



Overview of operating query systems relevant to migration and asylum

Updated on 06/04/2021

What is a query system?

A query system is a tool used to collect precise information on a topical issue in a relatively short timeframe. Query systems in the area of migration and asylum allow participating entities to formulate a question and receive replies on a variety of issues concerning policies, practice and legislation, as well as elicit information on statistical trends. This information is aimed to address the countries' immediate information needs in the above areas and obtain a comparative overview of the situation in the other countries that can serve as a point of reference. Information collected through queries may inform policies, practice, or legislative changes on the given subject matter, with audience ranging from senior officials and policy makers to thematic experts with an interest on the topic.

Currently, a number of query systems relevant to migration and asylum exist, managed by the European Migration Network (EMN), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC) and Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC).



About the actors

- The **European Asylum Support Office (EASO)** is a European Union agency, established in 2011, to assist Member States in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System and provide support to Member States, whose asylum systems are under pressure. Under its founding Regulation, among others, EASO acts as a centre of expertise on asylum; contributes to the development of the Common European Asylum; and provides evidence-based input for EU policy-making and legislation in all areas having a direct or indirect impact on asylum.
- The **European Migration Network (EMN)** is an EU network of migration and asylum experts, established in 2008, who work together to gather objective, policy-relevant, comparable and up-to-date information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe. EMN produces inter alia reports, studies and policy briefs with analysis of policy and legislative development and implementation. The EMN is coordinated by the European Commission, which is assisted by service providers.
- The **General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC)** is a network established in 2004 in order to facilitate practical and operational cooperation in the field of asylum and migration between the Immigration Services of the different member countries. The various forms of cooperation include exchanging experiences, developing best practices, informal meetings between the General Directors.
- The **Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC)**, is an informal, non-decision making forum for intergovernmental information exchange and policy debate on issues of relevance to the management of international migratory flows. Created in 1985, the IGC currently brings together 17 participating states, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, and the EU.



Why this overview?

There are substantial differences in the query systems operated by the four actors, with each system having its own relative strengths and added-value. Users can profit from the advantages offered by the four query systems in choosing which forum to use for their query. The aim of this overview is to provide experts in national administrations, who may be interested in getting insights from other states in regards to migration and asylum issues, with key information about each query system to consider when deciding to launch a query via a specific system to best suit their information needs.

Please note that EMN, EASO, GDISC and IGC are looking into modalities of how to address possible duplication of query proposals and avoid repetitive requests directed at countries replying to a query. To this end, in case a similar query has been already answered, upon communication among the four organizations, a possibility will be explored to share with you an overview of already existing information. Based on this, you will have the option to either request a more up-to-date follow up query or, should the provided overview be sufficient, withdraw your request.



Thematic scope

- Legal migration
- International protection (including asylum and country of origin information)
- Citizenship and statelessness
- Integration (but with a focus on content protection)
- Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes
- Borders and visas
- Irregular migration (but only asylum-related aspects of detention)
- Trafficking in human beings
- Return and readmission (but only asylum-related aspects)
- International cooperation on migration
- Identity

- Legal migration
- International protection (including asylum)
- Citizenship and statelessness
- Integration (but with a focus on content protection)
- Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes
- Borders and visas
- Irregular migration and people smuggling
- Trafficking in human beings
- Return and readmission
- International cooperation on migration
- Identity

- Legal migration
- International protection (including asylum and country of origin information)
- Citizenship and statelessness
- Integration
- Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes
- Borders and visas
- Irregular migration
- Trafficking in human beings
- Return
- International cooperation on migration
- Identity

- Legal migration
- International protection (including asylum and country of origin information)
- Citizenship and statelessness
- Integration
- Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes
- Borders and visas
- Irregular migration and people smuggling
- Trafficking in human beings
- Return and readmission
- International cooperation on migration
- Identity

Contributing countries

27 EU Member States + 4 EFTA Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) = 31 countries

27 EU Member States + 2 EFTA Member States (Norway and Switzerland); Switzerland only for queries launched within the EMN Return Expert Group -REG) = 29 countries

27 EU Member States + 3 EFTA Member States (Iceland, Switzerland and Norway) + 2 Western Balkans States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia) United Kingdom + Turkey = 34 countries

12 EU Member States (BE, DK, FI, DE, EL, IE, NL, PL, PT, ES, SE, UK) + 2 EFTA Member States (Norway, Switzerland) + 4 non-European States (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and the Republic of Korea as observer) = 18 countries

Standard response times

(deadlines applied when launching a query; in addition, if justifiable, all systems operate urgent queries)

2-4 weeks

2-4 weeks

2-4 weeks

2-4 weeks

Dissemination policy

Public (COI queries) or restricted to national asylum administrations. Restricted queries may be shared with external stakeholders upon explicit approval of the respondents.

In principle, public¹; in limited cases (e.g. queries answered through EMN REG) restricted to EMN NCPs, EC, EU Agencies (Frontex and EASO) as well as national asylum and migration administrations.

Restricted to national asylum and migration administrations.

Restricted to national asylum and migration administrations.

Format of query reports

Depending on the type of query:

- Compilation of replies²,
- Report with the main findings from a query, or
- High content-related summary report with the main findings from the query, including additional contextual information on data and situation in the country of origin.

Depending on the thematic scope:

- Compilation of replies² (both public and limited), or
- Compilation of replies supplemented by a brief summary of the main findings from a query, or
- EMN Informs results of information gathered and analysed from several queries).

Compilation of replies²

Depending on the thematic scope:

- Compilation of replies²
- Compilation of replies supplemented by a brief summary of the main findings from a query

Repository of queries & reports

EASO Query Portal ,restricted areas on EASO website (MB, Thematic Networks), IDS (restricted), public EASO COI Portal (distinction contingent on query type)

Public EMN website, restricted area on EMN website (distinction contingent on query type)

Restricted area on GDISC website

Restricted area on IGC website (general and thematic areas)

Specific features to consider when launching a query

- Specific focus and expertise in asylum/international protection field;
- According to needs, summary reports supplemented by statistical and COI information;
- Generally internal nature of query results.

- Publicly available results of a query, unless respondents indicate otherwise. In the latter case, two compilations are created, one restricted and one public;
- Wide thematic scope;
- Automated compilations of replies available at any chosen time.

- Western Balkans' and Turkey's perspective on national legal frameworks and practices;
- Wide thematic scope;
- Comparably "informal" exchange in terms of queries on national practices in certain areas;
- Restricted nature of query results.

- Non-European (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA) perspective on national legal frameworks and practices;
- Wide thematic scope;
- Official information validated by IGC States only;
- Restricted nature of query results.

Contact details

(whom to contact in case you are interested in launching a query through one of these networks/institutions?)

queries@easo.europa.eu (for policy queries & general issues)
reception@easo.europa.eu (for reception-related queries),
exclusion@easo.europa.eu (for exclusion-related queries),
EASO-Dublin@easo.europa.eu (for Dublin-related queries),
easo.coi.query@easo.europa.eu (for COI-related queries)
vulnerablegroups@easo.europa.eu (for vulnerability-related queries)

EMN National Contact Point in a respective country (for queries), or adolfo.sommarribas@uni.lu, emn@icf.com (for general issues)

GDISC National Contact Point in a respective country (for queries), or gdisc-secretariat@bamf.bund.de (current host of GDISC Secretariat; for queries and general issues)

admin@igc.ch (for queries and general issues)

¹ However individual MS may opt to have their response restricted to EMN NCPs only and not for wider dissemination.
² Compilation of replies by questions and by responding country.