



European Asylum Support Office

About us

EASO is an agency of the European Union (EU) set up by virtue of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The agency plays a key role in the concrete implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). EASO was established with the aim of enhancing practical cooperation on asylum matters and helping Member States fulfil their European and international obligations to give protection to people in need. EASO acts as a centre of expertise on asylum. It also provides support to Member States whose asylum and reception systems are under particular pressure.



EASO's mission

EASO's mission is to contribute to the implementation of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by providing support and facilitating, coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation among Member States as an independent centre of expertise on asylum.

EASO's tasks

EASO's purpose is to facilitate, coordinate and strengthen practical cooperation among Member States on the many aspects of asylum.

EASO provides:

1. practical and technical support to Member States;
2. operational support to Member States with specific needs and to Member States subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception systems, including the coordination of Asylum Support Teams (ASTs) composed of national asylum experts;
3. evidence-based input for EU policymaking and legislation in all areas having a direct or indirect impact on asylum.

EASO's focus points

EASO provides different kinds of support:

permanent support: supporting and stimulating the common quality of the asylum process through common training, common asylum training material, common quality and common Country of Origin Information (COI);

special support: tailor-made assistance, capacity building, relocation, specific support and special quality control tools;

emergency support: organising solidarity for Member States subject to particular pressures by providing temporary support and assistance to repair or rebuild asylum and reception systems;

information and analysis support: sharing and merging information and data, analyses and assessments at EU level, including EU-wide trend analyses and assessments;

third-country (i.e. non-member country) support: supporting the external dimension of the CEAS, supporting partnerships with third countries to reach common solutions, including by capacity building and regional protection programmes, and coordinating Member States' actions on resettlement.



EASO's Building



Unveiling the EASO logo, inaugural ceremony, Valletta, 19 June 2011

EASO's principles to fulfil its tasks:

- organising support and assistance for the general or specific needs of the Member States' asylum systems;
- coordinating and stimulating operational cooperation between Member States and enhancing quality;
- acting as an independent centre of expertise on asylum;
- organising EU-wide analyses and assessments of asylum data;
- facilitating and stimulating joint action and ensuring consistency within the asylum field;
- engaging with the full commitment of Member States;
- respecting the responsibility of Member States and their asylum decisions;
- cooperating with the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, as well as other EU institutions, agencies and bodies;
- involving international organisations and civil society;
- performing its duties as a service-oriented, impartial and transparent organisation within the EU legal, policy and institutional framework.

EASO contribution to the Mechanism for Early Warning, Preparedness and Crisis Management

In order to enable Member States to be better prepared for coping with changing flows of asylum seekers, the EU is setting up a Mechanism for Early Warning, Preparedness and Crisis Management. EASO has set up an Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS) that feeds into this mechanism as follows.

Early warning:

- EASO provides, on a regular basis, a regional outlook with an analysis of asylum trends and push–pull factors, as well as risk scenarios. This is based on data provided by Member States, Eurostat, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration, among others, combined with up-to-date COI produced by EASO.

Preparedness:

- EASO provides tools aimed at supporting Member States to be prepared for asylum influx and changes in asylum influx by providing training, COI, quality tools, and support on analysis and implementation of EU legislation.

Crisis management:

- EASO has a primary task of supporting Member States facing particular pressures. This is done through a number of operational measures such as the deployment of ASTs.



EASO Training

EASO training

EASO provides training and develops training materials in support of the promotion of quality and harmonisation in the area of asylum, as such contributing to the implementation of the CEAS. The cornerstone of EASO training activities is the EASO Training Curriculum, a common vocational training system designed for asylum officials and other target groups such as managers and legal officers throughout the EU. EASO training covers core aspects of the asylum procedure and practice in interactive modules.

EASO also develops training for the judiciary and engages in other relevant training initiatives. These include the development of training in cooperation with other EU agencies.

In addition to the permanent support activities, EASO delivers ad hoc training sessions in response to the specific needs of Member States under particular pressure. To this end it has delivered training sessions in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden.

Country of origin information

Country of origin information (COI) refers to information on countries from which asylum seekers originate. This sort of information is essential for asylum officials during the asylum determination process. COI can play a significant role in the implementation of a CEAS. In the field of COI, EASO:

- gathers targeted, relevant, reliable, accurate and up-to-date COI in a transparent and impartial manner;
- manages and further develops the EU's common COI portal, which provides a common entry point to information and offers additional resources for Member States;
- elaborates a common format and methodology for researching and presenting information on countries of origin to foster harmonisation of COI practices;
- drafts reports on key countries of origin reflecting this common format and methodology; in 2012 EASO published two reports on Afghanistan;
- organises country-specific practical cooperation workshops to share COI, discuss practices and responds to the different information needs of Member States.

EASO special and emergency support

EASO offers two kinds of specific support to Member States, namely 'special support' and 'emergency support'. **Special support** refers to tailor-made assistance, capacity building, facilitation and coordination of relocation, specific support and special quality control tools. **Emergency support** refers to organising solidarity for Member States subject to particular pressures by providing temporary support and assistance to repair or rebuild asylum and reception systems. Some examples of EASO support actions follow.

EASO emergency support to Greece

Following a request made by the Greek government, in February 2011, EASO agreed to support Greece with its establishment of the new Asylum Service, First Reception Service, Appeal Authority, and reception in general and reduction of the backlog via the deployment of experts from the different EU Member States via the so-called ASTs. In the first phase of the support to Greece, ending March 2013, EASO deployed and managed 70 experts from 14 Member States. These experts made up 52 ASTs. Following a request made by the Greek government in early 2013 for further support, EASO continues to support Greece until December 2014. In this second phase EASO supports Greece via the deployment of ASTs, which provide training on nationality establishment (in close cooperation with Frontex) and support on EU funding, support on the collection and analysis of statistical data and support in the field of COI. Depending on the request by the Greek government, EASO can rearrange or step up its operations.



Signing of the Operating Plan with Greece, Athens, 1 April 2011



Signing of the Operating Plan with Bulgaria, Bucharest, 17 October 2013

EASO special support to Italy

On 4 June 2013, EASO and Italy signed a special support plan which provides for EASO special support to Italy, until the end of 2014, in a number of prioritised areas, such as data collection and analysis, COI, Dublin system, reception system and emergency capacity, and training of independent judiciary. Anticipating the implementation of the new EU asylum package while facing large fluctuations in the number of arrivals of immigrants together with the need of keeping a high standard asylum and reception process, have motivated Italy to ask EASO for assistance in reinvigorating its asylum and reception systems.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, EASO has also offered special and/or emergency support to Bulgaria, Luxembourg and Sweden.

EASO and intra-EU relocation

In the area of relocation EASO promotes, facilitates, and coordinates the exchange of information and best practices on intra-EU relocation. EASO also participates in the Annual Relocation Forum, which provides an opportunity to assist Member States in understanding what the relocation needs are in the immediate future. In 2012, EASO carried out a fact-finding exercise on the Project for intra-EU Relocation from Malta (Eurema — phase I and II) and bilateral arrangements between EU Member States, associate countries and Malta.

In focus: Asylum Support Teams

What are Asylum Support Teams?

Asylum Support Teams (ASTs) are composed of national experts deployed by EASO in a Member State for a limited time in order to support the asylum system of that Member State.

Such experts are made available by Member States and are included in an EASO 'asylum intervention pool'.

What kind of support may an AST provide?

ASTs may provide any support agreed by EASO and the Member State subject to particular pressure, aiming at preparing its asylum and reception system and managing the situation of particular pressure.

ASTs may provide expertise in relation to, among other matters, reception, training, information on countries of origin and knowledge of the handling and management of asylum cases, including those of vulnerable groups.

How can ASTs be deployed?

ASTs may be deployed by EASO at the request of a Member State subject to particular pressure on its asylum system, including its reception facilities. EASO's Executive Director and the minister of the requesting Member State then sign an agreement which stipulates the actions to be implemented by ASTs.

EASO and the external dimension of the Common European Asylum System

EASO has an important role to play in the external dimension of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by strengthening asylum and reception capacity in third countries in order to better protect asylum seekers, facilitating the resettlement by Member States of refugees from third countries to the EU, and cooperating with third countries in matters connected with EASO's duties and activities. This includes supporting the implementation of regional protection programmes, and other actions relevant to durable solutions. In 2013, EASO has elaborated an external dimension strategy that defines the approach and general framework within which the agency will develop its work related to the external dimension of the CEAS.

EASO and resettlement

EASO aims at strengthening the EU role in the area of resettlement with a view to meeting the international protection needs of refugees in third countries and showing solidarity with their host countries. EASO facilitates the resettlement by Member States of refugees from third countries to the EU in cooperation with UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). EASO further develops existing methodologies and tools to strengthen Member States' ability to resettle refugees and contribute to the evaluation and further development of the joint EU resettlement programme.

Signing of the EASO-UNHCR working arrangement, Geneva, 13 December 2013





10th EASO Management Board meeting, Malta, 4 and 5 February 2013

The administrative and management structure

The Executive Director: The Executive Director, Dr Robert K. Visser, has been appointed by the Management Board, and is in charge of the day-to-day management of the agency. The Executive Director is independent in the performance of his tasks and is the legal representative of EASO. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of the work programme and the decisions of the Management Board. The Executive Director is supported by heads of unit/centre, the accounting officer and an Executive Office. Currently EASO is composed of four units/centres, namely:

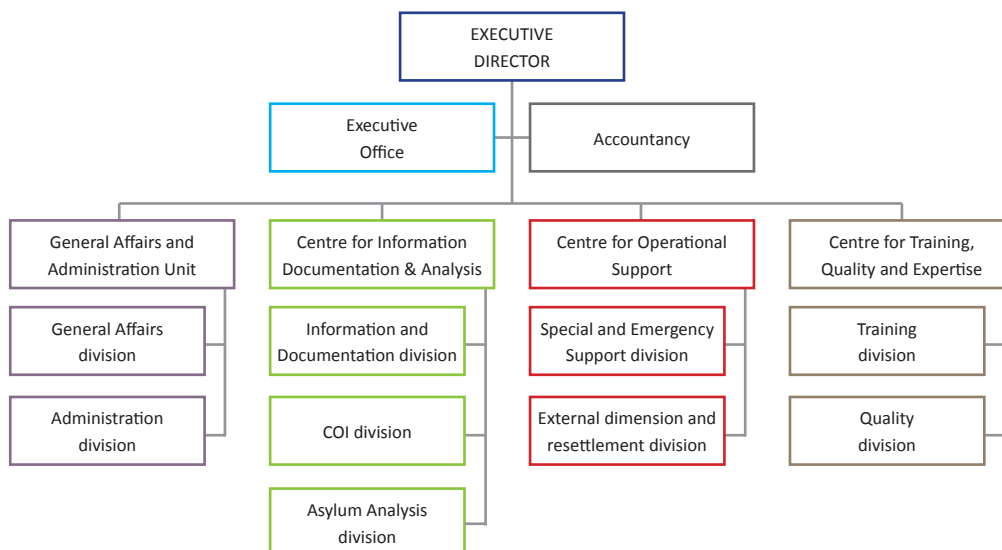
- General Affairs and Administration Unit;
- Centre for Information, Documentation and Analysis;

- Centre for Operational Support;
- Centre for Training, Quality and Expertise.

The Management Board: The Management Board is the agency's planning and monitoring authority. It is composed of representatives of the EU Member States and Associate Countries, the European Commission and a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Consultative Forum: The Consultative Forum has been established in October 2011 to promote EASO's engagement with civil society. The Consultative Forum is consulted regularly, and consists of civil society (including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academics and the judiciary) and other bodies.

EASO practical cooperation: EASO practical cooperation is a concept applied to expert meetings, conferences and networks organised by EASO. EASO practical cooperation activities follow a common methodology and are intended to improve and maximise convergence on approaches to, and assessment of the protection needs of asylum seekers.



Our history

- The Tampere European Council of 1999 agreed on the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS).
- The EU 2004 Hague Programme proposed the establishment of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The Office was conceived to play a crucial role in ensuring practical cooperation between Member States on matters related to asylum.
- The European Commission proposed the creation of EASO on 18 February 2009.
- In the first quarter of 2010, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on the creation of EASO. The EASO regulation came into force on 19 June 2010.
- On 1 February 2011, EASO became operational as an EU agency.
- On 1 April 2011 the first EASO operating plan was signed to support the reconstruction of the Greek asylum system.
- On 24 May 2011, the 'seat agreement' between the Government of Malta and EASO was signed. The agreement governs the relationship between the host Member State and EASO.
- On 19 June 2011, EASO was officially inaugurated in Malta.
- On 7 September 2012, EASO moved into its new premises located in the Grand Harbour of Valletta, Malta.
- In 2012, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden requested and obtained EASO's support.
- In 2013, Bulgaria requested and obtained EASO's support.

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Publications Office

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014

ISBN 978-92-9243-119-8

doi:10.2847/16671

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON ELEMENTAL CHLORINE-FREE BLEACHED PAPER (ECF)

In focus: the Consultative Forum



3rd Consultative Forum, Malta, 27 and 28 November 2013

The EASO Consultative Forum is a continuous two-way dialogue that allows for the exchange of information and pooling of knowledge between EASO and civil society.

As a European centre of expertise, consultation for EASO is not just an annual meeting but a continuous two-way dialogue that brings together experts on the many aspects of asylum to share knowledge and expertise. This process provides additional insight and information which helps EASO develop more comprehensive and advanced practical cooperation tools aimed at supporting the implementation of the CEAS.

EASO is particularly interested in content-related input. Areas of particular interest for consultation include early warning and preparedness, training, quality processes, unaccompanied minors, family tracing, gender, vulnerable groups, resettlement, relocation and provision of emergency support to Member States subject to particular pressure.

Want to join the EASO Consultative Forum? Contact the EASO Consultative Forum coordination.