

Operational plan - Relocation 2026

July 2026

The **European Union Agency for Asylum** (hereinafter the 'EUAA' or the 'Agency'), represented for the purpose of signature of this operational plan by its Executive Director, and **the Member States agreeing to this operational plan**, represented by their duly authorised signatories, as set out on the signature pages hereto,

collectively referred to as 'the Parties',

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) 439/2010¹ (hereinafter the 'EUAA Regulation'), and in particular Articles 18, 30 and 32 thereof,

Hereby agree on this operational plan (hereinafter also 'the Plan') for the provision of operational and technical assistance on relocation by the EUAA.

The implementation period of the Plan, including the foreseeable duration of the deployment of asylum support teams, shall be until 28 February 2027.

This period may be extended by agreement of the Parties through written exchanges. Any substantial changes to the Plan will be agreed through exchange(s) of letters between the Parties.

The Plan enters into force on the date after it has been signed by all Parties.

During the implementation period, Member States other than the Parties may agree to be bound by this Plan ('opt-in') following the procedure for requesting operational and technical assistance under Chapter 6 of the EUAA Regulation. Such agreement shall be formalised through an exchange of letters between the Member State concerned and the EUAA, which shall specify the measures agreed for the respective Member State. The implementation of such measures shall commence on the date specified in the exchange of letters.

The exchanges of letters shall form an integral part of this Operational Plan. The measures agreed therein shall not affect the measures relating to the other Member States as agreed in this Plan.

The other Member States bound by this Plan shall be duly informed of any opt-in by a Member State.

Any opt-in of Member States following the entry into force of the Plan, shall not require an amendment thereto within the meaning of Section 1.12 of this Plan, provided that such changes do not affect the individual Member State specific measures established therein relating to the other Member States bound by this Plan. The Parties shall be informed accordingly.

The Plan will be made publicly available on the EUAA's website.

¹ OJ L 468, 30.12.2021, p. 1.

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Contents

I.	Introduction.....	9
II.	Operational plan: description of the situation, operational objectives and measures	10
1.	Description of the situation.....	10
2.	Operational objectives and measures	12
III.	Operational plan: general implementing provisions	19
1.	Legal framework	19
1.1	General legal basis for the operational plan	19
1.2	Legal framework applicable to the operational plan.....	19
1.3	Lawfulness	20
1.4	Respect for fundamental rights	20
1.4.1	Protection of fundamental rights	20
1.4.2	The role of the Fundamental Rights Officer of the Agency	20
1.4.3	The complaints mechanism of the Agency	21
1.4.4	Code of conduct for experts in asylum support teams	21
1.4.5	Escalation of potential violations of fundamental rights by a host Member State	22
1.5	Public access to documents	22
1.6	Protection of personal data	23
1.7	Intellectual property rights	23
1.8	Civil and criminal liability of experts participating in asylum support teams ..	24
1.9	Protocol (No 7) on privileges and immunities	24
1.10	The role of the coordinating officer of the Agency	24
1.11	Non-substantial changes during implementation	25
1.12	Amendments to or adaptations of the Plan	25
1.13	Suspension or termination of the Plan	25
2.	Implementation provisions	26
2.1	Organisational pre-conditions	26
2.1.1	Pre-conditions applicable to the host Member States	26
2.1.2	Pre-conditions applicable to the EUAA	26
2.2	Conditions for deployment of asylum support teams	26
2.3	Composition of asylum support teams	27
2.4	Implementation modalities	28
3.	Security and safety	30
3.1	Standard security requirements.....	30

3.2	Specific security and safety requirements.....	31
3.3	Suspension of operational activities on security and safety grounds.....	31
3.4	Security incident reporting	31
4.	Communication	31
5.	Cooperation with other stakeholders.....	32
5.1	Cooperation with the European Commission and other EU agencies	32
5.2	Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	32
5.3	Cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration	33
6.	Monitoring and evaluation framework	33
6.1	Monitoring and reporting	33
6.2	Evaluation	33

I. Introduction

The **operational plan** addresses the specific needs of the host Member States with regard to the relocation or transfer of applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection within the Union.

The Plan provides the framework for the delivery of operational and technical assistance by the EUAA, including the deployment of asylum support teams.

The Plan is composed of two main parts and two annexes², which constitute an integral part thereof.

Part II. Operational plan: description of the situation, operational objectives and measures

This part provides an overview of the specific operational situation leading to the requests for provision of operational and technical assistance by the Agency. It describes the operational and technical assistance measures agreed to be implemented in the framework of the Plan, including the composition of asylum support teams, and is tailored for each specific Plan.

Part III. Operational plan: general implementing provisions

This part defines the general provisions for the operational and technical assistance, including inter alia the general legal framework, implementation modalities, general operational preconditions and conditions for deployment of asylum support teams, security and safety aspects, communication, monitoring and evaluation provisions.

The Annexes complement the Plan's general implementing provisions and provide further guidance concerning the processing of personal data in the context of the implementation of the Plan's activities as well as the modalities for the assignment of remunerated external experts.

The Plan is binding in its entirety, including its Annexes, on the Agency, the host Member States and the participating Member States.

The EUAA shall share a copy of the Plan with the Members of the EUAA's Management Board for information. All versions of this document shall also be made available to the competent authorities in each EU Member State, as well as the associate countries³.

² Country specific where relevant

³ Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

II. Operational plan: description of the situation, operational objectives and measures

1. Description of the situation

Pursuant to Article 56 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1351⁴ on asylum and migration management, the operationalisation of the solidarity mechanism is based on an annual migration management cycle. This cycle is initiated with the adoption of the **European Annual Asylum and Migration Report**, which provides a strategic overview of the asylum and migratory situation in the European Union and the **Commission implementing decision** which identifies whether a Member State is under migratory pressure, at risk of migratory pressure or facing a significant migratory situation. On this basis the European Commission simultaneously submits a proposal for a Council Implementing Act establishing an Annual Solidarity Pool, reflecting the identified needs for the upcoming year. This is subsequently discussed at the High-Level EU Solidarity Forum, where Member States pledge their solidarity contributions, and the Annual Solidarity Pool is formally established by the Council.

In November 2025, the Commission adopted the first European Annual Asylum and Migration Report⁵ and, on that basis, proposed the establishment of the first Annual Solidarity Pool for 2026 in accordance with Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 (AMMR). Following this proposal, on 22 December 2025 the Council adopted the implementing decision establishing the **Annual Solidarity Pool⁶ for 2026**, setting the overall solidarity contributions, including reference figures for relocations and financial support, and the pledges made by Member States pursuant to Article 57 of the AMMR.

In accordance with Article 16(2) of the EUAA Regulation, the EUAA is mandated to provide operational and technical assistance to Member States to, inter alia, assist with the **relocation or transfer of applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection** within the Union. In accordance with Article 17 of the EUAA Regulation, Member States shall address requests for assistance to the Executive Director.

On 18 May 2026, the **Republic of Cyprus** submitted a request for support to the Agency. Based on the Commission's assessment of the migratory situation, the Republic of Cyprus was identified as one of the Member States under migratory pressure and is eligible to benefit from the solidarity measures established in the 2026 Annual Solidarity Pool⁷. The Member State outlined at its request the current national constraints and the specific support required to implement the 1,283 relocations foreseen to take place from the country within the prescribed time limits.

As reflected in the 2025 European Annual Asylum and Migration Report, while the migration and asylum situation in Cyprus showed an improvement compared to the previous year, in particular due to a significant reduction in illegal border crossings (IBCs), the country still faced

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202401351

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The European Annual Asylum and Migration Report (2025), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/DOC/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0795>

⁶ 2025/2642 Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/2642 of 19 December 2025 on the establishment of the Annual Solidarity Pool for 2026, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202502642

⁷ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/2323 of 11 November 2025 pursuant to Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council

disproportionate obligations in relation to the overall situation in the Union. The decrease in IBCs was mainly driven by fewer departures from Syria and Lebanon, including in the context of developments in Syria and increased engagement with the Lebanese authorities. Nevertheless, Cyprus remained one of the Member States most affected relative to its size, ranking third in the Union in terms of irregular arrivals when measured against GDP and population, with close to 3,000 IBCs recorded.

Cyprus also continued to face disproportionate obligations in relation to asylum and protection systems. It registered more than 5,000 applications for international protection, placing it among the Member States with the highest numbers relative to GDP and population. In addition, around 3,500 registrations for temporary protection were recorded, further contributing to the overall operational burden on the national system. Cyprus was also among the main Member States that received the highest number of applications by unaccompanied minors at Union level, highlighting the particular pressure on its reception and child protection capacities.

The planned relocations from the country are expected to contribute to alleviating pressure on its asylum and reception systems. However, the implementation of the relocation activities under the AMMR requires operational and administrative resources that the country currently has limited capacities to make available, in particular in light of the new requirements and legally binding time limits established under the AMMR, as well as the need to relocate a high number of persons within a limited timeframe. While Cyprus can build on its experience from previous voluntary relocation schemes, the implementation of the mandatory solidarity mechanism under the AMMR requires a different operational approach, including enhanced planning, coordination and preparedness. In this regard, Cyprus requested the Agency's support across all support activities offered by the Agency to benefiting Member States.

On 19 May 2026, **Bulgaria** submitted a request for support to the Agency. Bulgaria committed to offering contributions to the Annual Solidarity Pool through 214 relocations.

Based on the findings of the 2025 European Annual Asylum and Migration Report, Bulgaria is identified as a Member State at risk of migratory pressure and as facing a significant migratory situation. In particular, Bulgaria has been affected by fluctuations in migratory flows along the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes, reflecting its role as a country of first entry and resulting in sustained pressure on its asylum and migration system.

During the reference period⁸, Bulgaria recorded nearly 10,000 applications for international protection, a significant number relative to its GDP and population, including a high proportion of applications from unaccompanied minors, placing it among the Member States most affected in this regard. At the same time, it registered a high and steady number of temporary protection registrations, with over 21,000 new registrations, positioning it among the top Member States relative to GDP and population. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of temporary protection registrations and applications for international protection over the past 5 years - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025, and especially since 2022 - and relative high number of positive decisions and rejections, created a relative high burden on the return system and placed the country in a situation of facing a significant migratory situation.

On 4 June 2026, **Romania** submitted a request for support to the Agency. Romania has committed to offering contributions to the Annual Solidarity Pool through 661 relocations.

Based on the 2025 European Annual Asylum and Migration Report, Romania has not been identified as Member State under migratory pressure or facing a significant migratory situation. The situation in the country was characterised by a low and relatively stable number of illegal

⁸ 1 July 2024-30 June 2025

border crossings, the majority of which involved Ukrainian nationals irregularly entering the country and requesting temporary protection.

Romania's contribution to the Solidarity Pool is based on its fair share. Romania decided to fulfil its entire fair share exclusively through relocations, amounting to 661 relocations. Implementing this commitment within a six-month period represents a significant operational challenge, given both the scale of the contribution and the limited timeframe.

In this context, Bulgaria and Romania both requested the Agency's support with targeted measures, in particular for the provision of information upon arrival and preparation of information provision material, interpretation services and timely information to the benefiting Member State and the EU Solidarity Coordinator on the safe arrival of the persons concerned. While both countries can draw on their experience from previous voluntary relocation schemes, the new requirements and legally binding time limits established under the AMMR, as well as the need to implement a new operational approach, requiring an enhanced planning, coordination and preparedness, necessitates additional capacity and/or expertise, including capacity building, for which the countries have reached out for support to the Agency.

All three Member States currently receive operational and technical assistance by the Agency in the context of agreed Operational Plans⁹. In this regard, the Agency's support on relocation will be complementary to other support provided and will not duplicate support already provided in other areas. Complementarity and synergies between the types of support will be ensured, including through targeted capacity-building activities where appropriate.

The Agency subjected the requests for assistance in relocation procedures and processes received within the framework of the 2026 solidarity cycle, to assessment, in accordance with Article 17(3) of the EUAA Regulation, enabling it to identify and propose the measures referred to in section 2 below.

2. Operational objectives and measures

The following operational and technical assistance measures are hereby agreed by the Parties to be implemented in the framework of the operational plan.

2.1. Support to the Republic of Cyprus

Measure CY-REL-1 – Relocation Cyprus	
Role in the 2026 Solidarity Cycle: Benefiting Member State	
Operational objective (outcome): Increased capacity of the national authorities for the planning and implementation of relocations of applicants for and/or beneficiaries of international protection within the Union.	
National stakeholders	Cyprus Asylum Service (CAS)
Operational preconditions	In addition to specific preconditions referred to in other parts of the operational plan, the following operational preconditions are agreed:

⁹ <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/archive-of-operations>

	• Steering Committees and/or other coordination meetings at relevant management levels take place at jointly agreed regular intervals or ad hoc, to ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Plan. • Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and operational guidelines/workflows where necessary for the implementation of EUAA support are agreed and signed as a matter of priority. • Working arrangements governing the Asylum Support Teams (ASTs) deployed by EUAA to ensure effective and coordinated collaboration at local and national levels are agreed where necessary. • The scope and areas of intervention of EUAA, including the tasks to be performed by the deployed ASTs, shall be agreed between the Agency and the competent authorities and shall be set out in written working instructions endorsed by them, which may be amended following joint consultation. • National authorities shall ensure that ASTs are granted timely and effective access to the national platforms and systems (i.e., DubliNet) required for the proper and efficient execution of their duties. • National authorities shall ensure that appropriate data protection notices are in place, including explaining the involvement of the EUAA in the relevant processing activities.
Activities	CY-REL-1.1 Support for the identification and matching of relocation candidates with contributing Member States • Support for the establishment and maintenance of a relocation pool of applicants for and/or beneficiaries of international protection. • Support with the collection and/or consolidation of data on family, cultural or other relevant ties. • Support for matching relocation candidates based on eligibility, meaningful links and, if relevant, reasonable preferences. • Support for obtaining and recording consents from beneficiaries of international protection. • Support with interpretation throughout all stages of the relocation procedure, including through remote interpretation. • Support for the provision of information on relocation procedures, rights, and obligations to persons concerned at different stages, including follow-up for those rejected for relocation as well as pre-departure orientation sessions for those to be relocated.

	CY-REL-1.2 Support for the processing of relocation cases • Support for the compilation and transmission of information and documents to contributing Member States via DubliNet. • Support for the drafting of transfer decisions in compliance with the applicable regulations. • Support for the notification of transfer decisions to relocation candidates. • Support for the organisation of logistical arrangements for personal security interviews¹⁰ and facilitation of cooperation with relevant actors. CY-REL-1.3 Support for quality management and capacity building • Support for the improvement and harmonisation of relocation processes. • Support for capacity building and knowledge transfer. • Support for the development and adaptation of information materials tailored to the national context, complementing centrally developed resources. • Support with data collection and statistical reporting. The scope of activities can be further detailed and complemented in accordance with identified needs and in mutual agreement between the EUAA and the Member State. Unless specified otherwise, the above activities are deemed to be implemented for the full duration of the operational plan. This can also include preparatory actions for the next cycle, conditional upon the outcome of the assessment of the European Commission in accordance with Article 11 of the AMMR, and the role of the Member State in that cycle.
EUAA resources	<u>Deployment of asylum support teams</u> Unless otherwise defined, deployments are deemed to cover the full duration of the operational plan. • Access to Asylum Procedure Experts – up to 5 • Asylum/Reception Operations Experts – up to 5 • Project Management Experts – 1 • Dublin Experts – up to 5 • Interpreters – up to 13

¹⁰ The scope of this activity is limited to logistical support; EUAA is not involved in conducting security assessments/checks, which is the sole responsibility of the concerned MSs.

2.2. Support to Bulgaria

Measure BG-REL-2 – Relocation Bulgaria	
Role in the 2026 Solidarity Cycle: Contributing Member State	
Operational objective (outcome): Increased capacity of the national authorities for the relocation of applicants for and/or beneficiaries of international protection within the Union.	
National stakeholders	State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers
Operational preconditions	In addition to specific preconditions referred to in other parts of the operational plan, the following operational preconditions are agreed: - Steering Committees and other coordination meetings at relevant management levels take place at jointly agreed regular intervals or ad hoc, to ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Plan. - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and operational guidelines/workflows where necessary for the implementation of EUAA support are agreed and signed as a matter of priority. - Working arrangements governing the ASTs deployed by EUAA to ensure effective and coordinated collaboration at local and national levels are agreed where necessary. - The scope and areas of intervention of EUAA, including the tasks to be performed by the deployed ASTs, shall be agreed between the Agency and the competent authorities and shall be set out in written working instructions endorsed by them, which may be amended only following joint consultation. - National authorities shall ensure that when applicable ASTs are granted timely and effective access to the national platforms and systems required for the proper and efficient execution of their duties. - National authorities shall ensure that appropriate data protection notices are in place, including explaining the involvement of the EUAA in the relevant processing activities, when relevant.
Activities	BG-REL-2.1 Support for the processing of relocation cases - Support for the provision of information to relocated individuals upon arrival in the contributing Member State. - Support for maintaining reporting of the safe arrival of the persons concerned to relevant stakeholders (i.e., Benefiting MS, EU Solidarity Coordinator). - Support with interpretation during the information provision upon arrival, including through remote interpretation. - Support for the development and/or adaptation of information materials tailored to the national context, complementing centrally developed resources.

	The scope of activities can be further detailed and complemented in accordance with identified needs and in mutual agreement between the EUAA and the Member State. Unless specified otherwise, the above activities are deemed to be implemented for the entire duration of the operational plan. This can also include preparatory actions for the next annual solidarity cycle, conditional upon the outcome of the assessment of the European Commission in accordance with Article 11 of the AMMR, and the role of the Member State in that cycle.
EUAA resources	<u>Deployment of asylum support teams</u> Unless otherwise defined, deployments are deemed to cover the full duration of the operational plan. • Access to Asylum Procedures Experts – up to 4 • Asylum/Reception Operations Experts – 1 • Interpreters – up to 5 The number of experts and deployment periods will be further detailed upon agreement of a detailed calendar of activities.

2.3. Support to Romania

Measure RO-REL-3 – Relocation Romania	
Role in the 2026 Solidarity Cycle: Contributing Member State	
Operational objective (outcome): Increased capacity of the national authorities for the relocation of applicants for and/or beneficiaries of international protection within the Union.	
National stakeholders	General Inspectorate for Immigration
Operational preconditions	In addition to specific preconditions referred to in other parts of the operational plan, the following operational preconditions are agreed: • Steering Committees and other coordination meetings at relevant management levels take place at jointly agreed regular intervals or ad hoc, to ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Plan. • Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and operational guidelines/workflows where necessary for the implementation of EUAA support are agreed and signed as a matter of priority. • Working arrangements concerning the ASTs deployed by the EUAA to ensure efficient collaboration at local and national levels are agreed where relevant.

	• The scope and areas of intervention of EUAA, including the tasks to be performed by the deployed ASTs, shall be agreed between the Agency and the competent authorities and shall be set out in written working instructions endorsed by them, which may be amended following joint consultation. • National authorities shall, when relevant, ensure that ASTs are granted timely and effective access to the national platforms and systems required for the proper and efficient execution of their duties. • National authorities shall ensure that appropriate data protection notices are in place, including explaining the involvement of the EUAA in the relevant processing activities, when relevant.
Activities	RO-REL-3.1 Support for the processing of relocation cases • Support for the provision of information to relocated individuals upon arrival in the contributing Member State. • Support for maintaining reporting of the safe arrival of the persons concerned to relevant stakeholders (i.e., Benefiting MS, EU Solidarity Coordinator). • Support with interpretation during the information provision upon arrival, including through remote interpretation. • Support for the development and adaptation of information materials tailored to the national context, complementing centrally developed resources. The scope of activities can be further detailed and complemented in accordance with identified needs and in mutual agreement between the EUAA and the Member State. Unless specified otherwise, the above activities are deemed to be implemented for the entire duration of the operational plan. This can also include preparatory actions for the next cycle, conditional upon the outcome of the assessment of the European Commission in accordance with Article 11 of the AMMR, and the role of the Member State in this cycle.
EUAA resources	<u>Deployment of asylum support teams</u> Unless otherwise defined, deployments are deemed to cover the full duration of the operational plan. • Access to Asylum Procedures Experts – up to 10 • Asylum/Reception Operations Experts – 1 • Interpreters – up to 12 The number of experts and deployment periods will be further detailed upon agreement of a detailed calendar of activities.

The profiles and numbers of the EUAA's resources foreseen for the agreed measures intend to reflect the initial deployment planning, in line with the assessment of the situation in the host Member States, the capacity of the host Member States and the EUAA's response capacity.

If, during the operational plan implementation, operational needs change, and subject to the availability of the EUAA's resources, the deployment planning can be re-adjusted through redeployment and/or assignment of additional or fewer experts, and in accordance with the general implementing provisions of this plan. The EUAA will maintain the actual overview of deployments through the implementation period.

In addition, conditional upon the EUAA's assessment and approval of any request, and subject to budget availability for the present operational plan, support could include inter alia equipment, works, services, communication and/or promotional material, required costs for training/meetings/workshops, infrastructure costs, IT equipment, office supplies and other material and operational support where required for the joint EUAA and national authorities' activities.

Where technical equipment is deployed in accordance with Article 23 of the EUAA Regulation, it shall be the concerned host Member State's sole responsibility to ensure compliance with all applicable town planning, environmental or other national or local legislation and regulations, including by obtaining all required permits or authorisations prior to the commencement of any works or the provision of equipment by the Agency.

Moreover, in the event that a host Member State would request the Agency to repeat certain activities/tasks in relation to specific individual files, in particular when the legal validity of those activities is successfully challenged due to procedural or other defects which are not due to the fault or negligence of the Agency, the Agency reserves the right to request the concerned host Member State to bear the related costs.

III. Operational plan: general implementing provisions

1. Legal framework

1.1 General legal basis for the operational plan

In accordance with Article 1 of the EUAA Regulation, the Agency shall contribute to ensuring the efficient and uniform application of Union law on asylum in the Member States in a manner that fully respects fundamental rights. The Agency shall facilitate and support the activities of the Member States in the implementation of the CEAS, including by enabling convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection across the Union and by coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation and information exchange. The Agency shall improve the functioning of the CEAS, including through the monitoring mechanism referred to in Article 14 and by providing operational and technical assistance to Member States, in particular where their asylum and reception systems are under disproportionate pressure.

Article 2(1) of the EUAA Regulation specifies the tasks the Agency is entrusted to perform, which include, in accordance with points (i), (l) and (n) thereof, providing effective operational and technical assistance to Member States, in particular when their asylum and reception systems are subject to disproportionate pressure, setting up and deploying asylum support teams, setting up an asylum reserve pool, and acquiring and deploying the necessary technical equipment for asylum support teams and deploying experts from the asylum reserve pool.

The Agency shall provide operational and technical assistance to a Member State in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 6 of the EUAA Regulation.

In line with Article 18(1) of the EUAA Regulation, this operational plan has been drawn up by the Executive Director in cooperation with the host Member States, and it is being agreed between the Executive Director and the respective host Member States.

In line with Article 24 of the EUAA Regulation, each Member State shall appoint a national contact point for communication with the Agency on all matters relating to operational and technical assistance.

In line with Article 18(1), the Agency has consulted the participating Member States, where necessary, on this operational plan through the national contact points referred to in Article 24.

1.2 Legal framework applicable to the operational plan

The EUAA's activities performed in the context of the operational and technical assistance as identified in this Plan are in principle governed by EU law, complemented, where appropriate, by the national law of the respective host Member States. This includes, inter alia, the safety and security of participating persons, and assets deployed for the purpose of EUAA's activities.

References to internal acts of the EUAA included in this Plan shall be construed to include any subsequent amendments to those internal acts as well as to any other internal act replacing them.

1.3 Lawfulness

This Plan shall be implemented by the Parties and all participating Member States in full compliance with all applicable laws.

All experts participating in asylum support teams and all persons taking part in the implementation of the Plan shall respect applicable international law, European Union law and the national laws of the host Member States.

1.4 Respect for fundamental rights

1.4.1 Protection of fundamental rights

In accordance with Article 57(1) of the EUAA Regulation, the Agency shall guarantee the protection of fundamental rights in the performance of its tasks under the EUAA Regulation in accordance with relevant Union law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and relevant international law, in particular the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967.

The Parties, as well as all participating Member States, shall implement this Plan in a manner which fully respects fundamental rights and human dignity. They shall cooperate in good faith and shall exchange all necessary information for that purpose, as required by virtue of Article 4 of the EUAA Regulation.

1.4.2 The role of the Fundamental Rights Officer of the Agency

In line with Article 49(1) of the EUAA Regulation, the Fundamental Rights Officer is appointed by the Management Board and is independent in the performance of their duties.

Pursuant to Article 49(3) of the EUAA Regulation, the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer shall be responsible for ensuring the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights in all of its activities and promoting respect of fundamental rights by the Agency.

In line with Article 49(5) of the EUAA Regulation, the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer was consulted on this operational plan. The Fundamental Rights Officer will also be consulted on any amendments to this operational plan as referred to in section 1.12. hereof and shall provide observations on the detailed evaluation reports referred to in Article 16(4) of the EUAA Regulation.

Pursuant to Article 49(5) of the EUAA Regulation, the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer shall have access to all information concerning respect for fundamental rights in relation to the Agency's activities, including by organising visits, with the consent of the relevant host Member States, to the places where the Agency carries out operational activities under this Plan.

The EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer is also responsible for handling complaints received by the Agency under the complaints mechanism referred to in Section 1.4.3. hereof and shall do so in accordance with the right to good administration. In line with Article 51(4) of the EUAA Regulation, for the purpose of handling complaints, the Fundamental Rights Officer shall inform the relevant authority or body competent for fundamental rights in the Member State of a complaint. In line with Article 4 of the EUAA Regulation, all parties shall cooperate in good faith, also in view of the handling of complaints by the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer.

1.4.3 The complaints mechanism of the Agency

In accordance with Article 51 of the EUAA Regulation, the Agency has set up a complaints mechanism to ensure that fundamental rights are respected in its operational activities¹¹.

Any person who is directly affected by the actions of an expert participating in an asylum support team, and who considers that their fundamental rights have been violated due to those actions, or any party representing such a person, may submit a complaint in writing to the Agency. In line with Article 51(3) of the EUAA Regulation, complaints which challenge a national authority's decision on an individual application for international protection shall be inadmissible.

Any expert participating in an asylum support team who receives any form of written communication from a complainant or from their representative containing allegations of violations of fundamental rights in the context of the Agency's activities shall forward such communication, including, where available, the contact details of the complainant or their representative, to the Fundamental Rights Officer without delay.

In accordance with Article 18(2)(n) of the EUAA Regulation, the following practical arrangements related to the complaints mechanism are being included in this operational plan, and shall be binding on the host Member States as well as all participating Member States:

- The host Member States shall cooperate in good faith and shall exchange all necessary information in a timely and accurate manner with the Agency and its Fundamental Rights Officer, as well as with the respective home Member States where relevant, for the purpose of ensuring the proper handling and follow-up of complaints by the Agency and home Member States;
- The host Member States shall ensure that complainants are not unreasonably hindered from submitting complaints to the Agency concerning experts participating in asylum support teams, nor from accessing representatives who may submit complaints on their behalf;
- The host Member States shall ensure that information material about the complaints mechanism may be provided at the sites of the Agency's operational activities, and that information on the complaints mechanism may be provided directly to persons who may be directly affected by the actions of experts participating in asylum support teams;
- The Agency, the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer and all participating Member States shall handle all complaints in a confidential manner and in compliance with all applicable data protection rules, as provided in Article 51(11) of the EUAA Regulation;
- In the case of admissible complaints concerning Member State experts, including seconded national experts, home Member States shall ensure appropriate follow-up, including disciplinary measures as necessary or other measures in accordance with national law. They shall report back to the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer on their findings and follow-up within six months of the complaint being forwarded to them by the Fundamental Rights Officer, and at regular intervals of three months thereafter if necessary, using the templates that may be developed by the Agency for this purpose.

1.4.4 Code of conduct for experts in asylum support teams

¹¹ The modalities governing the submission, handling and follow-up of complaints by the Agency and the Member States are laid down in Management Board Decision No 159 of 24 May 2024 on the setting up of the complaints mechanism.

Experts participating in asylum support teams shall maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, professionalism, respect and promotion of fundamental rights and international protection.

Whilst carrying out supporting functions, experts must not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, age or sexual orientation. All experts are expected to treat every person with courtesy, respect and due consideration for the nature of any legitimate activity in which they are engaged. To perform their duties properly, they shall serve the public interest and refrain from any activities which could undermine or compromise their independence and the appropriate performance of their duties.

During the implementation of this Plan, all experts must apply a zero tolerance attitude with respect to the infringement of fundamental rights.

This obligation is particularly important when dealing with persons who are in need of international protection. To that end, experts participating in asylum support teams deployed under this Plan shall comply and act in accordance with the 'EUAA's code of conduct for experts participating in asylum support teams'¹². All such experts will be requested to sign a declaration of compliance with the EUAA's code of conduct prior to their deployment.

Experts must inform the Agency without delay, making use of the relevant reporting channels, when they have reason to believe that a violation of the EUAA's code of conduct has occurred or is about to occur in the context of the Agency's operational and technical assistance activities.

1.4.5 Escalation of potential violations of fundamental rights by a host Member State¹³

The Agency has developed an escalation mechanism for the reporting and escalation of alleged violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by a host Member State.

Experts participating in asylum support teams have an obligation to inform the Agency without delay, making use of the relevant reporting channels, when they learn about, witness, are directly or indirectly involved in and/or have grounds to believe that a violation of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by a host Member State has occurred.

According to Article 18(6)(c) of the EUAA Regulation, the Executive Director shall, after informing the concerned host Member State(s), suspend or terminate, in whole or in part, the deployment of the asylum support teams if, after consulting the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer, the Executive Director considers that there are violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by that host Member State that are of a serious nature or are likely to persist.

1.5 Public access to documents

This operational plan shall be made public on the Agency's website.

¹² Available on the EUAA's website: <https://euaa.europa.eu/operations/operational-assistance>.

¹³ As soon as it is established in the EUAA.

The EUAA and the host Member States shall consult each other on any requests for public access to any other documents relating to this Plan and treat such requests in accordance with Regulation (EC) 1049/2001¹⁴ and the EUAA's implementing rules on access to documents¹⁵ or the respective national law, whichever is applicable.

1.6 Protection of personal data

The protection of personal data processed in the course of implementation of the plan is governed both by Regulation (EU) 2016/679¹⁶ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (the GDPR) as well as by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725¹⁷ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data (the EUDPR). Whereas the former applies to stakeholders at national level (including parties that may not be co-signatories of this Plan however are cooperating with the main partners), the latter applies to the EUAA. In addition, the EUAA and the host Member States will comply with Chapter 7 of the EUAA Regulation that contains specific provisions as far as the processing of personal data in the context of provision of operational and technical assistance is concerned.

Whenever personal data are processed by experts participating in asylum support teams within the activities agreed in this Plan, the asylum support teams will act as data processors on behalf of the competent authorities of each host Member State under the instructions received from the latter in its role as data controller.

The instructions on how to process personal data are defined in a 'Data Processing Agreement' (DPA) between the Agency and each host Member State laid down in Annex I to this Plan. Having the DPA in place is a condition for asylum support teams to be able to process personal data on behalf of the respective host Member States. The DPA forms an integral and legally binding part of this Plan.

To facilitate efficient and effective cooperation on matters pertaining to the protection of personal data, the host Member States agree to indicate a contact point. The EUAA will be liaising with the contact point on relevant matters in the course of implementation of the Plan, including each time there is a need to amend the DPA to reflect amendments in this Plan.

1.7 Intellectual property rights

All rights in any writings or other work produced by experts participating in asylum support teams which are not intended for the exclusive use of the national authorities of the host Member States shall be the property of the EUAA and/or the European Union, where such writings or work relate to activities undertaken in the context of the Plan.

¹⁴ Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001, regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

¹⁵ Management Board Decision No 6 of 20 September 2011 laying down practical arrangements regarding public access to the documents of EASO.

¹⁶ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

¹⁷ OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 33.

The EUAA and/or the European Union acquire irrevocably ownership of the results and of all intellectual property rights, such as copyright, and industrial property rights, on the materials produced specifically for the EUAA under the Plan and incorporated in such works, without prejudice, however, to the specific rules concerning pre-existing rights on pre-existing materials or other detailed rules contained in the relevant framework contracts concluded by the EUAA for purposes related to the implementation of this Plan.

1.8 Civil and criminal liability of experts participating in asylum support teams

Articles 26 and 27 of the EUAA Regulation shall be applicable to the experts participating in asylum support teams deployed in the host Member States.

1.9 Protocol (No 7) on privileges and immunities

In line with Article 61 of the EUAA Regulation, Protocol (No 7) on the privileges and immunities of the European Union ('the Protocol'¹⁸) applies to the Agency and its staff members (statutory staff), including when they are deployed for the purposes of the implementation of the Plan on the territory of the respective host Member States, including as part of asylum support teams.

The host Member States shall ascertain that the relevant provisions of the Protocol are implemented and shall provide the necessary support to the Agency in this regard.

1.10 The role of the coordinating officer of the Agency

Pursuant to Article 25 of the EUAA Regulation, the Executive Director of the Agency shall appoint one or more experts from the Agency's staff to act or to be deployed as a coordinating officer(s), in order to ensure the operational implementation of all organisational aspects, including the presence of staff members of the Agency, related to the deployment of asylum support teams throughout the provision of operational and technical assistance.

In particular, pursuant to Article 25(3) of the EUAA Regulation, the coordinating officer(s) shall foster cooperation and coordination between the host Member States and the participating Member States. The coordinating officer will:

- (i) Act as an interface between the Agency, the host Member States and experts participating in asylum support teams, providing assistance, on behalf of the Agency, on all issues relating to the experts' conditions of deployment;
- (ii) Monitor the correct implementation of the operational plan;
- (iii) Act on behalf of the Agency as regards all aspects of the deployment of asylum support teams and report to the Agency on all those aspects;
- (iv) Report to the Executive Director where the operational plan is not adequately implemented.

The coordinating officer(s) of the Agency may also be authorised by the Executive Director to assist in resolving any disputes concerning the implementation of this Plan and the deployment of asylum support teams.

¹⁸ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 266–272

1.11 Non-substantial changes during implementation

The Plan aims to provide effective and flexible support to the host Member States. Therefore, the foreseen activities will be implemented in consideration of the changing circumstances which may occur in the international protection and reception systems in the Member States or on the ground, as well as in the context of the availability of the Agency's staff, financial resources and experts.

The implementation of measures and delivery of technical and operational assistance foreseen in the Plan, including deployment locations, may be subject to non-substantial changes that may be accommodated within the objectives of a measure, do not require an amendment to or adaptation of the Plan, and that the concerned host Member State is informed in a timely manner at the appropriate level.

Changes required to the agreed actions and composition of asylum support teams in the framework of the Plan shall as a general rule be considered non-substantial, unless such changes require significant additional resources which cannot be accommodated within the overall EUAA budget, as well as when they impact on and/or require an amendment of the agreed operational objectives.

1.12 Amendments to or adaptations of the Plan

Any amendments affecting changes to the measures agreed between the Agency and a host Member State following the entry into force of the Plan shall not require the agreement of the remaining host Member States, provided that such changes do not affect the measures established under this Plan in relation to those other host Member States. Such amendments shall instead be agreed in writing between the Agency and the host Member State concerned. The other host Member States bound by this Plan shall however be informed of such bilaterally agreed changes.

In line with Article 18(5) of the EUAA Regulation, any other amendments to or adaptations of this Plan going beyond the changes referred to in the preceding paragraph of this section shall require the agreement of the Executive Director and the host Member States, after consulting the participating Member States, where necessary.

The Agency shall immediately send a copy of the amended or adapted Plan to the national contact points of the participating Member States referred to in Article 24 of the EUAA Regulation. The amended Plan shall be made public.

1.13 Suspension or termination of the Plan

According to Article 18(6) of the EUAA Regulation, the Executive Director shall, after informing the concerned host Member State(s), suspend or terminate, in whole or in part, the deployment of the asylum support teams if the conditions to carry out the operational and technical measures are no longer fulfilled or if the Plan is not respected by the concerned host Member State(s) or if, after consulting the Fundamental Rights Officer of the EUAA, the Executive Director considers that there are violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by the concerned host Member State(s) that are of a serious nature or are likely to persist.

2. Implementation provisions

2.1 Organisational pre-conditions

2.1.1 Pre-conditions applicable to the host Member States

In the implementation of the Plan, each host Member State will:

- (i) Designate an overall plan coordinator for the country-specific Measure and may also designate specific measure coordinators for the different activities stipulated in the Plan;
- (ii) Grant timely and appropriate access rights for the experts participating in asylum support teams and EUAA representatives to all relevant databases and provide the relevant parties with the required information and data in the context of the implementation of this Plan;
- (iii) Facilitate the provision of appropriate working space. Every effort shall be made by the Parties to provide suitable working conditions and, where required, working place for the experts participating in the activities implemented in the framework of the Plan. Health and safety conditions in line with EU directives and national law are considered as organisational pre-conditions;
- (iv) As far as operationally feasible, and where relevant, the working files shall be made available by the host Member States in English (unless otherwise agreed);
- (v) Provide timely input to the Early Warning and Preparedness System and tailored information on the implementation of measures agreed in the Plan;
- (vi) Facilitate the implementation of the EUAA survey data collection systems.

2.1.2 Pre-conditions applicable to the EUAA

In the implementation of the Plan, the EUAA will:

- (i) Designate a coordinating officer in accordance with Article 25 of the EUAA Regulation. The Agency may also designate specific measure coordinators for the measures stipulated in the Plan;
- (ii) Provide the necessary technical support to experts participating in this Plan with the aim of ensuring that all deliverables make good use of the expertise and information already available to the EUAA;
- (iii) Reimburse costs incurred by persons participating in the support activities in the framework of this Plan, according to the applicable EUAA rules;
- (iv) When supporting the development and implementation of agreed tools and procedures, take into account the EUAA's tools and guidance.

2.2 Conditions for deployment of asylum support teams

General rules and conditions for deployment are published on platforms, which the experts participating in asylum support teams are obliged to consult, such as the EUAA's country-specific operations platforms (COP). Access to these platforms is made available to experts participating in asylum support teams upon their deployment, allowing for preparation for deployment and daily implementation of their tasks.

The platforms contain relevant information, such as:

- Location(s) in the host Member States where the asylum support teams will be deployed;

- Logistical arrangements including information on working conditions, practical information concerning the locations of deployment and related workflows, etc.;
- Relevant safety and security aspects of the operation;
- Special instructions for the experts participating in asylum support teams, including working instructions and databases that they are authorised to consult;
- Description of specific tasks, including with regard to fundamental rights, workflows and procedures, as relevant, including where available detailed information about measures to be taken for referring persons in need of international protection, victims of trafficking in human beings, minors and any other persons in a vulnerable situation to the competent national authorities;
- Procedures and incident report forms for the code of conduct and the EUAA's Internal guidance on reporting and escalation of potential violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by the host Member States pursuant to Article 18(6)(c) of the EUAA Regulation ('escalation mechanism');
- Equipment that experts participating in asylum support teams may carry in the host Member States, transport and other logistics;
- Other specific instructions and provisions as necessary.

Other appropriate platforms or communication tools may be made available as necessary to make the above information available.

The host Member States shall contribute to information concerning their asylum and reception systems, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background.

The host Member States will provide experts participating in asylum support teams with information on the general state of play with regard to the procedures for international protection and reception, including where available measures for referring persons in need of international protection, victims of trafficking in human beings, unaccompanied minors and any other persons in a vulnerable situation to the competent national authorities for appropriate assistance and specific information necessary for the implementation of the operational measures on a continuous basis.

2.3 Composition of asylum support teams

In line with Article 19(1) of the EUAA Regulation, the Executive Director of the Agency shall determine the composition of each asylum support team, taking into account the particular circumstances of the respective host Member States.

The asylum support teams may be composed of the following resources:

- (i) **Experts from the Agency's own staff**, i.e., statutory staff within the meaning of Article 60 of the EUAA Regulation employed by the Agency subject to the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS)¹⁹;

¹⁹ As laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68, OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p.1, as last amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1023/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 (OJ L 287, 29.10.2013, p. 15). For the purposes of this operational plan, the term 'statutory staff' includes temporary agents and contract agents covered by the EU Staff Regulations and the CEOS.

- (ii) **Experts from Member States²⁰**, including experts made available through the annual bilateral negotiations and agreements referred to in Article 19(3) of the EUAA Regulation and the asylum reserve pool referred to in Article 19(6) of the EUAA Regulation²¹;
- (iii) **Experts seconded by Member States to the Agency (seconded national experts or ‘SNEs’)**, experts employed by a national, regional or local public administration of an EU Member State or an associate country or by a public intergovernmental organisation who are seconded to the Agency²² for the provision of support to its operational activities;
- (iv) **Other experts not employed by the Agency:** i.e., individuals providing services in relation to the Plan upon conclusion of a public contract between the Agency and the legal entity with which these individuals have an employment and/or contractual relationship, including temporary agency workers²³, or with remunerated external experts in line with Article 93 of the Agency’s Financial Regulation²⁴.

In line with Article 8(6) and Article 19(4) of the EUAA Regulation, experts participating in asylum support teams shall receive the training relevant to their duties and functions that is necessary for their participation in the operational activities organised by the Agency.

The implementation of the Plan shall be based on the common understanding that the provision of resources, other than EUAA (statutory) staff, to be deployed for the purposes described above can under no circumstances lead per se to the establishment of an employment relationship between the EUAA and the members of the asylum support teams.

2.4 Implementation modalities

The deployment on site/at national level of asylum support teams is the key modality for the provision of operational and technical support by the Agency, whereby through asylum support teams the Agency combines efforts with national authorities for the implementation of the Plan.

At times, based on prior agreement of the Parties and for pre-defined periods of time, members of asylum support teams can be assigned to work at the premises of the respective national authorities to ensure utmost efficiency, quality and sustainability of the anticipated results.

In practice, members of asylum support teams are temporarily assigned by the EUAA to work at the premises of national authorities of the host Member States. The latter coordinate the tasks of the deployed asylum support teams members in accordance with the activities foreseen in this operational plan and the agreed standard operating procedures and working instructions. The overall responsibility for the management of the resources remains with the EUAA and the members of asylum support teams report back to the Agency on the

²⁰ Including experts from associate countries with which the European Union has an arrangement in place on the modalities of their participation in the EUAA’s work, as referred to in Article 34 of the EUAA Regulation, which provides for the deployment of their experts as part of asylum support teams.

²¹ Decision of the Executive Director No 83 of 12 July 2022 on the mechanism for selection of experts to be assigned to asylum support teams in operational support activities coordinated by the Agency, including management of the asylum reserve pool.

²² Within the meaning of Article 1 of Management Board Decision No 1 of 25 November 2010 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts (SNE) to the European Asylum Support Office.

²³ Within the meaning of Article 3(1)(c) of Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work (OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9).

²⁴ Article 93 of Management Board Decision No 54 of 14 August 2019 on the EASO Financial Regulation (as amended by Management Board Decision No 74 of 28 July 2021). Management Board Decision No 54 of 14 August 2019 remains in force despite EASO being replaced by the EUAA. Any references in the EASO Financial Regulation to ‘EASO’ or the ‘EASO Regulation’, should therefore be construed as references to the ‘EUAA’ or equivalent provisions in the ‘EUAA Regulation’, respectively.

performance of their activities, deliverables, application of working instructions, etc. Members of asylum support teams remain bound by their obligations, including visibility of association with the Agency, compliance with the code of conduct, duty to report, etc.

In such cases, a coordination mechanism shall be agreed by the Parties to oversee the implementation of the Plan also with regard to the allocation and administration of resources, including coordination with national authorities' personnel deployed alongside the EUAA's asylum support teams. For this purpose, modalities for assignment of members of asylum support teams reflecting respective roles, responsibilities and obligations, shall be established and agreed upon in writing between the EUAA and the host Member States. In setting up the aforementioned coordination mechanism, the following rules must be complied with as a minimum:

- a) The EUAA shall duly advise the concerned members of asylum support teams, including — in the case of experts not employed by the Agency — the employers²⁵ of the experts or the experts²⁶ themselves, of their envisaged assignment to the premises of national authorities of a host Member State before such assignment takes place;
- b) The national authority shall clearly acknowledge that they endorse the obligations and responsibilities pertaining to them as hosting authority vis-à-vis the members of the asylum support teams which are assigned to work on their premises by the Agency. Such acknowledgement includes the obligation for the concerned national authorities to coordinate the tasks of the deployed asylum support teams related to the specific Plan measure(s) and in accordance with the respective standard operating procedures and working instructions, as applicable;
- c) The national authorities remain responsible for ensuring proper working conditions for all members of asylum support teams deployed by the Agency, and is responsible for their health, safety and security during work, in accordance with section 3.0 of this Plan. The EUAA may not be held liable for any breach of health and safety rules that might occur on the premises of the national authorities and/or while engaged in activities coordinated by the national authorities;
- d) Regarding reporting, the deployed members of asylum support teams remain accountable to the EUAA, which remains responsible for the overall coordination of their support, through defined reporting requirements for the activities performed in the framework of the assignment. Additional specific reporting obligations may be agreed between the EUAA and the host Member States.

The deployment of EUAA-contracted remunerated external experts who are assigned to carry out services in support of any national authority, will be subject to the modalities for the assignment of remunerated external experts laid down in Annex No. II to this Plan. These modalities, which constitute the coordination mechanism mentioned herewith, are applicable exclusively to the deployment of remunerated external experts and are agreed by the Parties with the signature of this Plan.

²⁵ Referring to individuals providing services in relation to the Plan upon conclusion of a public contract between the Agency and the legal entity with which these individuals have an employment and/or contractual relationship. Examples include temporary agency workers and contractor personnel (such as interpreters and cultural mediators).

²⁶ Applicable to remunerated external experts deployed in accordance with Article 93 of the Agency's Financial Regulation.

3. Security and safety

The principles of the EUAA's Security Governance Framework²⁷ are based on the security principles contained in the European Commission's security rules. Commission Decision 2015/443 on Security in the Commission²⁸ defines that security shall be based on the principles of legality, transparency, proportionality and accountability.

The safety and security of persons participating in the EUAA's activities under the Plan falls under the overall legal framework of each host Member State and shall be provided by the respective authorities legally responsible and accountable for public order and security and safety on the territory of that Member State.

The EUAA will endeavour to support the identification of the required security and safety measures and the implementation of those that are under its remit, both legally and functionally, in close cooperation with the concerned Member State's security focal point (see section 3.1 below).

To that end:

- (i) Standard security and safety requirements, identified herewith, shall apply as a general rule;
- (ii) Specific security and safety requirements for the Plan shall be identified jointly by the EUAA's and each host Member State's security focal point;
- (iii) The safety and security measures shall be identified jointly by the EUAA and each host Member State on the basis of field assessment visits, preferably prior to deployments.

3.1 Standard security requirements

The standard security and safety requirements are expected to be implemented consistently throughout the lifecycle of the Plan:

- Each of the host Member States on the one side and the EUAA on the other shall appoint a single point of contact for security matters under the Plan (hereinafter 'security focal point');
- The host Member States shall ensure that the working conditions for the performance of the activities under the Plan are compliant with the relevant national occupational health and safety norms and regulations;
- A pre-deployment security briefing, prepared in close cooperation with the respective national authorities, focusing both on general security rules and awareness, as well as on specific security aspects for each deployment shall be provided;
- Emergency (evacuation) plan. Certain operational activities, such as operations in field locations, require that personnel shall have clear guidance and training on how to evacuate quickly in case of emergencies. In a more general context, there could be a need to evacuate from the operational area as well. Emergency plans shall be drafted and maintained up-to-date by the competent authority/person(s), and shall be made available to the concerned parties and exercised regularly;
- Communication tools. As considered relevant and necessary by the EUAA's Security Sector, the EUAA may deploy additional means of communication as deemed necessary and in cooperation with the relevant host Member States authorities;

²⁷ Decision of the Executive Director No 61 of 12 April 2021 on the Security Governance Framework.

²⁸ OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41.

- Security of information. Sensitive non-classified and classified information shall be adequately protected, in accordance with the applicable legal framework²⁹.

3.2 Specific security and safety requirements

Specific security and safety requirements for the implementation of the Plan shall be defined on the basis of a pre-deployment security assessment visit with the aim of identification of specific potential risks, identification of mitigation measures and communication of those measures to the concerned Member State and involved stakeholders, prior to the deployment of asylum support teams.

3.3 Suspension of operational activities on security and safety grounds

The EUAA reserves the right to suspend operational activities in a host Member State on the basis of current risk assessment(s), while keeping the relevant host Member State(s) informed on the findings and mitigating measures identified as required for resumption.

A host Member State may also suspend temporarily, in whole or in part, the implementation of operational activities in case of serious imminent safety and security incidents, developments, or as mitigating or preventive measures or direct threats to personnel, activities or physical presence. The EUAA's coordinating officer and the EUAA's security focal point shall be informed without delay.

The Parties will agree on conditions for resumption as soon as possible.

3.4 Security incident reporting

Experts participating in asylum support teams who become aware of an incident related to the security and safety of persons, assets or premises are obliged to report the matter to the EUAA via appropriate channels and in any case to the following email: duty.officer@europa.eu.

4. Communication

The host Member States and the coordinating officer of the Agency as referred to in section 1.10, will manage the exchange of information concerning the tasks under the Plan.

During the implementation of this Plan, experts participating in asylum support teams shall be briefed regularly on the current situational and operational developments to address challenges and identify improvements.

The EUAA and relevant national stakeholders will maintain close cooperation and communication. The EUAA will also provide information to its partners (i.e., the European Commission, concerned EU agencies, and international organisations) about the operational activities, as appropriate and in line with the EUAA's transparency and communication policies.

²⁹ Including, inter alia, the security principles contained in Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17/03/2015, p. 53) and the Decision of the Executive Director No 49 of 14 May 2024 on the handling of sensitive non-classified and RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED information.

The timing and content of communication with the media shall be agreed upon between the EUAA and the respective host Member States.

Where relevant, the Parties will facilitate media coverage to ensure a wider dissemination and visibility of results.

As a publicly funded EU body, the Agency is accountable for and committed to transparency for the public resources it makes use of.

In this regard, the EUAA may brand its operational activities to ensure appropriate visibility. This includes the application of fixed branding and use of visibility items, such as on, but not limited to, containers and premises, as well as in offices where the Agency provides operational and technical assistance. It also includes the branding of mobile assets which it may deploy, including vehicles.

Such branding may also include visibility clothing and materials worn by experts participating in asylum support teams in order to identify their association with, or funding by, the Agency.

For transparency reasons and for the implementation of the complaints mechanism referred to in section 1.4.3 above, experts participating in asylum support team are required to be visibly associated with the Agency.

In specific cases, the Agency and the respective national authorities may agree on co-branding of visibility clothing and/or materials, in line with the visual identity rules and guidelines of each/all parties.

5. Cooperation with other stakeholders

5.1 Cooperation with the European Commission and other EU agencies

All activities under this Plan will be closely coordinated with the host Member States and in close cooperation with the European Commission, as well as with the other EU agencies present on the ground.

5.2 Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

In accordance with Article 18(3) of the EUAA Regulation, where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) operates and has the capacity to contribute a response to a request for operational and technical assistance, the Agency shall coordinate with the UNHCR as regards the implementation of the operational plan, where appropriate and with the agreement of the relevant host Member State(s).

The EUAA's coordinating officer will liaise with the UNHCR's office in each host Member State, where relevant, for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the respective host Member States under the current Plan.

5.3 Cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration

On the basis of relevant working arrangement(s) concluded between the EUAA and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the EUAA's coordinating officer will liaise with the IOM's office in each host Member State for continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the respective host Member States under the current Plan and in accordance with the working arrangement.

6. Monitoring and evaluation framework

6.1 Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the plan will involve systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of information and data.

The EUAA will implement a structured methodology, including regular and ad hoc monitoring and reporting, allowing evidence-based measurement of progress, corrective action-taking and reflective reviews. The monitoring and reporting framework will involve the collection and analysis of information about the Agency's operations, undertaken while the intervention is ongoing, and will help identify trends and patterns in an evidence-based manner, enhance regular analytical exercises, and inform strategic decisions for the management of the interventions.

The EUAA will make use of a number of tools developed in order to collect input from the implementation of the Plan and to guarantee feedback in real time.

Results from the implementation of the operational and technical assistance will be reviewed and reported through mechanisms deemed appropriate by the Parties, such as steering meetings or others.

6.2 Evaluation

A final (ex post) evaluation of the results of the operational and technical measures laid down in this Plan (and amendments thereto) shall be carried out in order to take stock of lessons learned and good practices.

Periodic or mid-term evaluations may also be conducted, if deemed necessary. The evaluation(s) will be conducted in line with the EUAA's evaluation framework, which is based on the European Commission's Better Regulation guidelines for evaluations. They may be performed externally through engagement of evaluation specialist(s), internally by the Agency's staff, or through a hybrid approach.

In order to ensure completeness of evaluations and to take into account the views and feedback from the Parties involved, senior and other key persons from the national authorities of the host Member States may be invited to interviews with the evaluators or to provide feedback by alternative means. The national authorities shall commit to supporting the

evaluation process and participating in such engagements with evaluators by mutually agreed appointments.

The ex-post evaluation report shall be submitted to the Management Board on conclusion of the evaluation. The report will be due within 60 days of the end of the provision of the operational and technical measures. For transparency and accountability purposes, evaluation report(s) may be made publicly available on the Agency's website after internal checks have been made to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions in Regulation (EU) 2018/1725³⁰ and that none of the interests protected in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001³¹ are undermined.

The independent observations of the Agency's Fundamental Rights Officer on the ex post evaluation report shall also be submitted to the Management Board on conclusion of the evaluation, in accordance with Article 16(4) of the EUAA Regulation.

Other evaluation deliverables, as applicable, shall be shared with the host Member States and communicated to the EUAA's administrative and management structure (e.g., Management Board) where relevant.

³⁰ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

³¹ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, (OJ L 145, 31.05.2001, p. 43).