

EASO CONSULTATIVE FORUM

28-29 NOVEMBER 2016

ATHENS, GREECE



INTERACTIVE, PARTICIPATORY FORMAT
Authentic dialogue matters for EASO

**EASO 6TH CONSULTATIVE FORUM PLENARY MEETING****28-29 NOVEMBER 2016****Stratos Vassilikos Hotel
Michalakopoulou 114, Athens, Greece****Background & Main Objectives**

Strengthening dialogue and pooling of expertise between institutional and non-institutional actors involved, with different roles, in the field of asylum and reception, can be of added value to better face the multiple challenges of the current high migration pressure.

EASO Consultative Forum represents a venue for constructive exchange, cross-fertilization and pooling of knowledge among relevant stakeholders operating in priority areas of the work of EASO.

The plenary meeting of the 6th EASO Consultative Forum will take place in Athens, aiming to facilitate the participation of actors operating in Greece, and will be hosted in a fully participatory format. The format will enable more interactive discussion offering the opportunity for participants to proactively engage, proposing topics of discussion, sharing ideas through the presentation of posters, exchanging dynamically with a diversified set of representatives and getting to know better the work of EASO and other relevant stakeholders.

What participants can expect from the meeting:

- Engage in meaningful conversations around three priority thematic areas and promote collective knowledge;
- A participatory process hosted by a team of professionals skilled in participatory leadership;
- The possibility to provide inputs and share ideas most relevant to the work of EASO;
- EASO actively listening and participating in authentic dialogue;
- A record (graphic and report) of the outcome of the meeting shared after the meeting;
- A venue to meet and exchange with around 100 participants from a diversified set of civil society organizations and institutions, refugees representatives, local authorities and third countries representatives.
- A *marketplace* available to host info stands for the requesting organizations/individuals.

What participants should be ready to:

- Actively engage sharing knowledge, ideas and experiences for one and an-half day;
- Listen to each other carefully, listen together for insights and deeper questions;
- Link and connect ideas which matter for EASO and which can help to better address the current challenges;
- Accept that divergent opinions are ok and suspend judgements, assumption and certainties;

Format of the event

The meeting will focus on the most significant developments which have been affecting the European asylum context in the past year, such as the establishment of the European relocation programme, the hotspot approach and the different legislative proposals under discussion.

An opening high level panel will help setting the scene and outlining what is changing in the European asylum framework under different perspectives.

The meeting will then unfold into a fully participatory process, steered by a hosting team of professionals skilled in participatory techniques. Discussion will be driven around the three following thematic areas:

1. Unpacking relocation and the hotspot approach.

The Council Decisions of September 2015 established provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece aimed to set-up the European relocation scheme in the next two years. Together with the hotspot approach and the EU-Turkey agreement, relocation represents a major novelty within the EU asylum practices. 2016 saw national and European institutions, as well as other relevant stakeholders, fully engaged to give practical implementation to these new measures. EASO within this framework, has been called to shift to more tailor-made practical operational support playing an important role in Italy and Greece, in particular on registration of applications for international protection, joint processing of asylum applications, referral of potential outgoing Dublin take-charge requests, and assistance with the relocation of applicants for international protection, matching and data collection. Furthermore in Greece, EASO supports the Greek authorities in specific parts of the admissibility procedure in order to ensure systematic individual assessment. This working group will focus on challenges, best practices and solutions related to the practical implementation of the relocation and hotspot approach by unpacking the different steps, looking into actors involved and possible synergies. Participants will be invited to share experiences and ideas related to those steps more relevant to their areas of work/expertise, including for instance provision of legal aid, referral, cultural orientation, matching, and integration.

2. Information, analysis and communication within a polyphonic context.

In the wake of the high migration pressure experienced by Europe in 2015-2016, particularly by Greece and Italy, multiple institutional and civil society actors have dedicated resources to gather data and information, aimed to different purposes according to their specific mandates and targeted recipients. A number of reports, gap analysis, advocacy statements, research papers, brochures, articles, and statistics have been published, presenting often dissonant and partial pictures of a situation which is highly complex and changes rapidly. Research and data analysis are key to provide evidence based inputs to the policy makers; communication is essential to inform the involved parties, refugees and citizens, disseminating clear messages through different channels, including social media. Within a polyphonic context, however, it can be challenging to ensure comprehensive outreach and consistent messages provided by several actors. As flagged by ECRE and AIRE in their report on Greece, too many actors, giving similar messages, might result in exacerbating confusion and uncertainty among refugees. EASO has been dedicating great efforts to further enhance its data collection and analysis system and to implement a communication strategy for relocation, including with the development of a mobile app. This working group will discuss



challenges, best practices and solutions to better integrate products of information and documentation, to improve information sharing and dissemination, to cross-check sources, with a view to reinforce consistent narratives, bridge communication gaps and build trust in the relocation program and in the actors involved.

3. Addressing the needs of vulnerable groups in the context of high influx: identification, referral, reception, integration.

The needs of vulnerable groups in the context of mixed flows and high migration pressure require special attention by all involved stakeholders in order to be identified and addressed properly throughout the asylum procedure. Persons with special needs include for instance unaccompanied and separated children; single parents with children; persons with serious or mental diseases; elderly; pregnant women or who recently gave birth; disabled; victims of torture, violence, human trafficking and persons with a post-traumatic disorder. Within the framework of relocation and the hotspot approach, tools, measures and safeguards for vulnerable cases have been developed by institutional and civil society actors involved with their respective mandate. EASO's work in the area of vulnerable groups become further integrated within EASO's operational support in Greece and in Italy. In January 2016, EASO launched the *Tool for the Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)*, which is freely accessible on-line; a tool for the Best Interest Assessment of the Child in the context of relocation was developed; vulnerabilities assessment is performed as part of the admissibility procedure in Greece; child-friendly information material for relocation are under development. Furthermore, EASO is finalizing the Guidance on Reception Conditions. This working group will discuss experiences, lessons learned, tools, needs, standards, challenges to address the needs of vulnerable groups particularly looking at the context of high influx in Greece and Italy and in the framework of relocation and the hotspot approach.

Based on the discussion of the first session, meeting participants will be offered the floor and they will be asked to bring forward their own concrete proposals and fill in the agenda. Topic owners will discuss their proposed ideas around key questions in small groups seeking solutions to the identified challenges, and prepare a poster. On the following half day, time will be dedicated to showcases and discussion in order to feed inputs to the closing panel debate which will react from different angles to the stocktaking of 2016 challenges, developments and ways ahead to strengthen synergies between institutional actors and civil society to address the refugees' crisis and support the building of a single and fair Europe of asylum.

Registration

The meeting is open to civil society organizations and individuals operating in the field of asylum; organizations and individuals operating at the different levels (locals, national, European and international) as well as representatives of refugees communities are encouraged to register.

EU Member States Asylum authorities, representatives of EU institutions and International Organizations, representatives from local municipalities are also invited to the meeting.

A limited number of civil society representatives from third countries involved in EASO's external dimension will be also invited to participate.



In order to participate it is necessary to register by filling the on-line registration form

<https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-6th-consultative-forum-plenary-meeting>

At the time of registering, participants from the civil society can apply for EASO Financial support (500€ flat rate) to cover their travel cost according to the following rules:

- **Participants from outside Greece only are eligible to request financial support;**
- **Participants need to attend fully the meeting and actively engage in the participatory discussions;**
- **1 participant for each organization is eligible for financial assistance (more participants from the same organization can register to the meeting);**
- **EASO has limited funding availability; financial assistance will be granted taking into account relevance, institutional, geographic and thematic balance among participants;**
- **A different procedure applies for civil society participants from Third Countries, ask for more information;**

EASO will notify in written the participant whose request for financial assistance has been accepted by 7 November 2016.

If you apply for financial assistance, submit your registration form as soon as possible and not later than 4 November 2016

Registration will close on 14 November 2016

Places are limited to 150 participants, in case the Plenary is full, EASO may decide to close the registration earlier.

For more information please contact

Consultative-Forum@easo.europa.eu

Enclosed: Draft programme