



## Press Release

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### EASO holds its Consultative Forum Meeting

EASO held its Consultative Forum plenary meeting on 25/26 November 2012 at, Valletta, Malta. This was the second meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum (the first was held in December 2011). Although EASO consults various organisations throughout the year, the plenary meeting has become a major event in EASO's calendar of activities attracting around hundred participants most of whom are NGOs working in the field of asylum. During this meeting, EASO presented the Operational Plan which describes the framework within which the Forum shall operate. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to discuss key EASO products and services during breakout sessions.

The Consultative Forum is a mechanism for the exchange of information and pooling of knowledge between EASO and relevant stakeholders. EASO addresses the members of the Consultative Forum on various topics identified as priority for EASO's work.

During this year's meeting, various notable actors in the field of asylum and migration addressed the Forum this year, including the Member of the European Parliament Hon. Cecilia Wikstrom and Ms. Cathryn Costello from the University of Oxford. During this meeting, EASO presented the Consultative Forum Operational Plan which describes the framework within which the Forum shall operate. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to discuss key EASO products and services during breakout sessions, such as the EASO Annual Report, EASO Annual Work Programme 2014, EASO Training, Quality and Unaccompanied minors, and the EASO Early warning and Preparedness System. EASO also presented a draft calendar of consultation activities during 2013, which was well received by participants.

Civil society organisations expressed their willingness to engage more closely with EASO and to provide relevant expertise. EASO welcomed suggestions and proposals made by civil society both on content and process and vouched to take them into consideration to the extent possible in its work during 2013.

Dr Robert K. Visser, EASO's Executive Director, stated that *the Consultative Forum is not just an annual meeting, but rather a continuous two way dialogue. The aim of consultation is to ensure that interested parties are given the opportunity to be heard and to contribute to EASO's work. I see consultation with civil society as a win-win situation when carried out in full respect of mutual obligations and responsibilities. That is why EASO has proposed to consult civil society in a more structured and comprehensive manner during 2013.*

Organisations interested in being consulted by EASO can register on [www.easo.europa.eu](http://www.easo.europa.eu)

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: [jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu](mailto:jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu)