

Press Release: Eritrea in Focus

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EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information report on Eritrea: Country Focus

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a new [Country of Origin Information \(COI\) report entitled 'Eritrea Country Focus'](#). The report provides information on a selection of topics relevant for international protection status determination in regard to Eritreans.

Between 2013 and 2014, the number of Eritrean applicants in the EU+ countries (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) more than doubled, rising from 20 295 applicants registered in 2013 to about 47 125 in 2014, a 132 % increase. 2014 was characterised by a strong rise in applicants throughout the second quarter, reaching a high of 7 875 registered in the month of July. Although the inflow of Eritrean applicants in the EU+ fell sharply from August 2014, recently figures show that the numbers of Eritrean applicants are again on the increase. Moreover, the stock of pending cases remained at over 30 000 at the end of April 2015 at EU+ level – possibly indicating difficulties in making decisions on Eritrean applications, including a lack of COI.

The most recurrent asylum motives brought forward by Eritrean applicants in EU+ countries relate to open-ended national service (and those fleeing it such as deserters, draft evaders, or their family members); fear of persecution on the basis of religion (e.g. of Jehovah's witnesses, Pentecostals, etc.); consequences of illegal departure in case of return; and harsh treatment during detention.

The [Eritrea Country Focus](#) aims to provide information on these subjects. The report first provides a chapter on general country information and state structure, including the political system. This is then followed by a description of national service (structure, exemptions, civil and military service, recruitment, duration, desertion and draft evasion); prisons and detention; religion; identity documents and; exit (Illegal and legal).

The report covers the period up until April 2015. [The Country Focus](#) is based on publicly available reports of COI units, UN agencies, human rights organisations, scholars, official and NGO papers, government and diaspora media. The [Eritrea Country Focus report](#) was written using the EASO network approach whereby networks of national COI experts work jointly to provide common COI at EU level in accordance with the EASO [COI Report Methodology](#). The report was drafted by a researcher from the Analysis and Services Division of the State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland and reviewed by COI experts on Eritrea from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, an external expert, and EASO in order to check and ensure quality.

EASO will continue to produce such reports on important countries of origin and to update them on a regular basis in order to raise and harmonise COI standards in the EU and use of common COI to further support the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

Quick links: [Country of Origin Information \(COI\) report entitled 'Eritrea Country Focus'](#)

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