial reason for the refusal. Based on the 69 children whose age was known the average age was 9.9 years. The youngest child was under 1 year (though with an older sibling aged 14). Three applications involved children aged 4 and 5 without older siblings. The eldest children involved in such applications were aged 15 and 16.

86. The following table compares the ages of children involved in return applications in which there was a judicial refusal based (in whole or in part) on their objections. In 2021 there was an increase in the number of children under the age of 8, though it should be noted that of these 14 cases involving children under the age of 8, 6 cases also involved older siblings.



ii. *The reasons for judicial refusal and the relationship between the taking person and the child*

87. In contrast to the previous Studies, whether the taking person was the mother or the father of the child did not have a significant impact on whether the return application ended in a judicial order for refusal. Where the taking person was the mother of the child, 14% of applications were refused, compared with 13% if the taking person was the father. In 2015 the figures were 12% and 9% respectively; 17% and 11% in 2008 14% and 9% in 2003; and 7% and 11% in 1999.

88. The relationship between the taking person and the child did, however, have an impact on the reasons for refusal, as can be seen in the table below. The Article 13(1)(b) exception was more likely to be relied upon if the taking person was the mother of the child (47%, compared with 39% where the taking person was the father). By contrast, return applications in which the taking person was the father were more likely to be refused on the basis of the child's objections (32%, compared with 21% if the taking person was the mother of the child) or the child not being habitually resident in the Requesting State (30% compared with 16%).

**The reasons for refusal and the relationship between the taking person and the child**

	Mother		Father	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	28	16%	17	30%
Applicant had no rights of custody	8	4%	3	5%
Art. 12 (settlement of the child)	38	21%	9	16%
Art. 13(1)(a) (applicant not exercising rights of custody)	8	4%	3	5%
Art. 13(1)(a) (consent)	17	9%	6	11%
Art. 13(1)(a) (acquiescence)	7	4%	3	5%
Art. 13(1)(b) (grave risk)	84	47%	22	39%
Art. 13(2) (child's objections to return)	37	21%	18	32%
Art. 20 (human rights)	6	3%	1	2%
<b>Number of reasons</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>129%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>144%</b>
<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>180</b>		<b>57</b>	

iii. *The reasons for judicial refusal and the "caring status" of the taking person*

89. Of the 283 return applications that ended in a judicial refusal in 2021, the "caring status" of the taking person in relation to the child was known in 201. In 184 of these cases the taking person was the primary or joint-primary carer of the child and only 17 were a non-primary carer (92% and 9%, respectively). In 2015, 91% of judicial refusals involved a taking person who was the primary or joint-primary carer of the child and 77% in 2008.

90. Both the reasons for refusal and the status as carer of the taking person were known in 181 applications. The table below shows the reasons for refusal in these applications. With the important caveat that only a small number of cases involving non-primary carers were recorded, one stand-out difference is that the return of the child was more likely to be refused based on the child being settled in the Requested State (Article 12) or the child's objections if the taking person was not a primary carer. The stand-out difference noted in the 2015 Study, namely, the absence of refusals based on non-habitual residence in the case of non-primary carers was not replicated in this Study.

**The reasons for refusal and the status as carer of the taking person**

	Primary or joint-primary carer		Non-primary carer	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	28	17%	3	19%
Applicant had no rights of custody	9	5%	0	0%
Art. 12 (settlement of the child)	33	20%	5	31%
Art. 13(1)(a) (applicant not exercising rights of custody)	7	4%	0	0%
Art. 13(1)(a) (consent)	20	12%	1	6%
Art. 13(1)(a) (acquiescence)	6	4%	0	0%
Art. 13(1)(b) (grave risk)	75	46%	6	38%
Art. 13(2) (child's objections to return)	32	20%	8	50%
Art. 20 (human rights)	7	4%	0	0%
<b>Number of reasons</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>131%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>144%</b>
<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>166</b>		<b>16</b>	

## 5. Appeals

91. In 2021, 359 of the reported return applications involved an appeal, amounting to 42% of the 856 return applications which went to court. This is a significant increase compared with 31% in 2015 and 24% in 2008.

92. 320 of these applications involved one level of appeal (89%), 34 were appealed twice (9%) and 5 involved 3 levels of appeal (1%). The time taken to conclude these applications is analysed in more detail below (see Section D.6.e).

93. Of the appealed applications, 46% ended in a judicial order for return, 39% in a judicial order refusing return, 9% were pending and the remaining 7% ended in some other outcome including an order for access, a voluntary agreement for return or non-return, or the case being withdrawn by the appellant after the launching of the appeal. In 2015, comparatively, 54% of the appealed applications ended in a return, 29% in a refusal, 11% were pending and the remaining 6% ended in some other outcome.

94. The outcome of the case at first instance and the final decision was known in 244 applications, 81% of such cases ended in the same outcome on appeal as at first instance. This can be compared with 67% in 2015 and 80% in 2008.

95. For applications ending in a judicial return, 86% of appeals confirmed this decision, compared with 71% in 2015 and 78% in 2008. Where applications ended in a judicial refusal, 78% of appeals confirmed the first instance decision, compared with 48% in 2015 and 82% in 2008.

## 6. Timing

96. Timing is a key issue when considering the successful operation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. Article 1(a) states that the object of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention is to secure the prompt return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in another Contracting State. Article 2 instructs Contracting States to use "the most expeditious procedures available" to attain the Convention's objectives.

97. Furthermore, Article 11(2) provides that applicants or Central Authorities of the Requesting State have the right to request the reasons for delay of their application when a decision has not been reached within six weeks from the date of the commencement of the proceedings.

98. Note might also be taken of the stronger obligation on EU Member States (except Denmark) to complete court proceedings within six weeks, imposed by Article 11 (3) of the Brussels II a Regulation. Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, repealing Regulation (EC) No 1347/2000. With effect from 1 August 2022 (and therefore outside the period of this Study), this Regulation was superseded by Council Regulation (EU) 2019 /1111 of 25 June 2019, on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility (recast). Article 24 of this Regulation provides for separate periods of 6 weeks for disposing, save in exceptional circumstances, first instance and appellate proceedings. This is discussed further in Part II of this Report (the Regional Reports, Part A. Brussels II a Regulation).

*a. The timing between the date the application was received by the Central Authority and final outcome*

99. Data on overall timing was available for 1,146 applications. The mean number of days to arrive at a final settlement was 207 days, from the date at which the application was received by the Central Authority, which is longer than the 164 days recorded in 2015 and the 188 days in 2008.<sup>26</sup>

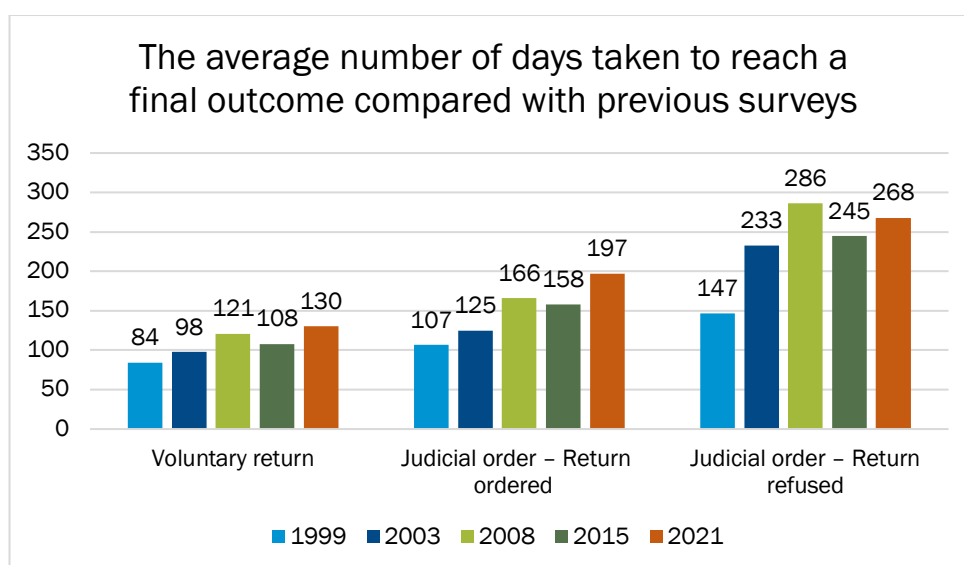
100. The time taken to reach a final decision varied considerably depending on the outcome, as can be seen from the table below. The table below shows the mean average time taken from the receipt of the application by the Central Authority until the final agreement or court decision, including any appeals.

**The average number of days taken to reach certain outcomes in 2021**

	Voluntary Return	Judicial return	Judicial refusal
Mean	130	197	268
Minimum	2	5	29
Maximum	630	751	777

101. As in previous Studies, voluntary returns were resolved most quickly, followed by judicial returns and then judicial refusals.

102. Additionally, 233 applications remained pending at the cut-off date of 30 June 2023. This means that these applications would have taken at least 18 months and up to two and a half years to resolve (547-913 days).



<sup>26</sup> For a detailed breakdown of the findings, see Annex 7.

103. Of the applications that were decided in court, the average time taken to reach a decision was 220 days, compared with 179 days in 2015 and 206 days in 2008. These figures include applications decided on appeal which will be discussed in more detail below (see Section D.6.e).

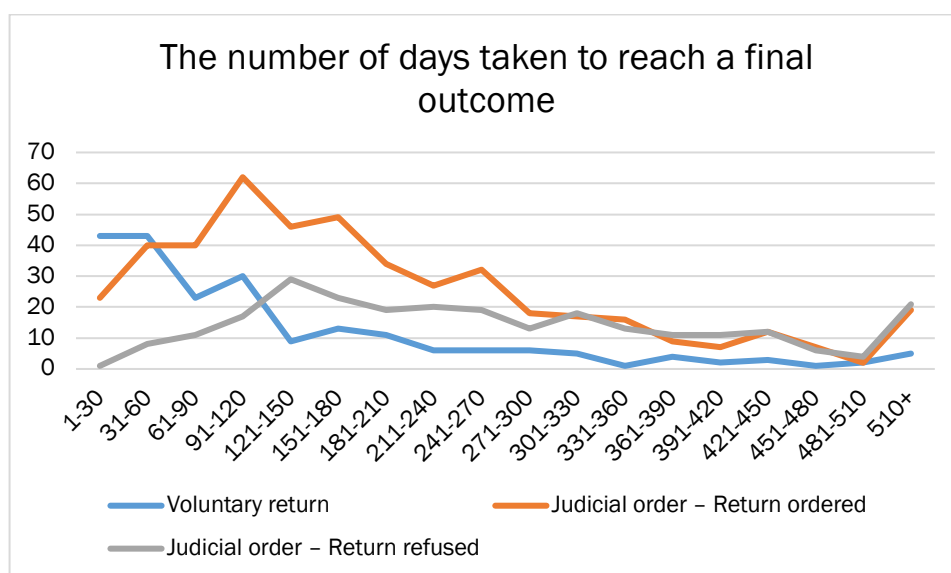
*b. Timing and the Contracting States*

104. There were, of course, significant differences between Contracting States in the time taken to determine applications. Annex 7 shows the average time taken to resolve applications and the Central Authorities which received them.

105. The applications received by some States were resolved relatively quickly, given the number of applications they received. For example, Austria (90 days, 20 applications), and the Czech Republic (105 days, 12 applications) With smaller numbers Norway (53 days, 8 applications) and Denmark (90 days, 8 applications). By contrast, applications received by Türkiye, Brazil, and Morocco took much longer to conclude (384 days, 14 applications; 363 days, 24 applications, and 334 days, 12 applications, respectively).

*c. Timing and outcomes*

106. The graph below shows how many applications were decided within time bands of 30 days.

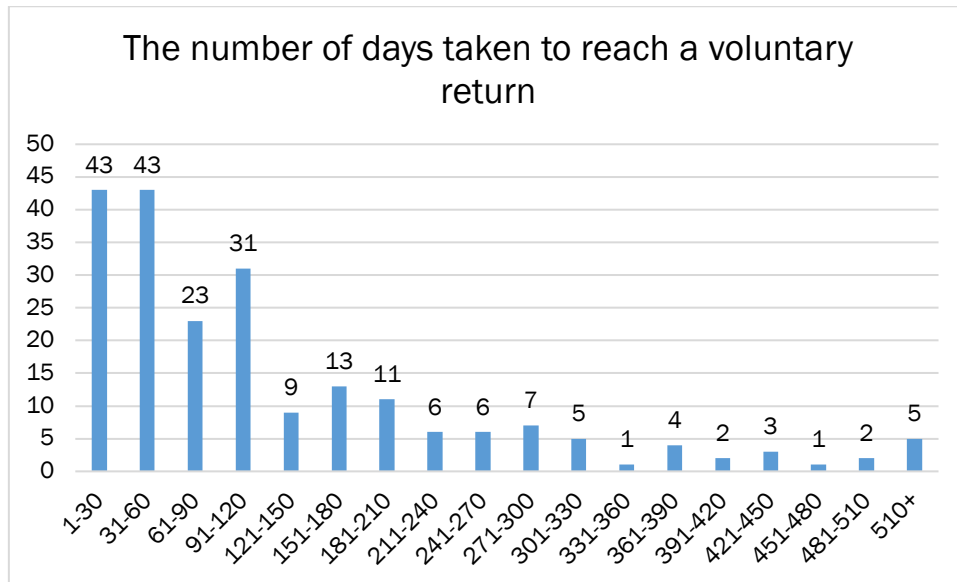


107. 319 applications took over 300 days to resolve (24%). This is higher than the 15% in 2015, 21% in 2008, 12% in 2003 and 5% in 1999. The table below analyses the applications ending in a voluntary return, judicial return or judicial refusal. It shows the number of applications ending in each outcome which took over 300 days to resolve.

**The number of applications taking over 300 days to resolve compared with previous Studies**

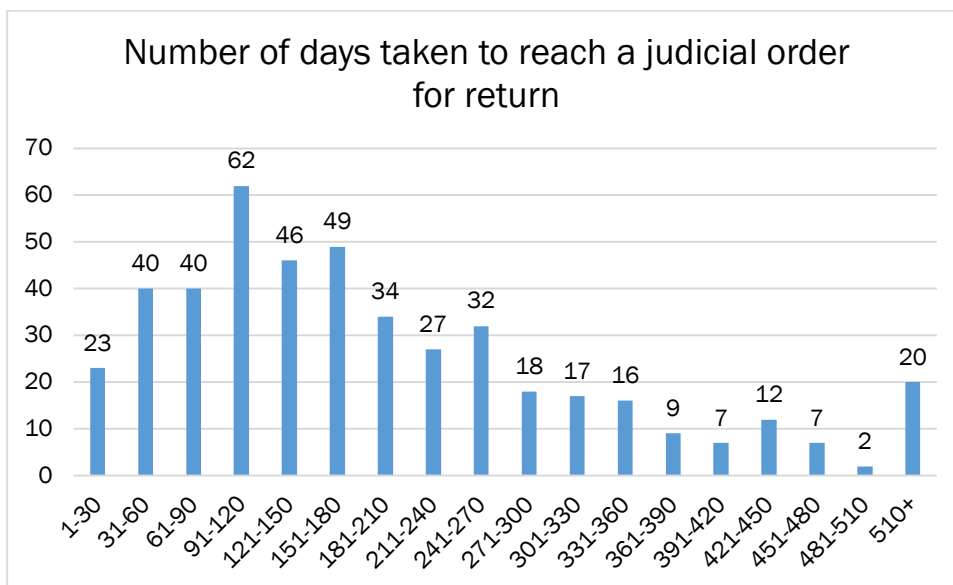
	1999	2003	2008	2015	2021
Voluntary return	8	7	21	17	23
Judicial return	12	25	77	67	90
Judicial refusal	6	45	101	54	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>209</b>

*i. Timing and voluntary returns*



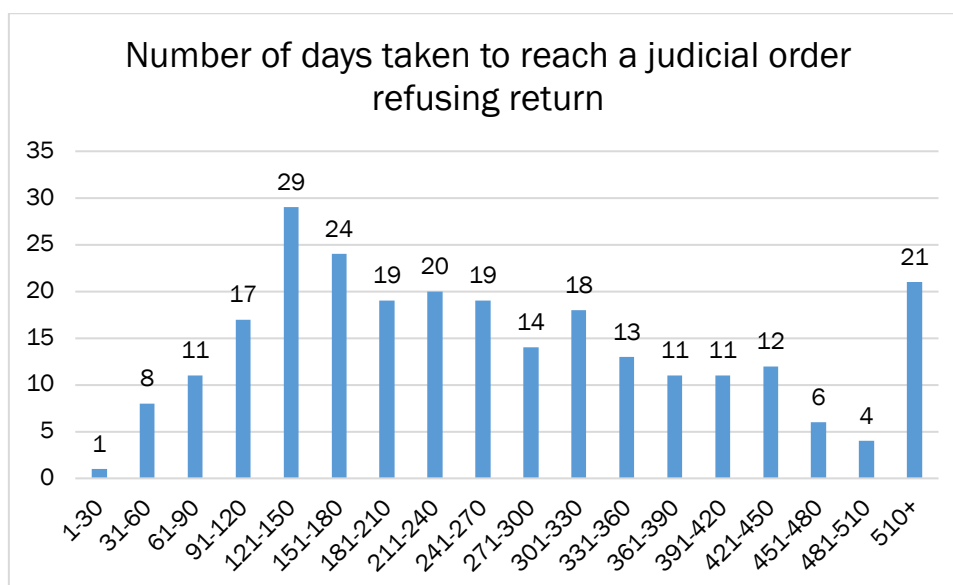
108. Of all outcomes, voluntary returns were, on average, resolved the most quickly with 51% concluded in 90 days or less. This can be compared with 61% in 2015, 58% in 2008, 60% in 2003 and 67% in 1999. Looking at applications resolved in fewer than 31 days, in 2021, 20% were resolved in this time compared with 31% in 2015, 24% in 2008, 34% in 2003 and 42% in 1999.

ii. *Timing and judicial return orders*



109. In line with the overall finding that applications took longer to resolve, in 2021 only 22% of applications ending in a judicial order for return were resolved in 90 days or less compared with 36% in 2015, 43% in 2008, 51% in 2003 and 59% in 1999.

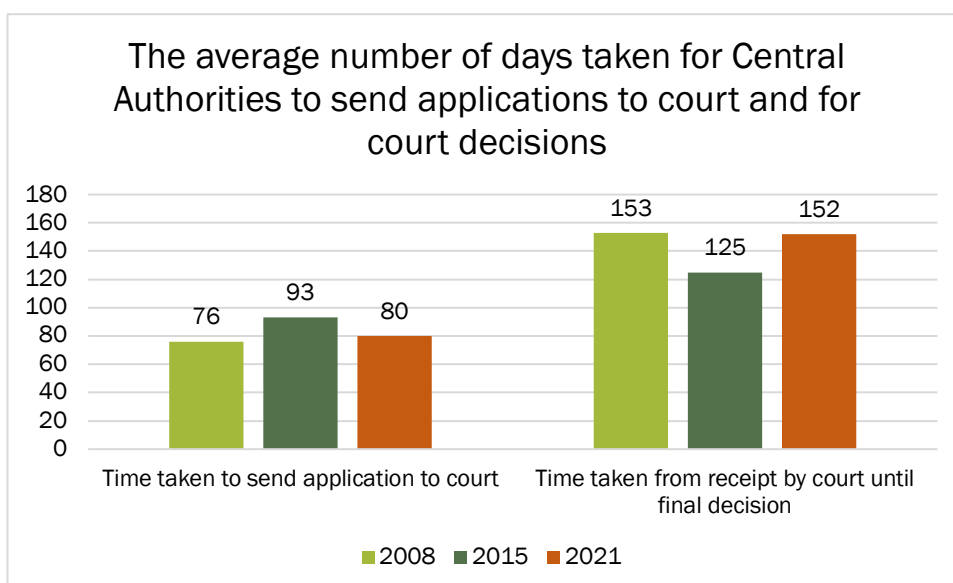
iii. *Timing and judicial refusals*



110. In 2021, only 8% of applications ending in a judicial order refusing return were concluded in 90 days or less compared with 13% in 2015, 15% in 2008 and 21% in 2003.

d. *The time taken for Central Authorities to send the application to court and the time taken for the court to dispose of the case*

111. In 2021, Central Authorities took an average of 80 days to send applications to court and the courts took a further 152 days on average to reach a final order.<sup>27</sup> The graph below shows the comparison with previous Studies.



112. Annex 8 provides average timings by the Central Authorities which received the applications. Some Central Authorities sent applications to court very quickly, even if they received a large number of applications. Notably, Austria took an average of 4 days (information available in 24 applications), Serbia 7 days (17 applications), Norway 9 days (11 applications). Chile 11 days (20 applications), Poland 24 days (91 applications), and New Zealand 26 days (19 applications). But the speediest of all was Montenegro which took an average of 1 day (10 applications) to send cases to court.

113. By contrast some Central Authorities took longer to send applications to court. In the USA the average was 156 days (information available in 124 applications), in the Russian Federation 156 days (19 applications), in Colombia 137

<sup>27</sup> Information on the date the application was sent to court was available in 964 applications and for the time taken from receipt by the court to final decision in 803 applications.



days (32 applications) and in Brazil 130 days (35 applications). But in each of these cases the recorded times were less than those recorded in 2015.

114. The average time that the national courts took to conclude applications also varied. Looking at Central Authorities that were able to provide information on 10 or more applications, cases were disposed of relatively quickly by the courts in Lithuania at an average of 82 days (11 applications), the Czech Republic in 91 days (10 applications), Austria in 96 days (18 applications), and in Germany 97 days (69 applications).

*e. Timing and appeals*

115. Appealed cases are likely to have taken longer to conclude due to both the time taken for more than one court hearing and the potential for complexity in the case. These decisions may skew the overall average time taken to reach a final settlement.

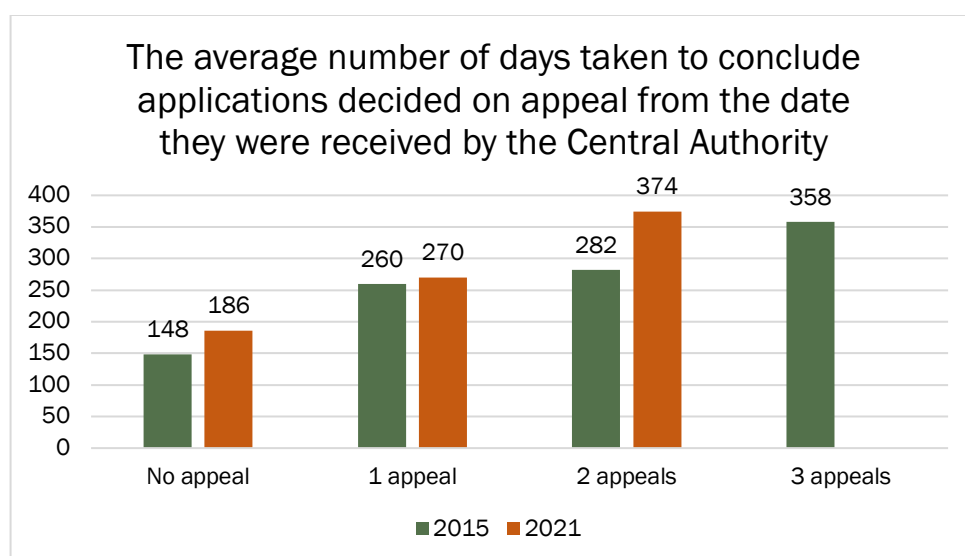
116. Overall, applications decided on appeal took an average of 278 days to conclude, from the date they were received by the Central Authority, compared with 266 days in 2015 and 324 days in 2008.<sup>28</sup>

**The average number of days taken to conclude an application decided on appeal**

	Judicial return	Judicial refusal
Mean	262	306
Minimum	34	47
Maximum	751	750
Number of applications	158	128

117. The table above compares the average time taken to reach a judicial return or judicial refusal. In 2015 and 2008 it also took longer to reach a judicial order refusing return than a judicial order for return.

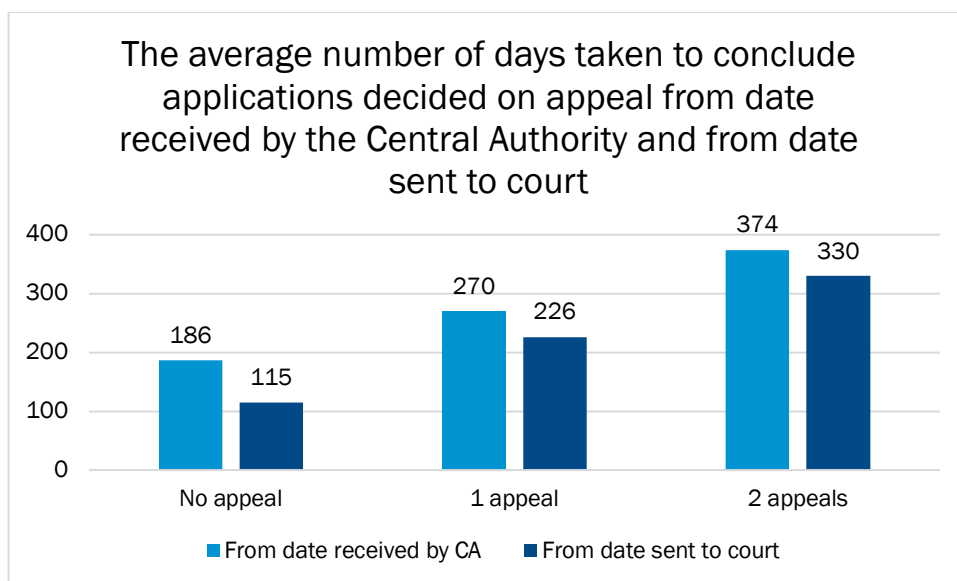
118. As can be seen from the graph below, the time taken also depended on how many times the application was appealed. No information was available for the five applications that were appealed three times as for two the Central Authority did not know the date of the final outcome and three remained pending. The majority of return applications (89%, 320 out of 359 appealed applications) involved only one appeal.



119. The graph below shows the time taken at different stages in the process depending on the number of times an application was appealed. This can be compared with the 2015 findings where applications which were appealed only once took an average of 260 days to conclude from the day they were received by the Central Authority (or 190 days from the day they were sent to court), applications which were appealed twice took 282 days (234 days from the date

<sup>28</sup> In 2021, information on the date the application was received and of the final decision was available in 308 applications decided on appeal.

they were sent to court) and applications appealed three times took an average of 358 days (264 days from the date they were received by the court).



## E. ACCESS APPLICATIONS

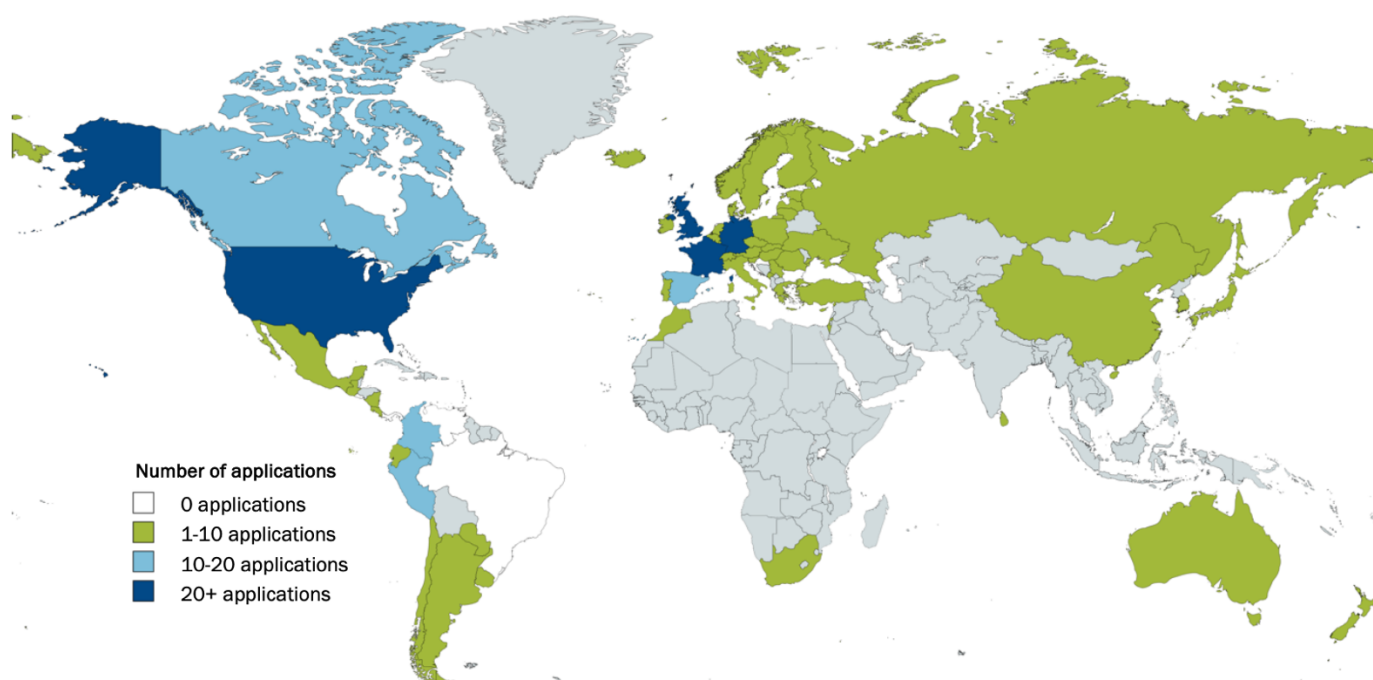
### 1. The number of access applications

120. Of the 77 States which responded to the Study in 2021, 57 States received a total of 399 access applications. This can be compared with 382 applications received by 47 States in 2015; 360 applications received by 42 States in 2008; 238 applications received by 27 States in 2003 and 197 applications received by 25 States in 1999.

121. When compared with the States that responded to the Study in both 2021 and 2015, there was a 1% increase in the number of access applications but almost exactly the same number of applications were received by States that responded to both the 2021 and 2008 Studies.

122. Overall, access applications made up 15% of all 2,590 applications under the 1980 Hague Convention in 2021 which is consistent with previous Studies (14% in 2015, 16% in both 2008 and 2003, and 17% in 1999).

#### The number of access applications received by each State in 2021



123. For the first time, the Central Authority which received the most access applications was United Kingdom - England and Wales (84 applications compared with 58 in 2015). This was followed by the USA which received 30 applications (compared with 66 in 2015, 46 in 2008 and 59 in 2003 and 44 in 1999) in 2003). By contrast, a number of States received no access applications.<sup>29</sup>

124. Annex 9 compares the number of access applications received by States in 2021 with previous Studies. Some States received a significantly large increase in access applications, compared with 2015 (United Kingdom - England and Wales, Peru, Spain) and some received much fewer (USA, Mexico and Japan).

125. Overall, 44% of States received more applications in 2021 compared with 2015, 23% received the same number and 33% received fewer applications.

### 2. The respondent

#### a. The relationship between the respondent and the child

<sup>29</sup> Andorra, Armenia, Brazil, Belize, Bulgaria, the Canadian Central Authorities of Alberta, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, North West Territories, Nova Scotia Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and Yukon, China (Macao) Croatia, Cuba, El Salvador, Georgia, Jamaica, Mauritius, Monaco, North Macedonia, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom Central Authorities of- Bermuda, Isle of Man and Northern Ireland, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

126. In 2021, 78% of respondents in access applications were the mothers of the children involved compared with 73% in 2015 and 79% in 2008 and 2003. 25% were fathers (compared with 26% in 2015, 19% in 2008 and 18% in 2003) and the remaining 6% involved grandparents, institutions or other relatives, such as step-parents or siblings.

*b. The status of the respondent as carer to the child*

127. Not all States were able to provide information on the status as carer of the respondent but for the 212 cases in which information was available, 66% of respondents were the child's sole primary carer, 33% a joint primary carer and only 1% a non-primary carer.

128. A higher proportion of respondent mothers were the primary carer of the child, compared with respondent fathers. 65% of mothers were the sole primary carer of the child, 35% a joint primary carer and 1% a non-primary carer. For respondent fathers, 69% were the sole primary carer, 28% a joint primary carer and 3% a non-primary carer.

129. In 2015 the respective findings were that 76% of respondent mothers were the primary carer, 20% a joint primary carer and 4% a non-primary carer,<sup>30</sup> and for respondent fathers, 53% were a primary carer, 22% a joint primary carer and 25% a non-primary carer.<sup>31</sup> Although, given the relatively low numbers on which particularly the findings relating to respondent fathers are based, some caution needs to be exercised when comparing the findings of the two Studies they do suggest a continuing trend towards joint parenting.

*c. The nationality of the respondent*

130. Previous studies found that around half of respondents travelled to a State of which they were a national. The findings were relatively consistent in this regard, with 58% of applications involving a taking person who travelled to a State of which they were national in 2015, 50% in 2008, 53% in 2003 and 40% in 1999. As a result, and in the interests of streamlining the questionnaire, the 2021 Study did not enquire about the nationality of the taking person.

### **3. The children**

131. At least 484 children were involved in the 399 access applications received in 2021,<sup>32</sup> making an average of 1.2 children per application, compared with 1.3 children in 2015 and 2008 and 1.4 in 2003 and 1999.

132. 74% of access applications involved just one child. This has been relatively consistent across past Studies and can be compared with 75% in 2015, 72% in 2008, 71% in 2003 and 69% in 1999.

*a. The age of the children*

133. In 2015 the average age of a child involved in an access application was 8.1 years compared with 8.0 years in 2015, 7.8 years in 2008 and 7.9 years in 2003. This includes four applications in which one of the children was age 16.

134. As in previous Studies, if the respondent was the mother of the child the average age was lower (8.1 years) compared with if the respondent was the father of the child (8.5 years), however, this was less pronounced than in previous Studies. In 2015 the average ages were 7.5 years and 9.2 years, respectively and 7.5 years and 9.1 years in 2008.

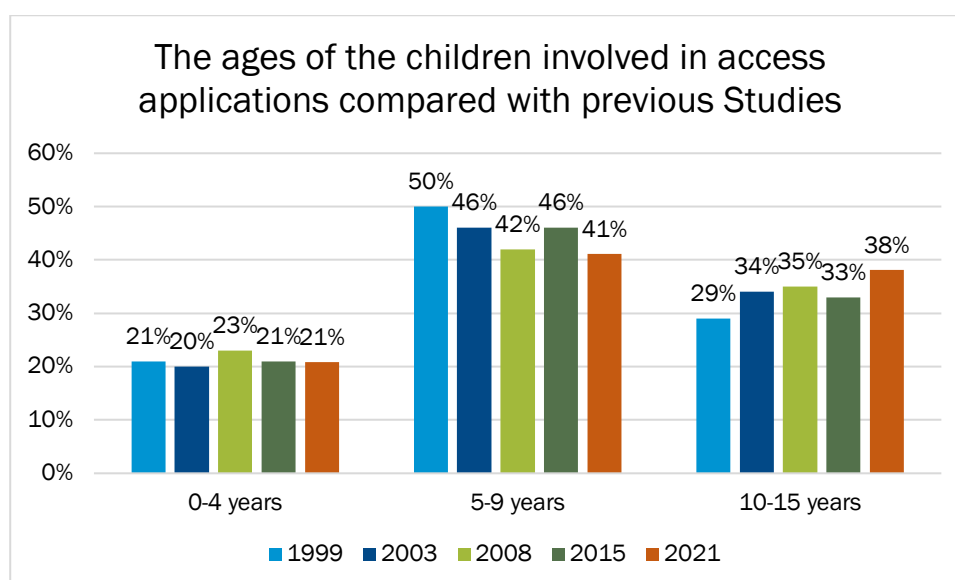
135. The graph below shows the age distribution of children involved in access applications in 2021, compared with previous Studies.

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<sup>30</sup> Based on 104 applications, 28 applications and 5 applications, respectively.

<sup>31</sup> Based on 19 applications, 8 applications and 9 applications, respectively

<sup>32</sup> Data was available in 304 of the 399 access applications involving 389 children and at least one child must have been involved in the remaining 95, making a total of 484 children.



*b. The gender of the children*

136. In previous Studies data was collected on the gender of the children involved in applications. In each year the results showed a more or less equal proportion of male and female children which remained relatively constant in each surveyed year (49% male and 51% female in 2015, 49% and 51%, respectively, in 2008, 55% and 45%, in 2003 and 50% and 50% in 1999.) Given this consistency and the desire to streamline the questionnaire, this data was not requested in the 2021 Study.

#### 4. Outcomes

137. The following is an analysis of all access applications received in 2021, regardless of whether the outcome in the cases was reached in that year, or later, or ever at all. Applications that were still unresolved on 30 June 2023 have been classed as “pending”.

*a. Overall outcomes*

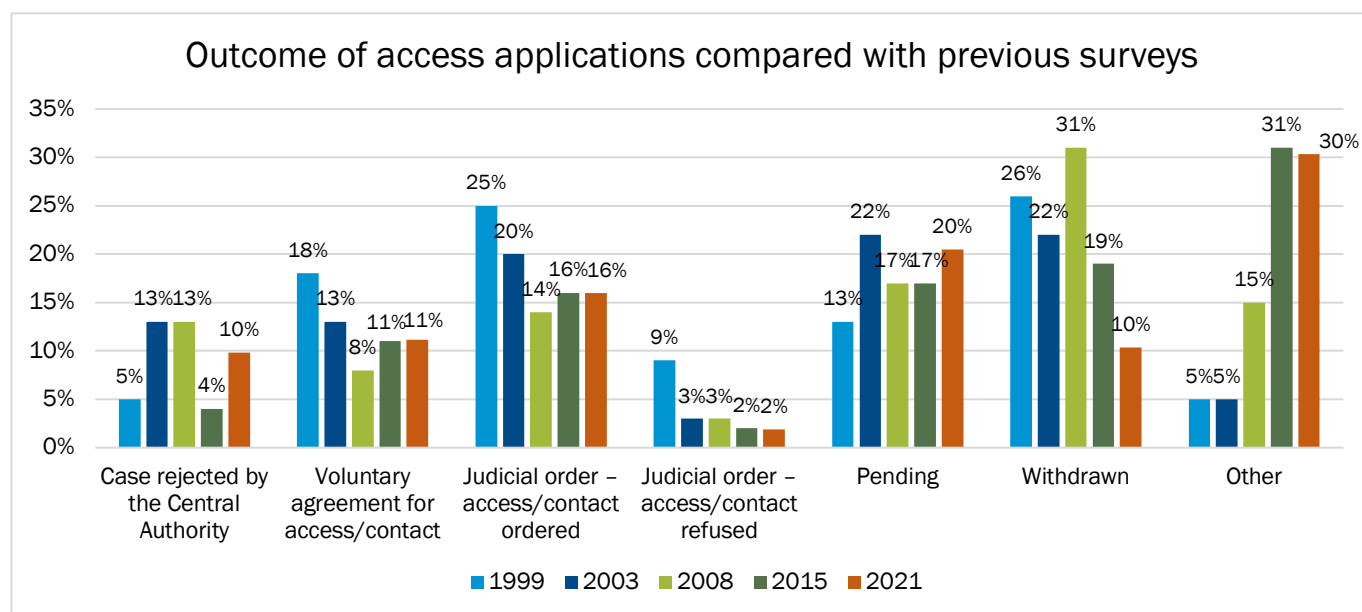
**The outcomes of access applications received in 2021**

	Frequency	Percentage
Case rejected by the Central Authority	37	10%
Voluntary agreement for access/contact	42	11%
Judicial order – access/contact ordered	60	16%
Judicial order – access/contact refused	7	2%
Pending	77	20%
Withdrawn	39	10%
Other	114	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>

138. The overall rate at which access was agreed or ordered was 27% in 2021, comprising 11% access agreements and 16% access orders. This can be compared with 27% in 2015, 21% in 2008 and 33% in 2003.

139. The graph below compares the outcomes in 2021 with those of previous Studies. As in 2015, a high proportion of applications ended in ‘Other’ outcomes. These outcomes included the case being decided on the merits in the State of habitual residence, the child not being traced or being traced to another country, the child turning 16, and a voluntary agreement for return. 36 of these applications (10% of all applications) ended due to the inaction of the applicant. Arguably, these applications could be placed in a similar category to those which were officially withdrawn. If these

“other” applications are added to the “withdrawn” applications the outcomes are closer to the 2008 Study, with 20% ending in a withdrawal and 21% in other outcomes.



140. In 2021, 75% of applications decided in court ended in an order for access. This can be compared with 88% in 2015, 81% in 2008, 87% in 2003 and 74% in 1999.

*b. Outcomes by the States which received the applications*

141. Annex 10 shows the outcomes of applications by the Central Authorities which received them. The overall rates at which access was agreed or ordered varied between States. For example, a relatively high proportion of applications ended in some form of access in applications received by Colombia (67%, 8 out of 12 applications),<sup>33</sup> and the United Kingdom – England and Wales (36%, 30 out of 84 applications), but a much lower proportion in applications received by Germany (8%, 2 out of 26 applications). In the other States that had relatively high numbers, the proportions were as follows: in France 26% (7, out 27 applications) and in the USA, 30% (9 out of 30 applications) ended in some form of access.

## 5. Appeals

142. Of the 85 applications decided in court, at least 7 decisions were appealed (8%), (although we suspect the actual number of appeals was higher as not all Central Authorities answered this question) lower than the 9% recorded in 2015 and 2008 and 11% in 2003.

## 6. Timing

*a. The timing between application and outcome<sup>34</sup>*

143. The average number of days to arrive at a final settlement in access applications was 301 days, compared with 254 days in 2015 and 339 days in 2008. In the four States with the most recorded timed cases, the outcome took an average 208 days in France (24 applications), 326 days in the United Kingdom – England & Wales (57 applications), 355 days in Germany (17 applications) and 472 days in the USA (10 applications).

144. As shown in the table below, the average time varied considerably depending on the outcome which was reached.

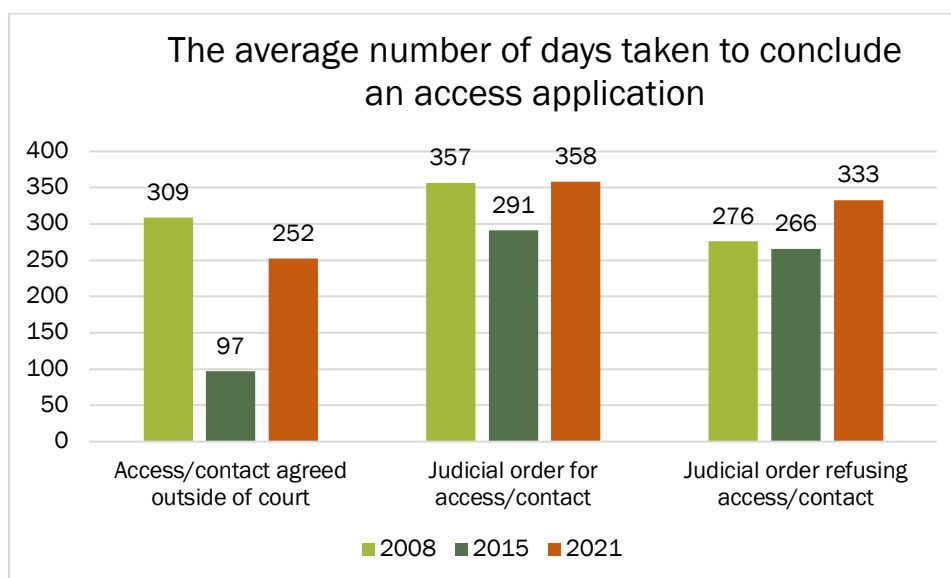
<sup>33</sup> See also Argentina (57%, 4 out of 7 applications), Mexico 50%, 3 out of 6 applications).

<sup>34</sup> Data was only available in 194 applications.

**The average number of days taken to reach different outcomes  
in access applications in 2021**

	Access agreed outside court	Access judicially granted	Access judicially refused
Mean	252	358	333
Minimum	27	9	107
Maximum	780	763	519
Number of applications	31	58	7

145. The graph below compares these findings with previous Studies.



*b. Timing and the Contracting States*

146. There were, of course, significant differences found between Contracting States. Annex 11 shows these differences in more detail.

*c. The time taken for Central Authorities to send the application to court and the time taken for the court to dispose of the case*

147. In 2021, Central Authorities took an average of 104 days to send an access application to court and the courts took a further 252 days on average to reach a final order.<sup>35</sup> In 2015 these figures were 119 and 173 days, respectively.

*d. Timing and appeals*

148. In 2021, it took an average of 385 days to reach a first instance decision from receipt by the court and 490 days to reach a decision on appeal, from the date the application was received by the Central Authority. This can be compared with 368 days and 433 days, respectively, in 2015.

## **F. COMPARISON BETWEEN RETURN AND ACCESS APPLICATIONS**

### **1. The number of applications**

<sup>35</sup> Based on 81 access applications sent to court and 53 applications where the date the application was filed in court and the date of the final decision were known.

149. As in previous Studies, the vast majority of applications made under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in 2021 were for return (85%). This was 86% in 2015.

150. 84 Contracting States are estimated to have received return applications in 2021 compared with 80 States in 2015, 68 in 2008 and 61 in 2003. By contrast, 62 are estimated to have received access applications compared with 49 States in 2015, 50 in 2008 and 40 in 2003.<sup>36</sup>

151. Annex 1 shows the return and access applications received by each State in 2021.

## **2. The taking person and the respondent**

152. In return applications 75% of taking persons were mothers and in access applications this proportion was 78%. In 2015, the proportion of taking or respondent mothers for both return and access applications was found to be 73%. In previous Studies a higher proportion of respondents in access applications were mothers compared with taking persons in return applications. In 2008, 69% of taking persons were mothers and 79% of access respondents, compared with 68% and 79%, respectively, in 2003.

## **3. The children**

153. The majority of both return and access applications involved just one child (74%). In previous Studies it was found that, access applications were slightly more likely to involve single children: 75% for access applications and 70% for return in 2015, 72% and 69%, respectively, in 2008, 71% and 67%, respectively, in 2003 and 69% and 63%, in 1999.

154. On average, children involved in access applications were older than those involved in return applications. In 2021, the average age of a child in an access application was 8.1 years and 6.7 years in a return application. This can be compared with 8 years for access applications and 6.8 years for return applications in 2015, 7.8 years and 6.4 years, respectively, in 2008, and 7.9 years and 6.3 years, respectively, in 2003.

## **4. Outcomes**

155. With regard to outcomes, the overall return rate of 39% in return applications can be compared with access being agreed or ordered in 27% of access applications. In previous Studies these return and access rates were 45 and 27%, respectively, in 2015, 46% and 21%, in 2008, 51% and 33% in 2003 and 50% and 43% in 1999.

156. As in previous Studies, proportionally more access applications were pending compared with return applications (20% as against 12%, compared with 17% and 6%, respectively in 2015 and 17% and 8% in 2008) and fewer access applications were refused (2% as against 13% of return applications, compared with 2% and 12% in 2015 and 3% and 15% in 2008).

## **5. Appeals**

157. Strikingly, only 8% of court decisions in access applications were appealed, as against 42% in return applications. This can be compared with 9% and 31%, respectively, in 2015, 9% and 24% in 2008.

## **6. Timing**

Access applications were markedly slower to reach a conclusion than return applications with the average access application taking 301 days compared with 207 days for a return application. This can be compared with 254 days for an access application and 164 days for a return application, in 2008 and 339 days and 188 days, in 2008.

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<sup>36</sup> These figures include estimated numbers recorded in outgoing cases in the INCASTAT database.



## G. ADDENDUM

158. As explained at the beginning of this Report, 2021 was chosen as the Study year so as to provide the most contemporaneous view as possible in relation to the holding of the Eighth Meeting of the Special Commission of how the Convention is working, given that to be comparable with the four previous Studies, outcomes were to be recorded up to 18 months after the last possible application could have been made, namely, 30 June 2023. However, one could not help but be aware that 2021 was a COVID-19 year, when lockdowns were still common, international travel restricted and courts were, to varying degrees, coming to terms with conducting entirely or partially remote hearings. With this in mind, preliminary soundings were made about the appropriateness of choosing 2021 but the feedback was that that year was not an untypical one so far as applications under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention were concerned. Nevertheless to provide a check at least on the overall numbers, Central Authorities were requested to provide information on the number of applications made in 2019, 2020 and 2022, i.e. the years preceding and following the Study year.

159. Of course, the very fact that 2021 was a COVID-19 year makes this Study interesting in itself, but it also raises the question of how far, if at all, its findings have been skewed by the Pandemic. It is with this latter point in mind that this Report ends with the following observations.

160. It should always be cautioned that each Study only provides a snapshot of what happened to applications made under the 1980 Convention in the Study year in question. For individual States, in particular, that snapshot may or may not be typical. In this sense, the 2021 Study is no different. Nevertheless, the previous four Studies have shown that there is an overall consistent pattern in how the Convention is used and about the circumstances of the abduction. Previous Studies have also identified trends in both outcomes and timing. How do the 2021 findings compare?

161. The consistent finding of all the Studies is that the large majority of applications made under the 1980 Convention are for return rather than for access. The 2021 Study's finding that 85% of applications are for the child's return is in line with this albeit that for the first time the actual number of return applications fell and those for access rose as against the previous 2015 Study. So far as the number of applications is concerned, the Pandemic does seem to have had some effect in that numbers dropped from those recorded in 2019 and have started to rise in 2021 and again in 2022.

162. The two busiest Central Authorities have always been the USA, England and Wales and that continued to be the case in 2021. As in 2015, Germany was the third busiest but whereas in 2021 the fourth and fifth busiest were France in Mexico, it was the other way around in 2015.

163. The Studies quickly established that the majority of taking persons are mothers and this continues to be the case in the 2021 Study, but at 75%, that is the largest proportion recorded. At the same time, however, the trend towards taking parents, mothers or fathers, being primary or joint primary carers has continued such that in 2021 94% of taking mothers and 72% of taking fathers were primary or joint primary carers.

164. At 6.7 years the average age of children involved in abduction cases where their return is sought is well in line with the average ages found in previous Studies.

165. What the preceding findings show is that the use made of the Convention and the overall pattern of abduction had not been affected by the Pandemic. However, the findings with regard to outcomes and, though to a lesser extent, timing, are a different matter.

166. With regard to outcomes the stand-out findings of the 2021 Study regarding return applications are:

- The overall return rate of 39% is the lowest recorded by any of the Studies, though that rate has been steadily declining since the 51% recorded in 2003. Nevertheless, the 2021 finding is a sharp drop from the 45% recorded in 2015.
- The proportion of return applications decided by courts, 38%, is the lowest recorded by any of the Studies and compares with 43% or 44% in each of the previous studies.
- At 16%, the proportion of voluntary returns was the lowest recorded by any of the previous studies but that was in line with a declining proportion of voluntary returns since 2003, namely, 17% in 2015, 19% in 2008, 22% in 2003 but it was only 18% in 1999.
- As against the finding with regard to voluntary returns there is the striking finding that 6% of return applications ended with the parties agreeing that the child remain in the requested State.
- A relatively high judicial refusal rate of 35% as against 28% in 2015 but not so different to the 34% in 2008.
- A striking finding that 45% of refusals were based in whole or in part on Article 13(1)(b), which was the greatest proportion ever recorded and compares with 25% in 2015 and 34% in 2008.

- A much larger proportion of decisions being appealed, 42% as against 31% in 2015 and 24% in 2008, coupled with the finding that 81% of the appealed decisions confirmed the first instance decision, 86% where the decision was for return, as against 71% in 2015 and 78% in 2008.
- A relatively high proportion, 11%, of pending cases as against 6% in 2015.

167. With regard to timing the 2021 Study found that applications were taking longer to resolve as compared with 2015, on average, 207 days compared with 164 days, but, though the longest time recorded by any of the Studies, the 2021 findings were nevertheless more reflective of the trend evidenced between 1999 and 2008 during which disposal times were generally lengthening.

168. It is a matter for speculation and for discussion as to how far, if at all, the stand-out differences recorded by the 2021 Study were the result in one way or another, of the Pandemic. One can imagine that court hearings could well have been disrupted which in turn might have led to applications taking longer to resolve leaving more applications pending as of 30 June 2023. That in turn might have led to less cases going to court and more voluntary agreements being reached and not least that the child remain where he/she was. Central Authorities, too, are likely to have come under increasing pressure as a result of the Pandemic, which could have contributed to the lengthening of proceedings. It is also conceivable that the longer disposal times could have led to more refusals to return. On the other hand, at first sight at any rate, it is not easy to see why the exponential increase in refusing return applications on the basis of Art 13(1)(b), nor the increased proportion of appealed cases, was related to the Pandemic.

## ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1

**Annex 1: The number of applications received and sent by each Central Authority in 2021**

State	Incoming return applications	Outgoing return applications	Incoming access applications	Outgoing access applications	Total
Albania	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Andorra	0	0	0	0	0
Argentina	14	54	7	18	93
Armenia	3	3	0	0	6
Australia	15	53	4	12	84
Austria	27	33	5	2	67
Bahamas	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Barbados	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Belarus	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Belgium	28	51	5	9	93
Belize	1	2	0	0	3
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	6	0	2	13
Brazil	49	84	0	10	143
Bulgaria	25	5	0	1	31
Burkina Faso	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Canada	34	49	17	6	106
Canada - Alberta	8	12	0	1	21
Canada - British Columbia	5	8	5	1	19
Canada - Manitoba	3	2	2	0	7
Canada - New Brunswick	0	2	0	0	2
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	1	0	0	0	1
Canada - Northwest Territories	0	0	0	0	0
Canada - Nova Scotia	0	0	0	0	0
Canada - Nunavut	0	0	0	0	0
Canada - Ontario	11	13	8	1	33
Canada - Prince Edward Island	0	0	0	0	0
Canada - Quebec	4	10	2	3	19
Canada - Saskatchewan	2	2	0	0	4
Canada - Yukon Territory	0	0	0	0	0
Chile	20	42	3	6	71
China	2	9	1	0	12
China - Hong Kong SAR	2	9	1	0	12
China - Macao SAR	0	0	0	0	0
Colombia	68	117	12	20	217
Costa Rica	34	17	2	1	54
Croatia	6	7	0	1	14
Cuba	2	2	0	0	4
Cyprus	5	5	1	1	12
Czech Republic	14	17	2	8	41
Denmark	9	18	4	2	33
Dominican Republic	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Ecuador	29	3	8	8	48
El Salvador	6	13	0	0	19
Estonia	7	11	2	1	21
Fiji	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Finland	7	14	1	4	26
France	127	105	27	26	285
Gabon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Georgia	3	5	0	0	8
Germany	117	220	26	34	397
Greece	12	NR	1	NR	13

## ANNEX 1

Guatemala	9	5	7	6	27
Guinea	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Guyana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Honduras	14	NR	NR	NR	14
Hungary	18	31	1	1	51
Iceland	7	3	2	0	12
Iraq	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ireland	27	40	2	7	76
Israel	11	18	1	3	33
Italy	65	91	5	15	176
Jamaica	2	7	0	1	10
Japan	14	15	6	4	39
Kazakhstan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Korea, Republic of	1	3	1	1	6
Latvia	11	22	2	5	40
Lesotho	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Lithuania	16	28	3	4	51
Luxembourg	5	21	1	0	27
Malta	3	7	1	1	12
Mauritius	1	0	0	2	3
Mexico	96	116	6	16	234
Moldova, Republic of	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Monaco	0	0	0	0	0
Montenegro	11	0	1	0	12
Morocco	19	9	1	0	29
Netherlands	18	52	4	9	83
New Zealand	24	28	1	8	61
Nicaragua	9	41	1	1	52
North Macedonia	3	1	0	3	7
Norway	11	15	8	1	35
Pakistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Panama	3	8	0	1	12
Paraguay	24	19	1	3	47
Peru	29	14	18	4	65
Philippines	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Poland	116	61	9	13	199
Portugal	35	40	7	7	89
Romania	53	18	4	1	76
Russian Federation	63	21	8	2	94
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	0	0	0
San Marino	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Serbia	17	17	1	3	38
Seychelles	0	0	0	0	0
Singapore	4	6	0	0	10
Slovakia	19	19	3	11	52
Slovenia	7	5	3	3	18
South Africa	12	15	3	1	31
Spain	72	85	13	5	175
Sri Lanka	1	1	1	0	3
Sweden	21	31	9	4	65
Switzerland	36	68	9	11	124
Thailand	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Trinidad and Tobago	1	4	0	0	5
Tunisia	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Türkiye	61	24	2	8	95
Turkmenistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Ukraine	38	43	7	7	95
United Kingdom - AA Central Authority Unknown	188	216	87	33	524
United Kingdom - Anguilla	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - Bermuda	0	3	0	0	3
United Kingdom - Cayman Islands	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - England and	169	194	84	32	479

**ANNEX 1**

Wales					
United Kingdom - Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom - Jersey	0	0	1	0	1
United Kingdom - Montserrat	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	7	9	0	0	16
United Kingdom - Scotland	12	10	2	1	25
United States of America	313	144	30	30	517
Uruguay	3	7	2	3	15
Uzbekistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	11	75	0	0	86
Zambia	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Zimbabwe	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
<b>Total</b>	<b>2191</b>	<b>2439</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>410</b>	

N/A = not applicable because not a Contracting State at the time

NR = no response received in that year

## ANNEX 2

### Annex 2: The number of return applications received by each State in 2021 compared with 2015, 2008, 2003 and 1999

Note that applications received and sent by the United Kingdom Central Authorities have been considered separately due to the large number of applications received by England and Wales and Scotland.

State	1999	2003	2008	2015	2021
Albania	N/A	N/A	0	NR	NR
Andorra	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Argentina	12	13	22	14	14
Armenia	N/A	N/A	0	2	3
Australia	64	43	75	45	15
Austria	9	12	28	20	27
Bahamas	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Barbados	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Belarus	0	2	NR	8	NR
Belgium	9	25	40	27	28
Belize	NR	2	NR	NR	1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	5	NR	3	5
Brazil	N/A	NR	27	46	49
Bulgaria	N/A	0	21	15	25
Burkina Faso	NR	1	NR	1	NR
Canada	36	56	49	43	34
Chile	7	17	14	12	20
China	4	5	6	6	2
Colombia	4	NR	33	55	68
Costa Rica	NR	NR	3	9	34
Croatia	7	3	3	2	6
Cuba	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Cyprus	NR	8	4	3	5
Czech Republic	5	11	15	33	14
Denmark	11	12	15	15	9
Dominican Republic	N/A	N/A	8	13	NR
Ecuador	N/A	NR	14	NR	29
El Salvador	N/A	0	0	5	6
Estonia	N/A	1	5	6	7
Fiji	N/A	NR	NR	4	NR
Finland	2	6	8	2	7
France	42	42	76	105	127
Gabon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Georgia	NR	0	1	4	3
Germany	70	80	115	172	117
Greece	NR	19	19	12	12
Guatemala	N/A	0	2	NR	9
Guinea	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	NR
Guyana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Honduras	N/A	3	5	2	14
Hungary	8	13	8	14	18

## ANNEX 2

Iceland	4	6	4	3	7
Iraq	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	N/A
Ireland	38	33	48	40	27
Israel	19	13	24	14	11
Italy	41	46	53	55	65
Jamaica	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Japan	N/A	N/A	N/A	21	14
Kazakhstan	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Korea, Republic of	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	1
Latvia	N/A	0	8	15	11
Lesotho	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Lithuania	N/A	0	7	18	16
Luxembourg	0	0	2	4	5
Malta	NR	4	0	1	3
Mauritius	3	NR	NR	5	1
Mexico	41	27	168	83	96
Moldova, Republic of	NR	NR	NR	5	NR
Monaco	NR	0	0	4	0
Montenegro	N/A	N/A	5	0	11
Morocco	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	19
Netherlands	26	26	40	31	18
New Zealand	39	27	37	31	24
Nicaragua	N/A	0	0	15	9
North Macedonia	NR	NR	NR	NR	3
Norway	11	4	10	18	11
Pakistan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Panama	4	3	9	3	3
Paraguay	NR	NR	3	21	24
Peru	N/A	NR	NR	28	29
Philippines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Poland	NR	18	67	49	116
Portugal	11	19	32	21	35
Romania	9	7	51	74	53
Russian Federation	N/A	N/A	N/A	44	63
Saint Kitts and Nevis	NR	NR	NR	NR	0
San Marino	N/A	N/A	NR	0	NR
Serbia	N/A	N/A	11	9	17
Seychelles	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Singapore	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	4
Slovakia	N/A	8	NR	32	19
Slovenia	0	0	1	1	7
South Africa	8	11	18	13	12
Spain	36	87	88	92	72
Sri Lanka	N/A	1	NR	NR	1
Sweden	14	22	29	25	21
Switzerland	11	39	26	40	36
Thailand	N/A	1	NR	NR	NR
Trinidad and Tobago	N/A	NR	NR	6	1
Tunisia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Türkiye	N/A	35	63	82	61
Turkmenistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Ukraine	N/A	N/A	30	27	38
United Kingdom	166	157	221	294	188



## ANNEX 2

United Kingdom - Anguilla	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - Bermuda	NR	0	1	0	0
United Kingdom - Cayman Islands	1	NR	0	0	NR
United Kingdom - England & Wales	149	142	200	261	169
United Kingdom - Isle of Man	NR	1	0	1	0
United Kingdom - Jersey	0	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom - Montserrat	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	6	2	13	6	7
United Kingdom - Scotland	10	12	7	25	12
United States of America	210	286	283	313	313
Uruguay	NR	NR	7	12	3
Uzbekistan	N/A	NR	NR	NR	NR
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	NR	NR	NR	6	11
Zambia	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Zimbabwe	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
<b>Total</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>2270</b>	<b>2191</b>

N/A = not applicable because not a Contracting State at the time

NR = no response received in that year

## ANNEX 3

*Annex 3: The taking persons in applications to each Central Authority*

Central Authority	Taking person mother of the children	% of taking mothers	Taking person father of the children	% of taking fathers	Taking person other	Total number of applications
Argentina	9	64%	5	36%	0	14
Armenia	2	67%	1	33%	0	3
Australia	12	80%	3	20%	0	15
Austria	21	78%	6	22%	0	27
Belgium	18	64%	10	36%	0	28
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	80%	1	20%	0	5
Brazil	38	79%	10	21%	0	48
Bulgaria	20	80%	5	20%	0	25
Canada - Alberta	2	67%	1	33%	0	3
Canada - British Columbia	5	100%	0	0%	0	5
Canada - Manitoba	2	67%	1	33%	0	3
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	1	100%	0	0%	0	1
Canada - Ontario	7	64%	4	36%	0	11
Canada - Quebec	3	75%	1	25%	0	4
Canada - Saskatchewan	2	100%	0	0%	0	2
Chile	18	90%	2	10%	0	20
China - Hong Kong SAR	2	100%	0	0%	0	2
Colombia	43	81%	9	17%	1	53
Costa Rica	27	90%	3	10%	0	30
Croatia	5	83%	1	17%	0	6
Cuba	1	50%	0	0%	1	2
Cyprus	5	100%	0	0%	0	5
Czech Republic	9	64%	3	21%	2	14
Denmark	7	78%	2	22%	0	9
Ecuador	20	69%	9	31%	0	29
El Salvador	4	67%	2	33%	0	6
Estonia	4	57%	3	43%	0	7
Finland	3	43%	4	57%	0	7
France	96	76%	28	22%	3	127
Georgia	1	33%	2	67%	0	3
Germany	98	84%	18	15%	1	117
Guatemala	8	89%	1	11%	0	9
Hungary	13	72%	4	22%	1	18
Iceland	6	86%	1	14%	0	7
Ireland	20	74%	3	11%	4	27
Israel	8	80%	1	10%	1	10
Italy	48	75%	16	25%	0	64
Jamaica	1	50%	0	0%	1	2

### ANNEX 3

Japan	13	93%	1	7%	0	14
Korea, Republic of	1	100%	0	0%	0	1
Latvia	6	60%	4	40%	0	10
Lithuania	11	69%	5	31%	0	16
Luxembourg	4	80%	1	20%	0	5
Malta	1	50%	1	50%	0	2
Mauritius	1	100%	0	0%	0	1
Mexico	75	79%	19	20%	1	95
Montenegro	8	73%	3	27%	0	11
Morocco	12	63%	6	32%	1	19
Netherlands	17	94%	1	6%	0	18
New Zealand	20	83%	4	17%	0	24
Nicaragua	6	67%	2	22%	1	9
North Macedonia	1	50%	1	50%	0	2
Norway	5	45%	6	55%	0	11
Panama		0%	2	67%	1	3
Paraguay	17	71%	7	29%	0	24
Peru	22	79%	6	21%	0	28
Poland	82	75%	23	21%	5	110
Romania	34	64%	18	34%	1	53
Russian Federation	51	82%	10	16%	1	62
Serbia	12	71%	4	24%	1	17
Singapore	2	50%	2	50%	0	4
Slovakia	15	79%	4	21%	0	19
Slovenia	5	71%	2	29%	0	7
South Africa	10	83%	2	17%	0	12
Spain	55	76%	15	21%	2	72
Switzerland	28	78%	8	22%	0	36
Trinidad and Tobago	1	100%		0%	0	1
Türkiye	37	61%	23	38%	1	61
Ukraine	33	87%	5	13%	0	38
United Kingdom - England and Wales	125	74%	42	25%	1	168
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	5	71%	2	29%	0	7
United Kingdom - Scotland	4	36%	7	64%	0	11
United States of America	229	73%	74	24%	9	312
Uruguay	3	100%		0%	0	3
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	7	64%	4	36%	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1551</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2065</b>



## ANNEX 4

Mexico	1	23	11	7		40	3	11	96
Montenegro		1	2			4	4		11
Morocco	1	7	1	1		2	1	6	19
Netherlands		1	6	3			1	7	18
New Zealand	3	1	16	3				1	24
Nicaragua		4	1			1		3	9
North Macedonia		1			1			1	3
Norway		1	4	1			2	3	11
Panama			1	1		1			3
Paraguay		8	8	3		2	2	1	24
Peru		3	1	3		12	5	5	29
Poland		1	33	35		2	33	12	116
Romania		8	21	13			3	8	53
Russian Federation	2	3	2	16		5	2	33	63
Serbia		1	1	9		1	5		17
Singapore			2					2	4
Slovakia		6	5	1		3		4	19
Slovenia		2	4					1	7
South Africa	1	5	4			1	1		12
Spain	21	10	10	9			4	17	71
Sri Lanka	1								1
Switzerland	4	6	6	4			2	14	36
Trinidad and Tobago		1							1
Türkiye	1	11	10	4		13	6	16	61
Ukraine	2	6		3		5	2	19	37
United Kingdom - England and Wales	2	18	73	19	4	2	20	30	168
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	1		1	1			2	2	7
United Kingdom - Scotland	2	1	5	3			1		12
United States of America	3	53	65	14	2	60	33	83	313
Uruguay		1	1	1					3
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		1	3	2		2		3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>2106</b>

## ANNEX 5

Annex 5: The sole reasons for judicial refusals

	habitually resident in Requesting Applicant had no rights of custody	Art. 12	not exercising rights of	Art. 13(1)(a) consent	Art. 13(1)(a) acquiescence	Art. 13(1)(b)	Child's objections	Article 20	More than one reason	Total
Argentina						1				1
Australia		1							1	2
Austria	1								1	2
Brazil						1			3	5
Bulgaria		1		1		5	1		2	11
Canada - British Columbia	1									1
Canada - Manitoba									1	1
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	1									1
Canada - Quebec	1									1
Chile				1					4	5
Colombia			1			2	2		3	8
Costa Rica						1		2	2	5
Croatia									2	2
Cuba		1								1
Cyprus									1	1
Czech Republic	2	1					1			4
Denmark		1				2				3
El Salvador									1	1
Finland	1									1
France	2	4		1		2	2		1	12
Georgia						1			1	2
Germany	3	1	2	2		6	2			16
Israel	1								1	2
Italy	1	1		3		3	6		2	16
Japan	1									1
Latvia		1				2				3
Lithuania		1			1		2		2	6
Mexico						2			4	6
Netherlands							2			2
New Zealand									1	1
Nicaragua									2	2
Norway									1	1
Paraguay		1				1				2
Peru									2	3
Poland				3	3	13	2		11	35
Romania	4				1	4	1		2	12
Russian Federation	6	1				7	1		1	16
Serbia						5				5

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Slovakia	1										1
Spain	2		2				1	1		2	8
Switzerland	1		1		1		1				4
Türkiye			1				1	1		1	4
Ukraine							1			1	2
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland										1	1
United Kingdom - Scotland			2							1	3
United States of America	2	2	4		1		3			1	13
Uruguay										1	1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			2								2
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>240</b>

## ANNEX 6

Annex 6: The sole and multiple reasons for judicial refusals

	Child not habitually resident in Requesting State	Applicant had no rights of custody	Art. 12	Art. 13(1)(a) not exercising rights of custody	Art. 13(1)(a) consent	Art. 13(1)(a) acquiescence	Art. 13(1)(b)	Child's objections	Article 20	Total number of reasons	Total number of applications
Argentina							1			1	1
Australia			1							1	1
Austria	2						1	1		4	2
Brazil		1	2	1			3	1	2	10	5
Bulgaria	1	1	2	1	2		7	1		15	11
Canada - British Columbia	1									1	1
Canada - Manitoba	1		1		1	1				4	1
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	1									1	1
Canada - Quebec	1									1	1
Chile	1	1	1		2	1	3	2		11	5
Colombia			2	2		1	3	5		13	8
Costa Rica				1			2	1	3	7	5
Croatia					2		2	1		5	2
Cuba			1							1	1
Cyprus							1	1		2	1
Czech Republic	2		1					1		4	4
Denmark			1				2			3	3
El Salvador					1		1			2	1
Finland	1									1	1
France	2		4		2		3	2		13	12
Georgia			1		1		1	1		4	2
Germany	3	1	2		2		6	2		16	16
Israel	2			1		1				4	2
Italy	2		1		4		4	7		18	16
Japan	1									1	1
Latvia			1				2			3	3
Lithuania			3			1	2	2		8	6
Mexico				1			6	2	2	11	6
Netherlands								2		2	2
New Zealand							1	1		2	1
Norway							1	1		2	1
Paraguay			1				1			2	2
Peru		3		1		1	2			7	3
Poland	6	3	3	2	3	3	21	8		49	35
Romania	4					1	6	3		14	12
Russian Federation	7		1				8	1		17	16
Serbia							5			5	5



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Slovakia	1									1	1
Spain	2		4				1	3		10	8
Switzerland	1		1		1		1			4	4
Türkiye			2				2	2		6	4
Ukraine			1	1			1			3	2
United Kingdom – England and Wales	2						1	2		5	5
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland							1	1		2	1
United Kingdom - Scotland			3					1		4	3
United States of America	2	2	5		1		4			14	13
Uruguay					1		1			2	1
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			2							2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>240</b>

## ANNEX 7

**Annex 7: Applications received by each Central Authority and the time they took to conclude**

State	Average number of days from receipt by Central Authority to final outcome	Number of applications for which information was available
Argentina	218	14
Armenia	119	1
Australia	309	14
Austria	91	20
Belgium	149	26
Bosnia and Herzegovina	261	4
Brazil	363	24
Bulgaria	281	24
Canada - Alberta	144	5
Canada - British Columbia	88	5
Canada - Manitoba	112	2
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	477	1
Canada - Ontario	248	3
Canada - Quebec	195	1
Canada - Saskatchewan	8	2
Chile	166	17
China - Hong Kong SAR	102	1
Colombia	296	40
Costa Rica	171	29
Croatia	180	5
Cuba	288	2
Cyprus	307	3
Czech Republic	105	12
Denmark	90	8
Ecuador	434	3
El Salvador	166	5
Estonia		
Finland	104	5
France	234	48
Georgia	320	3
Germany	158	112
Greece	NR	NR
Guatemala	NR	NR
Honduras	NR	NR
Hungary	303	7
Iceland	128	7
Ireland	139	16
Israel	138	11
Italy	155	54
Jamaica	400	1
Japan	221	6
Korea, Republic of	464	1
Latvia	115	9
Lithuania	172	16
Luxembourg	167	2
Malta	NR	NR
Mauritius	NR	NR
Mexico	214	46
Montenegro	113	7
Morocco	334	12
Netherlands	169	8
New Zealand	135	24
Nicaragua	206	9

**ANNEX 7**

Norway	53	8
Panama	227	2
Paraguay	197	14
Peru	458	6
Poland	250	90
Portugal	NR	NR
Romania	221	39
Russian Federation	317	31
Serbia	244	16
Singapore	200	3
Slovakia	227	6
Slovenia	112	4
South Africa	152	10
Spain	231	24
Sri Lanka	NR	NR
Sweden	NR	NR
Switzerland	155	33
Trinidad and Tobago	56	1
Türkiye	384	14
Ukraine	165	11
United Kingdom - England and Wales	177	161
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	89	7
United Kingdom - Scotland	111	12
United States of America	253	169
Uruguay	70	3
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	153	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1346</b>

## ANNEX 8

**Annex 8: The time taken for the Central Authority to send applications to court and the time the court then took to finalise the application**

State	Average number of days taken to send to court	Number of applications	Average number of days taken from receipt by the court to final decision	Number of applications
Argentina	63	9	159	9
Armenia	91	1	28	1
Australia	124	10	251	9
Austria	4	24	96	18
Belgium	80	10	112	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	15	5	247	4
Brazil	130	35	240	23
Bulgaria	90	17	299	15
Canada - Alberta	30	3	91	2
Canada - British Columbia	12	3	81	5
Canada - Manitoba	12	2	100	2
Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador	13	1	464	1
Canada - Ontario	154	2	166	2
Canada - Quebec			135	1
Chile	11	20	155	17
China - Hong Kong SAR	39	1	63	1
Colombia	137	32	168	22
Costa Rica	30	20	161	21
Croatia	77	5	103	5
Cuba	116	1	162	1
Cyprus	178	2	200	2
Czech Republic	34	9	91	10
Denmark	10	8	80	8
Ecuador	138	11	308	3
El Salvador	52	5	114	5
Finland	72	3	81	3
France	89	10	131	11
Georgia	36	3	284	3
Germany	70	67	97	69
Hungary	160	8	156	7
Iceland	51	5	74	5
Ireland	34	10	89	9
Israel	55	6	64	8
Italy	67	41	108	37
Japan	90	6	109	5
Korea, Republic of	64	1	400	1
Latvia	31	10	82	9
Lithuania	118	11	82	11
Luxembourg	84	2	84	2
Mexico	54	73	166	39
Montenegro	1	10	130	6
Morocco	21	1	371	1
Netherlands	108	9	99	8
New Zealand	26	19	129	19
Nicaragua	241	4	83	4
North Macedonia	6	1		
Norway	9	11	44	8
Paraguay	117	13	168	11
Peru	102	25	314	5
Poland	24	91	222	88
Romania	86	37	145	37
Russian Federation	156	19	202	18
Serbia	7	17	237	16

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Singapore	113	3	90	4
Slovakia	90	1	368	1
Slovenia	58	5	53	4
South Africa	59	6	120	5
Switzerland	82	13	127	16
Türkiye	130	30	278	13
Ukraine	121	11	250	4
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	21	5	98	5
United Kingdom - Scotland	37	4	124	3
United States of America	156	124	124	101
Uruguay	11	3	59	3
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	28	10	118	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>803</b>

## ANNEX 9

Annex 9: The number of access applications received by each Central Authority in 2021 compared with previous Studies

State	1999	2003	2008	2015	2021
Albania	N/A	N/A	0	NR	NR
Andorra	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Argentina	6	6	3	7	7
Armenia	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Australia	14	19	16	11	4
Austria	8	11	2	0	5
Bahamas	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Barbados	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Belarus	NR	0	NR	0	NR
Belgium	0	2	7	8	5
Belize	NR	NR	NR	NR	0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A	NR	NR	1	NR
Brazil	N/A	NR	5	3	0
Bulgaria	N/A	0	1	1	0
Burkina Faso	NR	0	NR	0	NR
Canada	8	11	13	12	17
Chile	4	4	1	4	3
China	0	0	0	1	1
Colombia	0	NR	4	9	12
Costa Rica	NR	NR	5	0	2
Croatia	1	0	2	0	0
Cuba	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Cyprus	N/A	1	1	1	1
Czech Republic	3	0	6	0	2
Denmark	0	0	0	3	4
Dominican Republic	N/A	N/A	1	2	NR
Ecuador	N/A	NR	2	NR	8
El Salvador	N/A	0	0	1	0
Estonia	N/A	0	3	1	2
Fiji	N/A	NR	NR	0	NR

**ANNEX 9**

Finland	2	2	1	0	1
France	15	13	22	29	27
Gabon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Georgia	NR	0	0	0	0
Germany	24	18	31	29	26
Greece	NR	1	1	1	1
Guatemala	N/A	0	2	NR	7
Guinea	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	NR
Guyana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Honduras	N/A	0	0	0	NR
Hungary	0	0	0	0	1
Iceland	0	0	0	1	2
Iraq	NR	NR	NR	NR	N/A
Ireland	1	2	13	6	2
Israel	2	2	2	2	1
Italy	4	3	23	13	5
Jamaica	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Japan	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	6
Kazakhstan	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Korea, Republic of	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Latvia	N/A	0	0	2	2
Lesotho	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Lithuania	N/A	0	1	2	3
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	1
Malta	NR	0	1	0	1
Mauritius	0	NR	NR	1	0
Mexico	0	0	6	21	6
Moldova, Republic of	NR	NR	NR	0	NR
Monaco	NR	0	0	0	0
Montenegro	N/A	N/A	0	0	1
Morocco	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1
Netherlands	8	6	13	6	4
New Zealand	4	6	8	0	1
Nicaragua	N/A	0	0	0	1
North Macedonia	NR	NR	NR	NR	0
Norway	3	0	4	4	8
Pakistan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR

## ANNEX 9

Panama	0	0	0	1	0
Paraguay	NR	NR	3	4	1
Peru	N/A	NR	NR	4	18
Philippines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Poland	NR	8	2	3	9
Portugal	4	3	3	1	7
Romania	1	0	2	1	4
Russian Federation	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	8
Saint Kitts and Nevis	NR	NR	NR	NR	0
San Marino	N/A	N/A	NR	0	NR
Serbia	N/A	N/A	0	1	1
Seychelles	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Singapore	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	3
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	3
South Africa	NR	3	6	4	3
Spain	6	19	25	0	13
Sri Lanka	N/A	0	NR	NR	1
Sweden	2	5	11	3	9
Switzerland	5	11	11	17	9
Thailand	N/A	0	NR	NR	NR
Trinidad and Tobago	N/A	NR	NR	0	0
Tunisia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR
Türkiye	N/A	0	3	2	2
Turkmenistan	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Ukraine	N/A	N/A	3	4	7
United Kingdom	29	17	42	62	87
United Kingdom - Anguilla	0	0	0	0	NR
United Kingdom - Bermuda	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom - Cayman Islands	0	0	0	0	NR
United Kingdom - England and Wales	25	17	38	58	84
United Kingdom - Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom - Jersey	0	0	0	0	1
United Kingdom - Montserrat	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
United Kingdom - Northern Ireland	1	0	2	2	0
United Kingdom - Scotland	3	0	2	2	2
United States of America	44	59	46	66	30



**ANNEX 9**

Uruguay	NR	NR	4	4	2
Uzbekistan	N/A	NR	NR	NR	NR
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	NR	NR	NR	2	0
Zambia	N/A	N/A	N/A	NR	NR
Zimbabwe	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Total	205	232	361	382	399

## ANNEX 10

Annex 10: Outcomes of access applications by Central Authority

	Case rejected by the Central Authority	Voluntary agreement for access/contact	Judicial order – access/contact ordered	Judicial order – access/contact refused	Pending	Withdrawn	Other	Total
Argentina		4			2	1		7
Australia							4	4
Austria		1		2		2		5
Belgium			2			2	1	5
Canada - British Columbia							5	5
Canada - Manitoba	1	1						2
Canada - Ontario			1	1	2		3	7
Canada - Quebec		1						1
Chile		1	1			1	1	4
China - Hong Kong SAR							1	1
Colombia		6	2		2	1	1	12
Costa Rica			1				1	2
Cyprus							1	1
Czech Republic					1	1		2
Denmark							4	4
Ecuador			1		2		5	8
Estonia						1	1	2
France	2	3	4		2	1	15	27
Germany		2			7	7	10	26
Guatemala	2	1			3		1	7
Hungary							1	1
Iceland			1				1	2
Ireland					2			2
Israel							1	1
Italy	1	2				1	1	5
Japan		2			2	1	1	6
Korea, Republic of							1	1
Latvia	1				1			2
Lithuania							3	3
Luxembourg			1					1
Malta					1			1
Mexico		1	2		1		2	6
Montenegro						1		1
Morocco							1	1
Netherlands					1		3	4
New Zealand	1							1
Nicaragua			1					1
Norway							8	8

**ANNEX 10**

Paraguay					1			1
Peru	5	3			8	1	1	18
Poland					3	1	2	6
Romania		2					2	4
Russian Federation		1	1				6	8
Serbia						1		1
Slovakia		2	1					3
Slovenia			2				1	3
South Africa			2		1			3
Spain	13							13
Switzerland	1	1	2	1	3		1	9
Türkiye					2			2
Ukraine	2	1	1		2	1		7
United Kingdom - England and Wales	5	2	28	3	22	11	13	84
United Kingdom - Jersey							1	1
United Kingdom - Scotland	2							2
United States of America	1	3	6		6	4	10	30
Uruguay		2						2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>376</b>

**Annex 11: The time taken to reach a final outcome by Central Authority**

State	Average number of days taken to reach a final decision	Number of applications in which dates available
Argentina	166	2
Australia	227	4
Austria	395	3
Belgium	263	5
Canada - British Columbia	274	5
Canada - Manitoba	207	1
Canada - Ontario	399	3
Canada - Quebec	62	1
Chile	446	4
Colombia	303	8
Costa Rica	83	2
Denmark	439	2
Ecuador	375	1
Estonia	618	1
Finland	439	1
France	208	24
Germany	355	17
Iceland	560	2
Israel	603	1
Italy	156	3
Japan	302	3
Lithuania	91	2
Luxembourg	460	1
Mexico	220	4
Montenegro	375	1
Morocco	541	1
Nicaragua	195	1
Poland	280	2
Russian Federation	136	3
Serbia	425	1
Slovakia	438	1
Slovenia	223	1
South Africa	229	2
Switzerland	341	4
Ukraine	129	5
United Kingdom - England and Wales	326	57
United Kingdom - Jersey	195	1
United Kingdom - Scotland	133	2
United States of America	472	10
Uruguay	61	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>194</b>