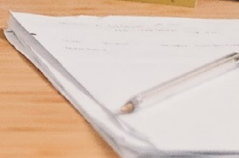
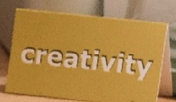
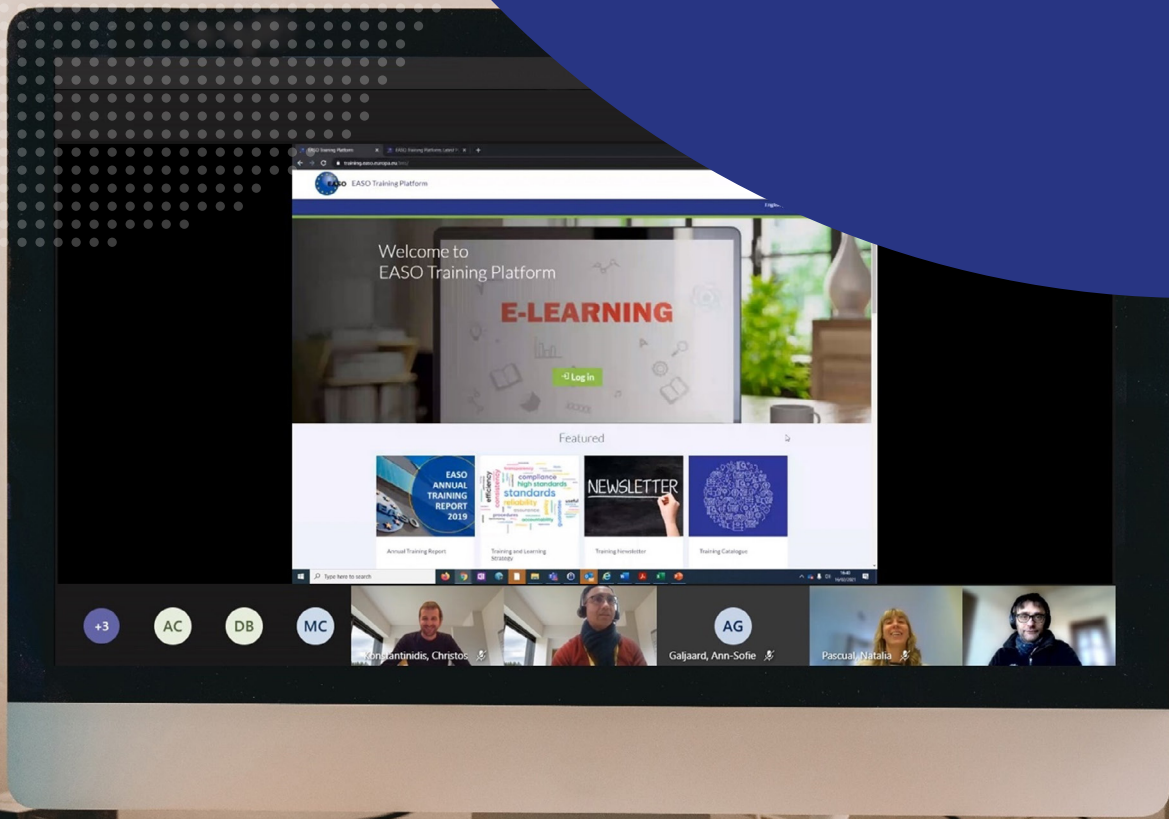




EASO Annual Training Report 2020

Executive Summary





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Foreword



The past year has challenged us all in ways that were unimaginable just 18 months ago. The upheaval in the way we work and the way in which institutions operate had a profound impact in all sectors, not least in the asylum field. Travel restrictions, port closures and physical distancing measures required all relevant actors to quickly adapt their working arrangements to ensure that persons in need of international protection could continue to access asylum processes while adhering to all health and safety protocols.

Even during this challenging period, EASO wanted to continue the implementation of necessary changes to ensure that we could continue supporting national asylum and reception administrations. Specifically, in the training domain, our EASO team rapidly deployed online solutions to replace face-to-face sessions with webinars, thereby enabling the continued delivery of EASO training in this new context. It also strengthened further its own internal capacity

in terms of in-house trainers to complement and support national deployed experts in the delivery of train-the-trainer and operational training sessions.

When I took over the position of Executive Director of EASO, we started with the internal restructuring of Agency, which resulted in the establishment of a Centre entirely dedicated to EASO Training - the Training and Professional Development Centre (TPDC). The TPDC will enable EASO to continue putting quality and excellence at the heart of its training activities whilst allocating training resources in an optimal manner.

I am proud to point out that this edition of the Annual Training Report 2020 shows how, despite the challenge posed by the ongoing pandemic, EASO was able to rapidly respond to the changes and maintain high levels of training delivery during 2020, with an increase of 5 % in registrations for EASO Training Curriculum modules compared to 2019. As a departure from previous editions, this report also goes beyond the numbers to highlight important areas of the TPDC's activities as well as to anticipate some of the main developments in EASO training over the coming year.

During the past year, EASO continued to implement the Training and Learning Strategy adopted by EASO's Management Board in 2019. This will soon translate into an enhanced quality assurance framework for EASO training, which will consolidate EASO's position, in accordance with its founding regulation, as a centre of expertise on all matters relating to asylum. This new quality assurance framework will ensure that the learner is always at the centre of EASO's training activities, and in accordance with European standards and guidelines in training and education, also ensure that training quality standards are maintained and enhanced across the training cycle.

In delivering this ambitious agenda, EASO will continue to rely on the invaluable contributions of experts drawn from national asylum and reception authorities who, as an expression of the principle of solidarity, are made available by the Member States to participate in the development and delivery of EASO training. Their contribution, together with that of other key international, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders active in the field of asylum, migration and fundamental rights, ensures that EASO can continue to assist EU Member States and third country partners in building the capacity and resilience of their national asylum systems and of the Common European Asylum System as a whole.

Nina Gregori

EASO Executive Director

European Asylum Support Office

Introduction

The *EASO Annual Training Report 2020* provides an update on outcomes achieved throughout the year. These include reporting on training activities as well as milestones reached as the Training and Professional Development Centre (TPDC) implements its Training and Learning Strategy. This Executive Summary outlines the highlights.

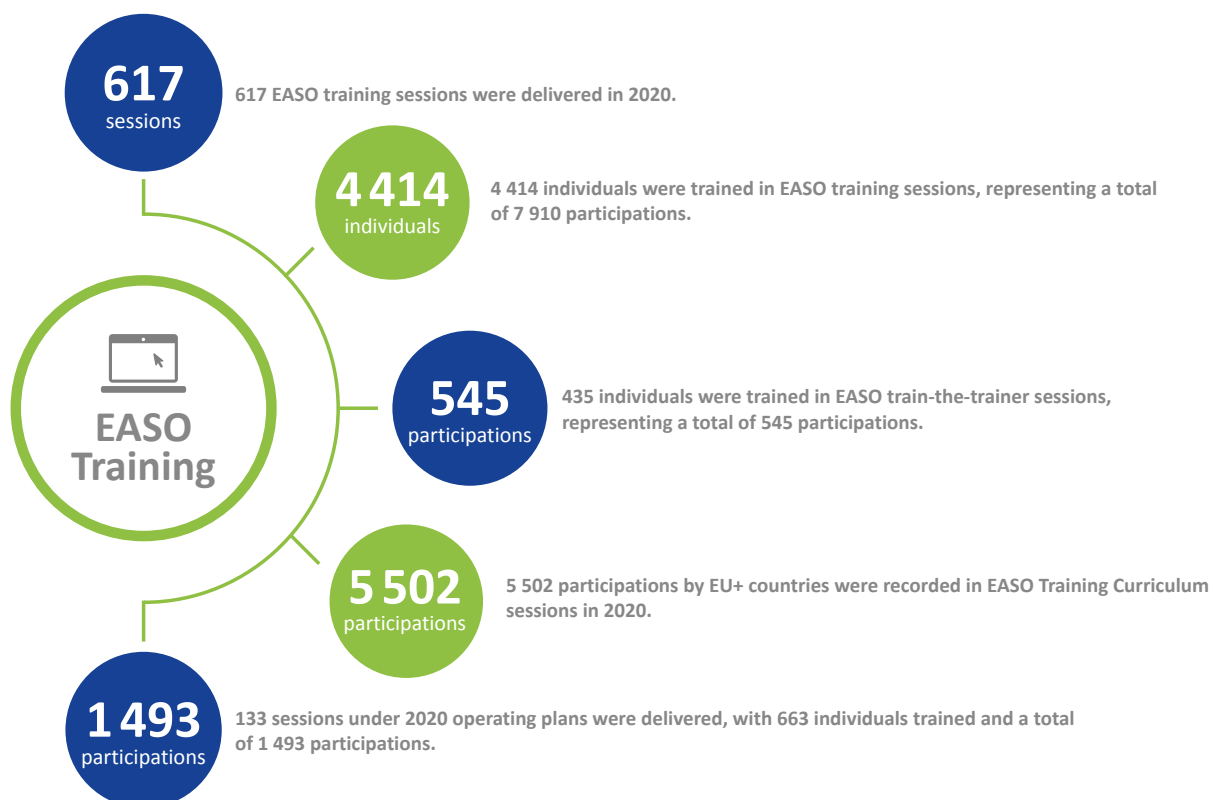
The report focuses on specific themes such as adapting training activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the finalisation of the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework; the restructuring of the EASO Training Curriculum; and the development of assessments in preparation for the incremental roll-out of certified training. An important milestone in 2020 was the development of the EASO Training Quality Assurance Framework, which provides the guidelines for ensuring that consistently high training standards are maintained and enhanced across all areas of the training cycle.

1. Overview of training activities in figures



In 2020, the total number of participations ⁽¹⁾ in EASO training sessions reached 7 910. Training in EASO Training Curriculum modules increased by 5 % in terms of participations. The COVID-19 pandemic did not impact the implementation of the EASO Training Curriculum thanks to the successful transition to fully virtual training. On the other hand, training activities within operating plans which require more face-to-face activities (standard courses, on-the-job coaching and tailor-made courses), saw a decrease in participations of 58 %. This resulted in an overall decrease of 11 % compared to 2019.

Key figures for EASO training activities in 2020



⁽¹⁾ EASO training counts participation in training. This means that an individual attending several training sessions will be counted several times.

2. In the spotlight



Training needs analysis – the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for asylum and reception officials and the EASO Training Needs Analysis Tool

The EASO Training Curriculum is designed specifically to provide common vocational training for asylum and reception officials working in EU Member States. However, given the diversity (in both size and organisational structure) of the organisations responsible for asylum and reception across Europe, EASO, supported by the Member States, mapped all the duties and tasks specific to the sector in order to ensure that the training we design and deliver is aligned with the job to be performed. The result is the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for asylum and reception officials (ESQF), which was finalised in 2020. The framework categorises the job tasks according to competence areas and levels of complexity and outlines the knowledge, skills, responsibilities and autonomy necessary to carry them out. These are aligned with the learning required to ensure that asylum and reception officials can perform their duties effectively and in line with the Common European Asylum System. The ESQF can help identify gaps in the training we offer. The ESQF is used throughout the training cycle (for needs analysis, design and development, implementation and evaluation, etc.) to ensure that our training is flexible and accurate for the jobs to be performed.

The ESQF has been used to build an interactive and user-friendly tool which proposes learning paths targeted to training needs – the EASO Training Needs Analysis Tool (ETNAT). After the user has input the job tasks performed, an algorithm is used to select corresponding EASO Training Curriculum modules, ranked in order of relevance. The ETNAT pilot phase was launched at the end of 2020 and Member States' asylum and reception administrations are assisting EASO in improving ETNAT's features to ensure that it provides maximum usability and added value.

Training needs analysis – a practical example with the EASO–Spain joint rapid training needs assessment

During the last quarter of 2020, the TPDC participated fully in the work leading to the signature of the 2021 operating plan with Spain.

EASO and Spanish authorities explored areas of collaboration and the potential for EASO to support the Spanish Ministry for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration in relation to reception. After identifying potential priority areas of cooperation, a joint rapid needs assessment was conducted over a period of 6 weeks. This assessment confirmed the priority areas of support with the Spanish authorities and all relevant stakeholders. As part of the process to identify training needs, the tasks carried out by Spanish reception officials were mapped to the competence areas in the ESQF. By identifying relevant learning outcomes, future training support can be planned using existing training modules or ad hoc training targeted to specific needs. A first outline of a training package which could be of interest to the identified target groups was also developed.

New approach to design and development – towards learner-centred flexible learning pathways

In 2020, the TPDC continued working towards alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. In practice, this has meant a new design methodology. The TPDC has developed module design templates for all learners' modules. Each template, in line with the ESQF, identifies the aim of the module, target audience, job tasks and learning outcomes. Based on this, a targeted assessment strategy is adopted in each certified module. This learning-outcomes approach is being applied during the restructuring of the Training Curriculum to allow for more flexible learning pathways.

Modules developed in 2020

- Identification of potential exclusion cases.
- Registration of applications for international protection.
- Reception of vulnerable persons: identification of vulnerability and provision of initial support (Block A) and needs assessment and design of interventions (Block B).

Modules upgraded in 2020

- Evidence assessment.
- Exclusion – which has been renamed 'The application of the exclusion clauses to persons undeserving of international protection'.

3. Virtual training solutions



The COVID-19 pandemic impacted EASO's training in many ways. When all face-to-face training activities were suspended, the TPDC rose to the challenge and adapted rapidly in order to be able to deliver training virtually. This coincided with a dramatic rise in registration for EASO training during the first months of the pandemic.

Online sessions on EASO's learning management system remained open as planned and participants were enrolled as per usual practice. As in the case of the EASO train-the-trainer sessions, the face-to-face component was suspended until further notice. Questions, answers and general discussion forums were introduced in all online studies, with the aim of providing learners with an additional opportunity to address any questions they might have to the trainers. In addition, practice exercises were added to the online studies in order to enhance the learning experience in the absence of the immediate face-to-face sessions.

Adaptation to virtual training – finding technical solutions

In parallel, the TPDC performed a rapid assessment and testing of remote solutions to support the delivery of the training based on available tools and their features. This resulted in the delivery of virtual synchronous training in the form of webinars. Responding to the need to enrich the e-learning toolbox for synchronous virtual training, the TPDC performed market research to find alternative and complementary technical solutions and produced a technical manual for the features of the applications most used by in-house trainers.

From face-to-face to virtual solutions – in practice

All planned face-to-face training sessions were replaced by interactive webinars and the TPDC developed ad hoc virtual solutions (i.e. webinars on best interests determinations, remote interviewing and supporting staff well-being during COVID-19).

Satisfaction

91 % of the participants in some of the most important training sessions expressed overall satisfaction, while 86 % were satisfied regarding the use of the virtual platform. The participants' feedback shows that the EASO trainers were able to convey knowledge and skills even in the unprecedented situation occurring in 2020.

4. Preparing for the future – implementing the EASO Training and Learning Strategy



Training Quality Assurance Framework

During 2020, the TPDC worked extensively with training national contact points and with the Certification and Accreditation Working Group to further define and develop the quality assurance system for EASO training activities. The result of this work is a draft Training Quality Assurance Framework which outlines the main guiding principles of this quality assurance system. The framework is meant to ensure full alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, while taking into consideration EASO's specific mandate and mission.

As we move towards implementation of the Training Quality Assurance Framework, the following activities are being carried out:

- development of a standardised training needs analysis methodology;
- development of a new method for the design and development of modules;
- certification of trainers;
- launch of certified modules including assessments and training for trainers;
- enhanced support for learners;
- development of an evaluation methodology.

Restructuring the EASO Training Curriculum

Over the past year, the TPDC has continued restructuring the EASO Training Curriculum, which will now feature a larger number of smaller modules. This new structure will allow for a smooth progression of learning by ensuring that learners will not have to repeat learning or engage in learning which is unnecessary.

Development of thematic content courses for trainers

The core modules have been identified as having a common learning theme for the duties and tasks of future case officers. Trainers will be equipped with extra skills and knowledge to support learners during their learning journey. The same thematic approach will be applied, where possible, when designing the content of the courses for trainers of other modules.

Development of modules on Becoming an EASO assessor, Becoming an EASO trainer and Becoming an EASO coach

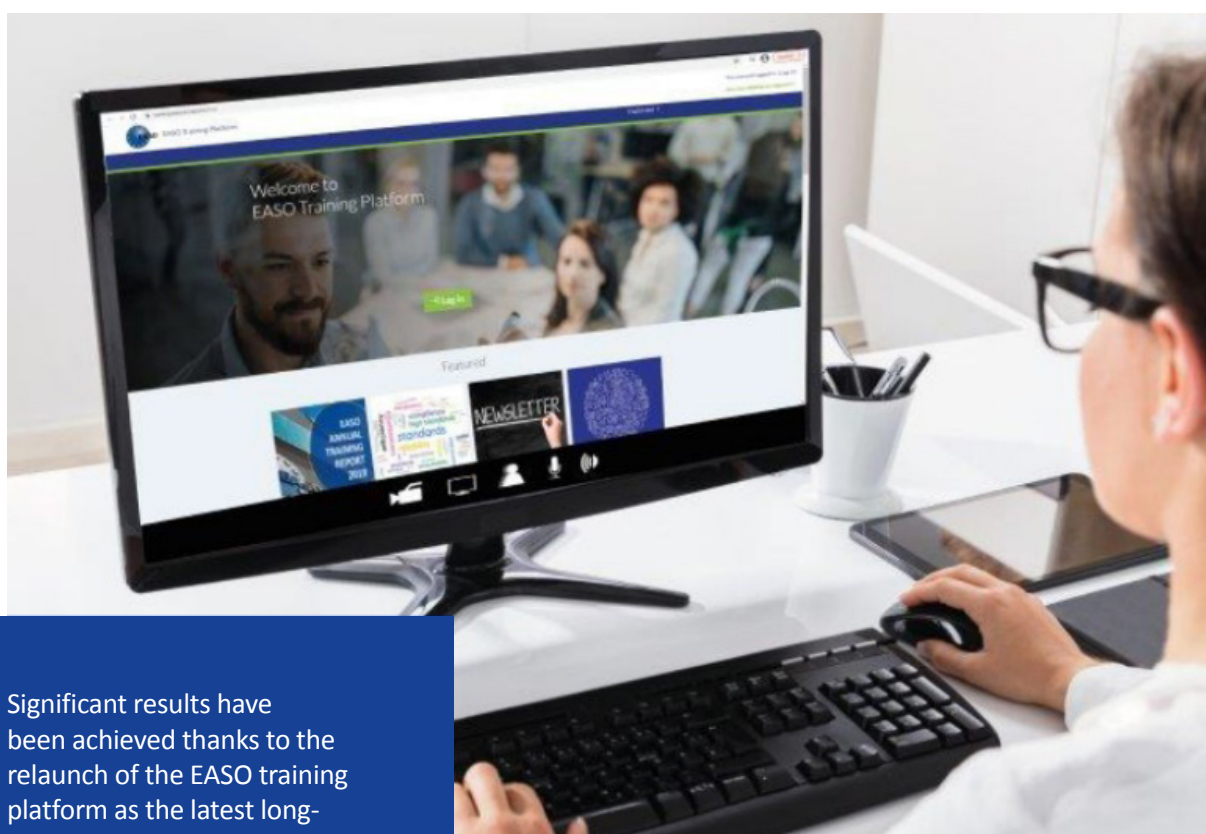
EASO will continue to support trainers with a set of specific modules to guide them in their roles as assessors, coaches and didactic experts.

Development of the foundation modules (with assessment) and launch of the core modules and foundation modules

EASO will launch the new foundation modules and restructured core modules for learners.

Revamping and upgrading the learning management system

In 2020, the TPDC prepared for a relaunch of its learning management system (planned for the first quarter of 2021), upgraded to its newest long-term support version and with a brand-new look and feel that brings it further in line with EASO's updated visual identity.



Significant results have been achieved thanks to the relaunch of the EASO training platform as the latest long-term support version, the web analytics platform, the development of a network of e-learning professionals across EU agencies and the authentication of end users with a single set of credentials.

