

PRESS RELEASE

Frontex and European Asylum Support Office Sign Working Arrangement

WARSAW, 26 September 2012 – Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) signed a Working Arrangement today at Frontex’s Warsaw HQ. The Working Arrangement formalises existing cooperation between the two Agencies and will provide a framework for developing closer ties and mutual support in future.

A number of EU policy documents, including the Stockholm Programme and a range of Council Conclusions and Commission Communications stress the importance of genuine and practical solidarity towards Member States facing particular pressures on their asylum and border management systems and underline the need for ever closer cooperation between the two Agencies.

In particular, the Stockholm Programme stresses that it is essential that the activities of Frontex and EASO are coordinated when it comes to the reception of migrants at the EU’s external borders and to the identification of those in need of international protection.

According to the Working Arrangement, this coordination will be articulated in the following areas:

- the Agencies’ commitment to cooperate and coordinate their assessments and operational responses when assisting Member States; in particular in view of deployment of European Border Guard Teams and/or Asylum Support Teams;
- the Agencies cooperate to develop methods to better identify those in need of international protection in the context of mixed migration flows;
- the exchange of information on the profiles and compositions of expert pools as well as sharing best practices on the functioning of those pools;
- exploring the possibilities for establishing common or mixed teams of border management and asylum experts;
- exchanging best practices and methodologies on data collection and exchange, as well as on information-gathering and the production and sharing of statistics and analyses;
- engagement in establishing and implementing specific mechanisms for joint Third Country Monitoring;
- holding consultations on the development of training materials, developing training strategies and plans and exploring the possibilities for mutual participation in training activities.

The two Agencies have already cooperated on an *ad hoc* basis across a wide range of activities encompassing Frontex and EASO operations, risk analysis, and training. Frontex regularly participates as an observer in EASO’s Management Board and EASO is mandated in the revised Frontex regulation to be a permanent member of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights.

“This arrangement is a milestone for Frontex,” said Frontex Executive Director Ilkka Laitinen. “This is an important document setting out a framework for future cooperation. The convergence between Frontex and EASO’s missions makes them fully complementary when supporting the EU Member States from an operational and capacity-building perspective. I very much look forward to sharing our expertise and experience to further improve the raising and harmonising of European standards in these crucial areas,”- he added.

Dr Robert Visser, EASO’s Executive Director held that “EASO and Frontex are sister EU Agencies in the field of Justice and Home Affairs. Bilateral Cooperation between the two Agencies is already ongoing, at different levels, on a regular basis. This Working Arrangement enables for a more structured cooperation, in the field of international protection in the context of mixed migration flows. It structures and enhances this cooperation, enabling further joint activities both in the strategic and the operational field. This agreement should be seen as the beginning of a long-term partnership between the two agencies.”