



Press Release

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EASO Executive Director a.i, visits Greece and the Hotspot in Lesvos

During his mission to Greece, on 22-24 February 2016, EASO's Executive Director a.i., Jose Carreira visited Athens and the hotspot in Lesvos to assess the situation and the functioning of the EU relocation scheme. During his visit he met with various stakeholders including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Filippo Grandi, Greek Minister for Migration, Hon. Ioannis Mouzalas, and the Head of the Greek Asylum Service, Ms Maria Stavropoulou.

EASO is currently operational in Athens, Lesvos, Samos and Chios and making preparation to deploy experts also in Leros and the port in Piraeus. EASO's main role in the hotspots is to assist the EU relocation process, in particular through the provision of information on relocation, assistance provided to the Dublin unit, and detection of possible document fraud. In order to facilitate the opening of the hotspots, EASO has procured mobile units including equipment to support the relocation process. EASO staff have already provided information on relocation to **approximately 10,500 persons** and EASO is expected to scale up its operation in Greece in the coming weeks through the further deployment of experts.

Assessing the situation on the Greek island of **Lesvos**, Mr Carreira commended the efforts being made by the Greek authorities and all stakeholders on the ground in handling the large flow of refugees arriving daily on the island.

During his various meetings, Mr Carreira pointed out that supporting the **EU Relocation Scheme** is the key priority for EASO operations in Greece. *"The relocation process can be compared to a very complex watch with a number of interlocking cogs. If not all cogs are working at optimal speed the output will suffer – we have to work together in order to ensure that each cog and each actor is working to optimum speed. EASO will do its part in order to overcome challenges. Although some first results have been achieved we still have a long way ahead of us. EASO is working closely with all partners to support Greece and participating states to further improve the implementation of the Relocation Scheme."*

During his visit to Lesvos, Mr Carreira also met with representatives of the European Commission, FRONTEX, Hon. Boris Pistorius, Minister of Interior of Lower Saxony (Germany) and Hon. Peter Beuth, Minister of Interior of Hesse (Germany).

Any further information on EASO may be obtained by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu (follow us live on twitter [@EASO](https://twitter.com/EASO))