

Overview of survey results on the '2016 EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union'

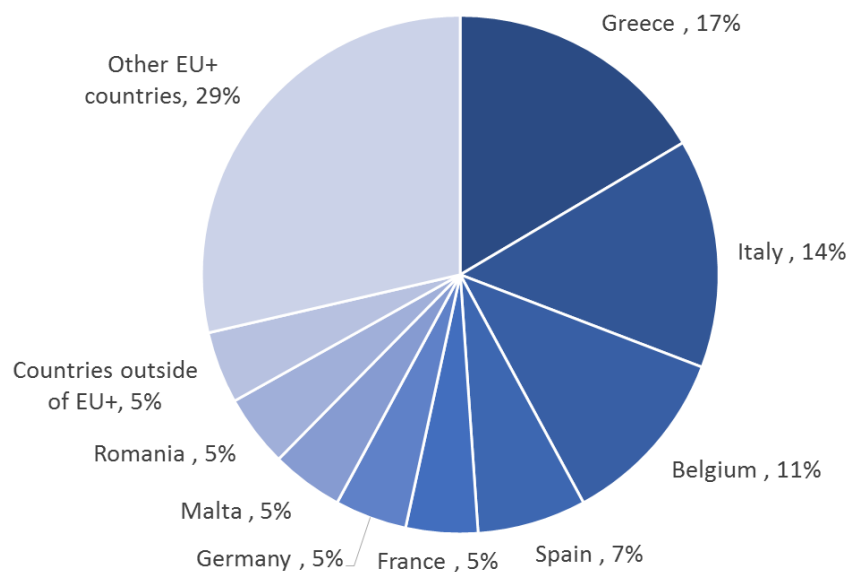
This report presents the results of an evaluation survey on the '2016 EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union' (Annual Report)¹, which was conducted between 11 October and 15 November, 2017. The survey aimed at assessing the overall usefulness and added value the Annual Report brings to its target audiences. The survey results were carefully examined by EASO to improve the 2017 edition of the Report, to be published in 2018.

In order to elicit broad participation, EASO invited all Annual Report readers to fill out an open evaluation survey by sharing the respective link on the EASO website and social media. In addition, members of the civil society were specifically invited to share their feedback through a participatory consultation process, involving all members of the EASO Consultative Forum.

A total of 138 respondents completed the survey.

Almost all EU+ countries² were represented in the evaluation, illustrating the wide geographical distribution of the Annual Report's readership. Responses were also received by individuals based in other countries, such as: Albania, Indonesia, Kosovo, Ukraine and the United States.

Figure 1. Geographical distribution of respondents



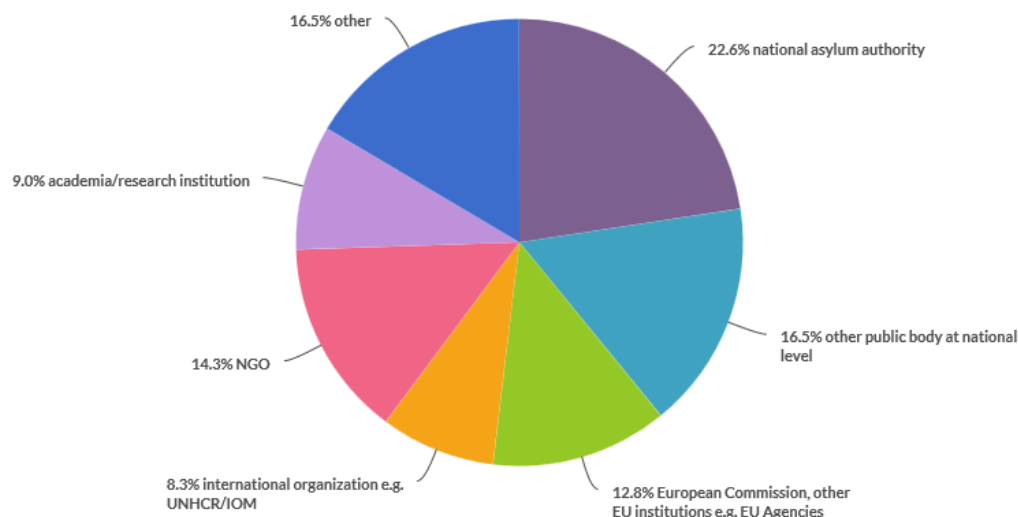
Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

Survey respondents represented a variety of institutions, with the largest groups coming from national asylum authorities (22.6%) and other public bodies (16.5%) (see Figure 2).

¹ EASO produces the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2017, in line with Article 12 (1) of the EASO Regulation. The Report aims at providing a comprehensive overview of important asylum-related developments at EU and national level, and the functioning of all key aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). More information, previous reports, and the online version of the Annual Report 2016, which was the focus of this survey, are available at : <https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-annual-report>.

² The only EU+ countries not represented in the evaluation were: Estonia, Lithuania, Iceland and Norway.

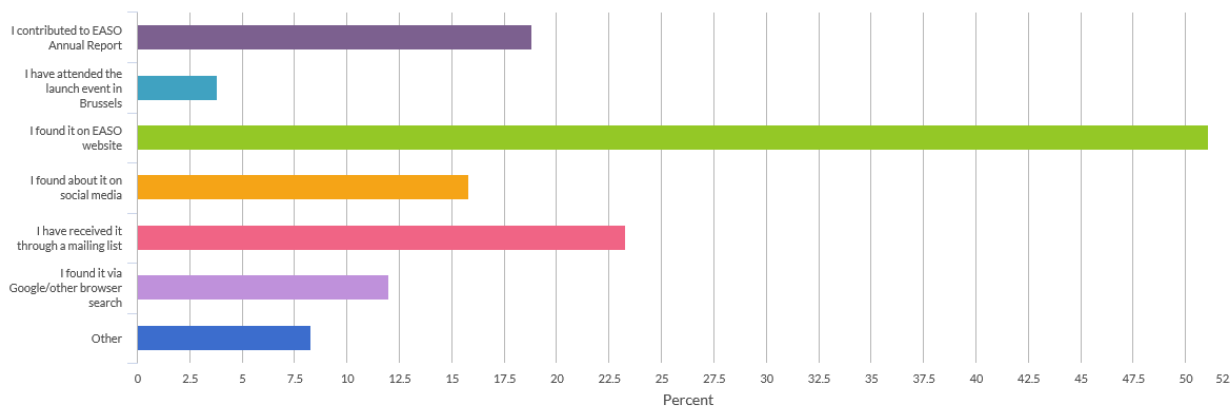
Figure 2. Respondents by type of institution



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

Initially, survey participants were asked to provide information on how they became aware of the Annual Report. The majority of them replied that they found it on EASO’s website (51%). The second largest group of respondents (23%) received the Annual Report via EASO’s mailing distribution list, and the third group in size (19%) comprised active contributors to the Annual Report, namely individuals, who provided EASO with information that was incorporated in the Report (19%).³

Figure 3. How respondents became aware of the 2016 EASO Annual Report⁴



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

The primary aim of the Annual Report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current situation in the area of asylum in the EU+ countries⁵, through a multifaceted examination of asylum-related developments during a given reference year. To this end, a set of survey questions aimed at eliciting feedback on the extent to which this primary aim was achieved, as well as on specific uses by the target audience of the information provided in the Report. In responding to these questions, more than a third of survey participants confirmed that they used the Report to enhance their overall knowledge of the current asylum situation in the EU+ countries, while more than half replied that they use the Report to get updates on asylum-related statistical trends.

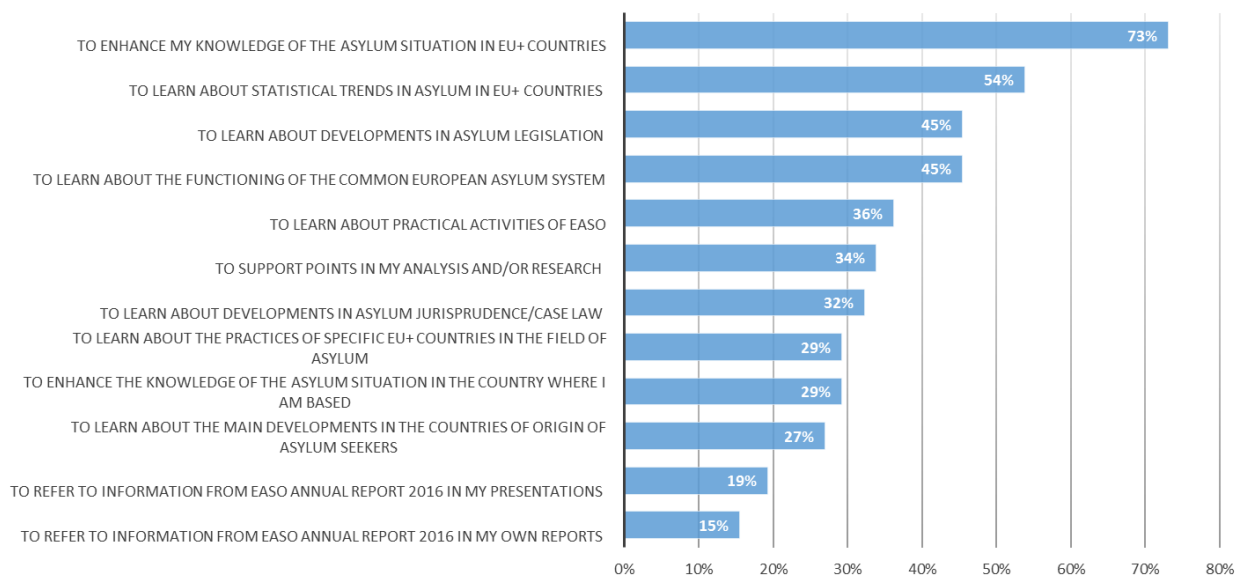
³ The Report is drafted based on information collected from national asylum administrations, civil-society stakeholders, EU agencies and institutions, UNHCR, and other relevant sources.

⁴ Respondents were offered the option to choose more than one answer, hence numbers do not sum up to 100%

⁵ EU Member States; Norway; Switzerland; Iceland; and Liechtenstein

Learning about latest developments in asylum legislation (45%), and increasing understanding of the workings of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (45%) were also listed among the most common uses of the Annual Report by its audience.

Figure 4. How respondents use information provided in the Annual Report 2016⁶



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

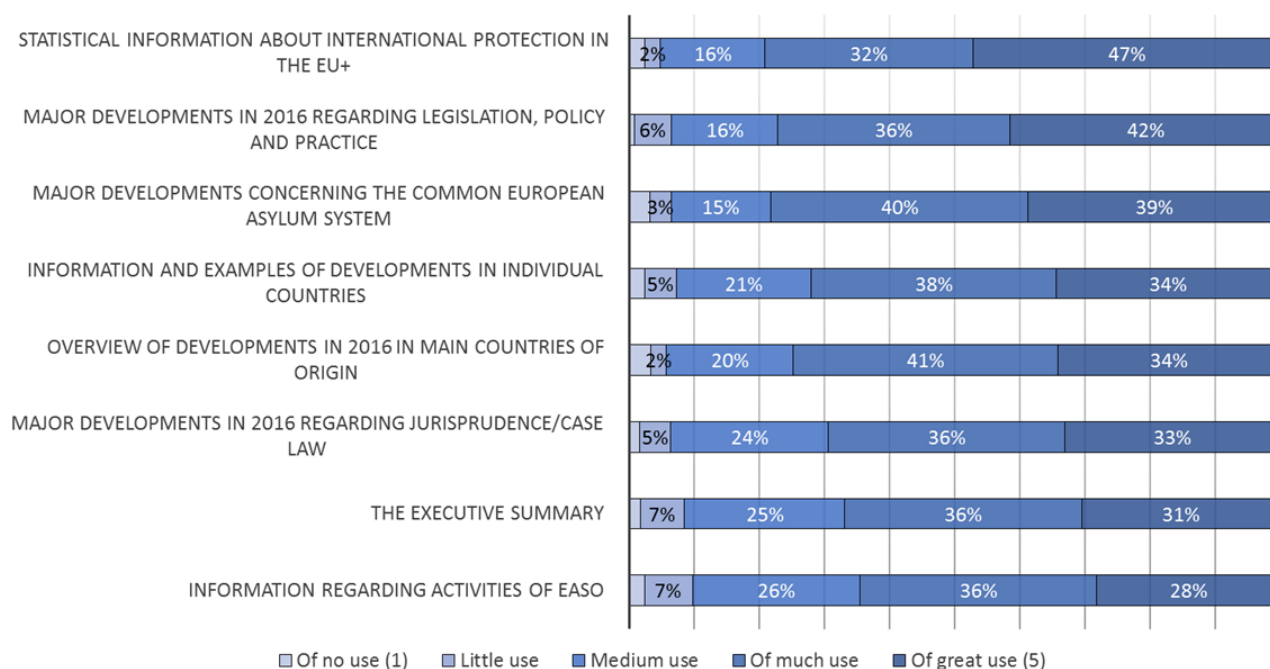
Moreover, the number of survey participants, who responded that they cite the Annual Report in their own work, fluctuated between 15% and 19%. Significant as it is that the Report is gradually establishing itself as a common reference to be cited in asylum-related literature, the numbers indicate that there is a potential to further promote the Report in this area. Interestingly -and importantly- the Report is also used as a valuable curricular tool in teaching activities, among other groups, by interpreters in the context of asylum. This points clearly to the dialectic function the Report may serve in bridging systematic research with applied practice.

Furthermore, respondents were requested to evaluate, in terms of usefulness, each component of the Annual Report, on a scale from 1 (least useful) to 5 (very useful). Statistical information on international protection was the highest-ranking component, with 79% of respondents characterizing it as either “of great use” or of “much use” (values 4 and 5 respectively). Insights on major developments ranked equally high in their usefulness: the sections on CEAS received positive evaluations by 79% of respondents, and the sections on legislation, policy, and practice by 78% of respondents. Only less than 3% of survey participants found the different components of the Report “of no use” and, on average, less than 5% found them “of little use”.

In general, respondents evaluated the Annual Report 2016 positively, with 27% of them regarding it as excellent and 60% as good. 12% of respondents stated that the Annual Report 2016 is average. Only 2% of the respondents replied that the quality of the Report is poor.

⁶ A multiple choice question hence answers do not sum to 100%

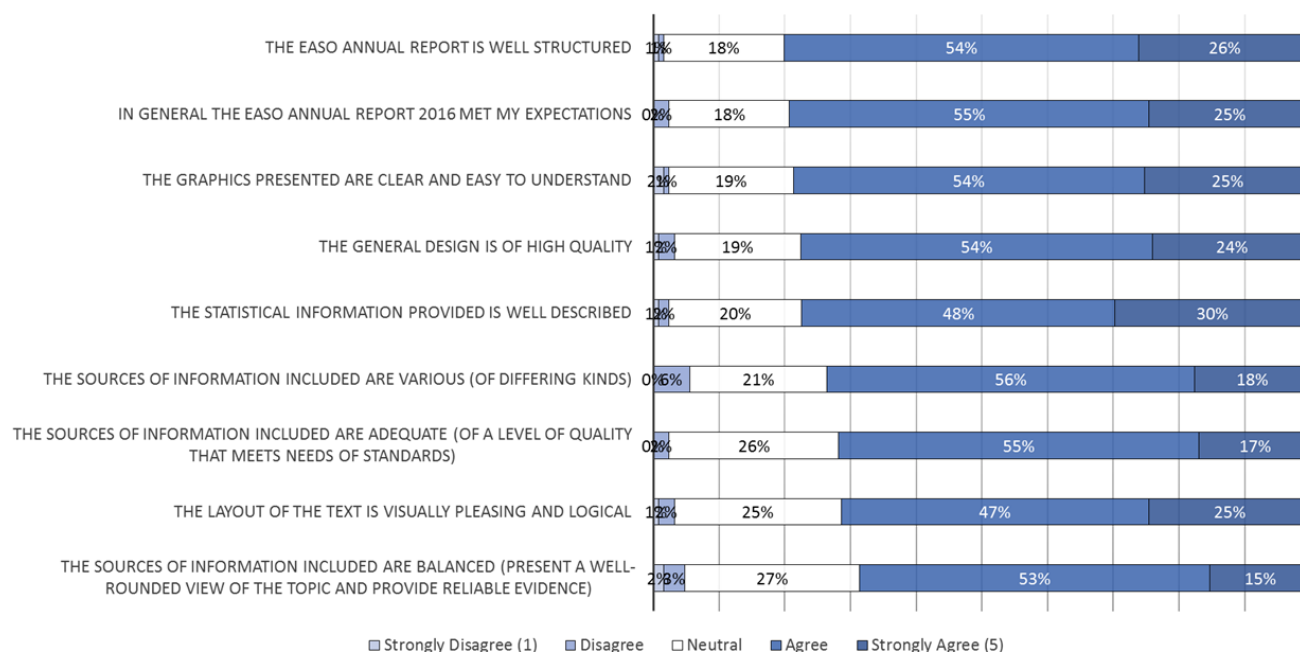
Figure 5. Usefulness of different components of the EASO Annual Report 2016



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

Respondents were also asked to evaluate a number of features of the Annual Report, as well as offer suggestions for improvements, by expressing their agreement or disagreement with a standard set of statements on the quality of the Report and possible steps forward. Again, a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to capture respondent opinions. Figures 6 and 7, illustrate the statements provided and participant responses. An additional option was provided for respondents to offer their comments/suggestions in an open-ended way.

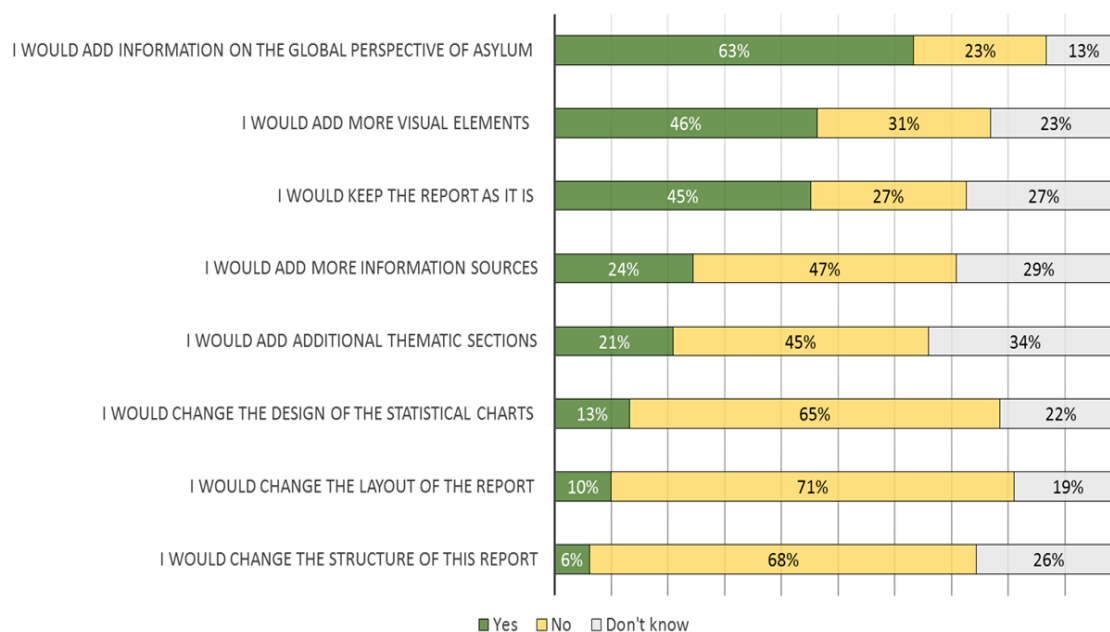
Figure 6. Evaluation of Annual Report 2016



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

Across all categories, the vast majority of survey participants seemed to evaluate the quality of the Report positively, with agreement rates to the provided statements ranging from 68% to 80%. More analytically, most of the respondents stated that, overall, the Report met their expectations (80%) and an equally high percentage (80%) found it well-structured. On this point, 6% of respondents indicated that the Report structure could be improved, with suggestions to that end including: improving the visual attractiveness of the Report; making the Report more interactive; and including more analytic information regarding the reasons for seeking international protection. Less than half of respondents stated that they would keep the Report as is, but a quarter seemed indecisive and expressed no concrete opinion on the subject.

Figure 7. Suggestions for changes



Source: Evaluation Survey Annual Report 2016

In general, respondents agreed that the sources of information included in the Report are adequate (72%), of sufficient variety (74%), and balanced (68%). In this regard, a group of survey participants indicated that Report sources could be further enriched by incorporating additional information (21%) and by adding new thematic sections (21%). In more detail, suggestions for additional sources included: expanding the coverage on civil society's views, including critical voices; incorporating insights from reports produced by NGOs, with an emphasis on local and grassroots organizations; including information from the national ombudsman offices and judiciary; adding more documentation (e.g. photos); including academic sources and analyses; and offering insights from personal experiences of asylum seekers.

In terms of topics to be added or covered in more detail, 63% of respondents stated that they would add information on the global perspective of asylum. Moreover, in their individual, open-ended comments, respondents expressed further suggestions toward enhancing the quality of the Report. These included more information on: countries of origin; (lack of) compliance with EU asylum law as reflected by infringement procedures; geographical distribution of reception centres and input on conditions in those facilities; external dimension of CEAS and cooperation with third countries; statistics on interpretation needs and language requested; deeper analysis of recognition rates and secondary movements of asylum applicants in the EU+; additional analytical sections on key nationalities; and deeper coverage on issues relevant to children (such as the situation of children in countries of origin, distribution of asylum-seeking children among EU+ countries, issues of trafficking of children).

Regarding the format of the Report, additional suggestions were put forward, including: to provide a more concise document; to prepare versions of the Report in multiple languages; to develop an e-book format; to make a longer executive summary with more detailed information and a more extensive conclusions part addressed to a variety of audiences. Finally, beyond questions of format, a common request centered on publishing the Report earlier than June, if at all possible.

December 2017