



Infopoint

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EU-funded Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Programme launched in Belgrade

EASO, the European Commission and Frontex, together with representatives of IOM and UNHCR launched an EU-funded programme for pre-accession assistance in the field of protection-sensitive migration management during an official kick-off conference in Belgrade. This regional support programme for the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey aims to establish a harmonized, effective and protection-sensitive migration management in line with EU standards. The element of protection-sensitive migration management runs as a red thread through the programme and stresses that international protection aspects should be taken into consideration throughout the whole migration management process.

The individual assessment of asylum cases is key in determining the need for protection and to be able to provide the appropriate support to persons with special needs. Identification and first registration are of outmost important for the full chain of migration management; referral mechanisms need to be established to channel the persons in need of international protection into the national asylum system to assess the need for international protection and come to a decision of stay (integration) or return", said Claus Folden, Head of EASO Centre for Operational Support.

EASO is ready to work closely with the project partners and with the partner countries, with the aim of supporting the partner countries to establish EU compatible systems for persons in need of international protection. Last year, over 1 million migrants and refugees entered the EU mainly via Greece but also via Italy. Countries of the Western Balkans were heavily affected by the movements of hundreds of thousands of people coming via Turkey and transiting on their way to the European Union.

"The migratory pressure on the countries of the Western Balkans has clearly demonstrated the need to strengthen border management capacities in this region. We need to build resilience of the national authorities to cope better with this type of situations in the future, but also to reinforce their bid to joining the EU and Schengen," said Frontex Deputy Executive Director Berndt Körner.

The programme's focus is to build the capacity of the countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey and help them improve border management and asylum and reception systems in line with EU standards. Since the programme includes many different elements, Frontex, the European Asylum Support Office, International Organisation for Migration and UNHCR will all be involved in its implementation.

The humanitarian situation of the migrants along the Western Balkans route calls for urgent action using all available EU and national means to alleviate it. The current contingency planning which is underway in the European Union provides significant funding to support countries facing large numbers of refugees and migrants. The programme launched today is complementary and provides sustainable solutions to build the capacity of the Western Balkans countries and Turkey for the future.