



European Asylum Support Office

# EASO Annual General Report 2014



June 2015

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION

**2014**  
Participants to meetings

**100**  
Contributions from civil society received

**Stage II**  
EPS stage II fully implemented



**1**  
Working arrangement with eu-LISA

**4**  
Civil society organizations consulted

***In 2014***

**4**  
Training modules updated

**34**  
Publications

**3**  
High level visits

**4**  
Operational support plans

**1**  
New training module

**6**  
Joint processing pilots

**117**  
Meetings/workshops organized

**3**  
Joint Contact Committee meetings



# EASO Annual General Report 2014

June 2015

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## List of abbreviations

<b>AEAJ</b>	Association of European Administrative Judges
<b>AIP</b>	Asylum Intervention Pool
<b>APD</b>	Asylum Procedures Directive
<b>ATCR</b>	Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement
<b>AST</b>	Asylum Support Team
<b>CEAS</b>	Common European Asylum System
<b>CEPOL</b>	European Police College
<b>COI</b>	Country of Origin Information
<b>EASO</b>	European Asylum Support Office
<b>EIGE</b>	European Institute for Gender Equality
<b>EMCDDA</b>	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
<b>EMN</b>	European Migration Network
<b>ENPI</b>	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
<b>EPRA</b>	European Platform of Reception Agencies
<b>EPS</b>	Early warning and Preparedness System
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>eu-LISA</b>	European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
<b>Eurojust</b>	The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
<b>Europol</b>	European Police Office
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>Frontex</b>	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
<b>GDISC</b>	General Directors of Immigration Service Conference
<b>GPS</b>	Group for the Provision of Statistics
<b>IALN</b>	Inter-Agency Legal Network
<b>IARLJ</b>	International Association of Refugee Law Judges
<b>IDS</b>	Information Documentation System
<b>IGC</b>	Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>JHA</b>	Justice and Home Affairs
<b>LGB</b>	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Persons
<b>MFF</b>	Multiannual Financial Framework
<b>MSPP</b>	Multiannual Staff Policy Plan
<b>NCP</b>	National Contact Point
<b>RDPPs</b>	Regional Development and Protection Programmes
<b>THB</b>	Trafficking of Human Beings
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Introduction

The **EASO Annual General Report** outlines the achievements of the Agency in 2014 and the resources used to effect these achievements. The structure of the report mirrors the EASO Annual Work Programme 2014 and provides a detailed account of progress against the objectives and performance indicators identified in the annual work programme.

Key information concerning EASO's organisation, publication and the management of human and financial resources is also provided.

Previously referred to as the Annual Activity Report, the Annual General Report is prepared in accordance with Article 29(1)(c) of the EASO Regulation and was adopted by the Management Board of EASO on 8 June 2015. The Annual General Report is sent to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, including the Internal Audit Service, and the Court of Auditors no later than 15 June 2015. The Annual General Report is a public document and has been translated into all the official languages of the EU.

In 2015, following the Communication on the guidelines for the programming document for decentralised agencies (C(2014) 9641) of 16 December 2014, EASO has also drafted a **Consolidated Annual Activity Report**

**2014** in accordance with the new reporting requirements established by the Framework Financial Regulation (Article 47). The Consolidated Annual Activity Report includes a declaration of assurance by the Executive Director, stating that the information contained in the report presents a true and fair view of whether the resources assigned to the activities have been used for the intended purpose in line with the principle of sound financial management and that the controls put in place give the necessary guarantees on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions; it includes the final accounts 2014, extensive budgetary and financial management reports, the internal controls developed by the Agency, the internal and external audits performed during the year of reference, as well as information on EASO publications.

Part I (Policy Achievements) of the EASO Consolidated Annual Activity Report is based on the Annual General Report.

The Consolidated Annual Activity Report shall be sent, together with the assessment of the EASO Management Board, to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, including the Internal Audit Service, and the Court of Auditors no later than 1 July 2015.

## Executive summary

The activities EASO has implemented in 2014 can be divided into five focus areas: permanent support, special support, emergency support, information and analysis support and third country support.

Within its **permanent support** activities, EASO delivered thirteen train-the-trainer sessions, organised four regional training sessions, developed one new training module and updated four modules, developed two training handbooks and an Annual Training Report based on the training cockpit, organised the Annual Didactic Seminar, two training National Contact Points (NCPs) meetings and initiated the process for the certification of the EASO training system.

EASO's work on quality of asylum processes and decisions included a thematic mapping on access to procedure, identification of persons with special needs and special procedures, the development of Practical Guides on Personal Interview and on Evidence Assessment, three thematic meetings, eight working group meetings and a meeting of the NCPs on quality. EASO furthermore strengthened its cooperation with the members of the Courts and Tribunals, organising an annual conference and three experts' meetings and developing a practical tool on Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. In the area of trafficking in human beings, EASO coordinated a report on 'Joint Activities' developed by the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies to address THB from October 2012 to October 2014 and organised one expert meeting.

An EASO practical cooperation conference on unaccompanied minors and four thematic meetings were organised and a publication on family tracing and the evaluation of the 'EASO age assessment practice in Europe' publication were initiated.

With regard to Country of Origin Information (COI), EASO further developed the COI portal which served 580 active users, created four new COI specific networks on Iran, Iraq, Russia and Afghanistan, organised two meetings and four training sessions for the National Common Portal Administrators, two meetings of the Strategic COI Network and thirteen country-specific workshops and seminars. In addition, EASO produced two COI reports (on Somalia and on Chechnya) and a publication on 'Tools and tips for online COI research'.

**Special support** was provided to Italy, completing the implementation of the Special Support Plan which started in 2014, and, as from June 2014, to Cyprus. EASO organised a number of practical cooperation meetings on tools to provide support, contingency planning, relocation and reception.

Furthermore EASO, in collaboration with other stakeholders, implemented eight actions within the framework of the Task Force Mediterranean, including six pilot projects on joint processing of asylum applications and a pilot project on the phenomenon of facilitation of persons seeking international protection.

EASO provided **emergency support** to Bulgaria and Greece, completing the implementation of the respective Operating Plans. EASO organised two meetings of the Asylum Intervention Pool NCPs.

In the area of **information and analysis support**, EASO published its 2013 Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU with inputs from approximately forty stakeholders. In addition, EASO developed three quarterly asylum reports, twelve monthly asylum reports and seven ad hoc reports. Moreover, EASO organised two meetings with the Group of Provision of Statistics (GPS), fully implemented stage II of its Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS) and developed a proposal for EPS stage III.

On **third country support**, EASO continued the implementation of its EASO External Dimension Strategy, particularly through the implementation of a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) project with Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco. EASO established an External Dimension Network and organised two practical cooperation meetings. EASO participated in the Annual Resettlement and Relocation Forum on 25 September 2014 and a mapping of resettlement cycles in Member States was completed.

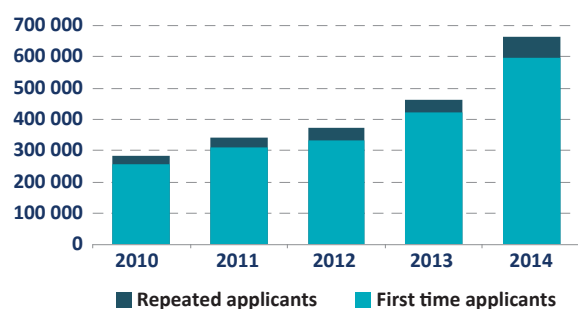
With regard to **EASO's organisation and cooperation with stakeholders**, EASO organised three Management Board meetings, signed a working arrangement with eu-LISA, held its 4th Consultative Forum meeting and consulted civil society on various topics. In 2014 EASO chaired the network of the JHA Agencies, within which three contact group meetings and the Heads of JHA agencies meeting were held. Various high level visits were organised, including hosting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr António Guterres, and the European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ms Cecilia Malmström. Finally, EASO strengthened its internal and external communication: a communication strategy was adopted, press releases and newsletters were regularly issued and an EASO info day was organised on 19 June 2014 in Member States and in the European Parliament. Finally, EASO organised three Joint Contact Committee meetings with the European Commission on the Qualification Directive, Dublin system and the Asylum Procedures Directive. In 2014 the external evaluation of EASO was launched.



<b>EASO's key results in 2014</b>
<b>117 meetings and workshops organised</b>
<b>2 014 participants in meetings and workshops</b>
<b>1 new training module</b>
<b>4 training modules updated</b>
<b>100 contributions received from civil society</b>
<b>70 civil society organisations consulted</b>
<b>EPS stage II fully implemented</b>
<b>6 pilot projects on joint processing and 1 pilot project on information gathering on the phenomenon of facilitation during the asylum determination process</b>
<b>4 operational support plans</b>
<b>34 publications</b>
<b>3 high level visits</b>
<b>Chairmanship of the JHA Agencies network</b>
<b>Working arrangement with eu-LISA concluded</b>
<b>3 Joint Contact Committee meetings organised with the European Commission</b>

# 1. Setting the scene: relevant developments in 2014

The year 2014 saw an unprecedented increase in applications for international protection in the EU+, which reached a total of 662 825 <sup>(1)</sup>.



**Figure 1: Fourth consecutive year of growth in asylum applicants in the EU+**

The year 2014 was also marked by important developments at the policy level in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, with the election of the 8th European Parliament and the appointment of a new European Commission. Within this framework EASO has made efforts to exchange views and coordinated, together with the other Justice and Home Affairs Agencies, the provision of evidence-based input to the policy debate and decision-making process.

The Stockholm Programme and its Action Plan completed its 5-year period at the end of 2014. In this regard, the European Council adopted in its meeting of June 2014 strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning for the coming years in the JHA field <sup>(2)</sup>. In preparation for that meeting, the Council of the EU was requested to undergo a process of reflection and the Commission was invited to present contributions. As part of this process, the Council of the EU held several meetings to discuss the future of the JHA policies. In addition, the Commission adopted two communications on 11 March 2014 on justice and home affairs entitled, respectively, 'The EU Justice Agenda for 2020 — Strengthening Trust, Mobility and Growth within the Union' (COM(2014) 144) <sup>(3)</sup> and 'An open and secure Europe: making it happen' (COM(2014) 154) <sup>(4)</sup>. EASO provided input to this process through a paper entitled 'Implementing the CEAS in full. Translating legislation

into action' <sup>(5)</sup>. Finally, the European Parliament adopted on 4 March 2014 a report <sup>(6)</sup> on the mid-term review of the Stockholm Programme.

According to the new guidelines, the overall priority is to consistently transpose, effectively implement and consolidate the legal instruments and policy measures in place. The objective is progress towards a trusted area of freedom, justice and security by better managing migration in all its aspects, by preventing and combating crime and terrorism and by improving judicial cooperation across the Union. The newly appointed President of the European Commission, Mr Juncker, in his mission letter <sup>(7)</sup> to the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship (Mr Avramopoulos), in November 2014, called for an enhanced role for EASO and for the Common European Asylum System to be fully implemented and operational.

The priorities set by the EU institutions have underlined that in the field of asylum, responsibility and solidarity go hand in hand. In this sense, EASO is a key operational actor aiming at high common standards in practices and stronger cooperation, creating a level playing field whereby similar asylum cases are treated and decided in a similar way across the Union. Converging practices and common training will enhance mutual trust. To this end, in full compliance with its mandate, EASO in 2014 continued developing a common training programme adapted to the recast asylum *acquis*, and provided operational support and assistance to Member States' asylum systems with identified specific needs, particularly to Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Cyprus. Furthermore, EASO set up pilot projects on joint processing of asylum applications in Member States, facilitating quicker and more efficient processing of asylum applications, in full respect for the EU and the applicable national legal frameworks. EASO further strengthened its Early warning and Preparedness System, which provides trends analysis reports to Member States on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, examining the situation of asylum in the EU.

As regards the internal organisation, in 2014 EASO was still considered to be in its start-up phase; EASO was impacted by budgetary constraints, which resulted

<sup>(1)</sup> EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2014.

<sup>(2)</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/143478.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/143478.pdf)

<sup>(3)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/files/com\\_2014\\_144\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/files/com_2014_144_en.pdf)

<sup>(4)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/an\\_open\\_and\\_secure\\_europe\\_-\\_making\\_it\\_happen\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/basic-documents/docs/an_open_and_secure_europe_-_making_it_happen_en.pdf)

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-written-contribution-in-full1.pdf>

<sup>(6)</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2014-0153+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

<sup>(7)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner\\_mission\\_letters/avramopoulos\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_mission_letters/avramopoulos_en.pdf)



**Picture 1: UN High Commissioner for Refugees at EASO Management Board meeting**

in a limited reduction of the initially foreseen human and budgetary resources. The staff complement of EASO in 2014 reached 79 staff members and its budget amounted to EUR 15 million in commitment

and in payment appropriations. In 2014 EASO external evaluation started and this is expected to be finalised by July 2015.

## 2. EASO priorities in 2014

In 2014, EASO focused on supporting Member States in the implementation of the five recast EU asylum legal instruments laying the foundations of the second phase of the CEAS: the Qualification Directive (Directive 2011/95/EU), the Dublin III Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 604/2013), the Reception Conditions Directive (Directive 2013/33/EU), the Asylum Procedures Directive (Directive 2013/32/EU) and the Eurodac Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 603/2013). EASO played a key role in supporting Member States in this process through a vast array of tools that are being developed to fulfil this purpose. In developing these tools, EASO has taken into account the existing best practices and practical cooperation measures to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication. Finally, EASO in 2014 implemented the measures foreseen by the Task Force Mediterranean.

### **EASO's priorities 2014**

**Supporting Member States' implementation of the recast asylum package through training, practical cooperation activities, COI and quality reports.**

**Further developing EASO's Early warning and Preparedness System**

**Providing operational support to Greece in line with the operating plan phase II and special support to Bulgaria, Italy and Cyprus**

**Implementing the measures of the Task Force Mediterranean**

## 3. EASO's achievements in 2014 by area of activity

### 3.1 Permanent support

EASO's permanent support to Member States aims at supporting the implementation of the CEAS and improving the quality of the asylum processes and systems. This support aims at promoting a consistent implementation of the CEAS within the EU and at sharing common knowledge and skills, organisation and procedures, information, resources and best practices. EASO permanent support consists of:

- EASO training;
- quality support;
- COI;
- reception;
- specific programmes, such as EASO's cooperation with Member States and European courts and tribunals and activities with regard to unaccompanied minors, the list of available languages and cooperation on the prevention of trafficking in human beings.

#### 3.1.1 Training

EASO's training results in 2014
<b>179 participants in thirteen train-the-trainer sessions organised in Malta</b>
<b>108 participants in four regional training sessions organised within the External Dimension Strategy</b>
<b>2 533 participants in 179 national training sessions administered</b>
<b>1 new training module developed</b>
<b>4 modules updated</b>
<b>3 handbooks published (CEAS, Inclusion, Interview Techniques)</b>
<b>Development of the certification system</b>

EASO's training activities in 2014 supported Member States in developing further the skills and competencies of their staff through qualitative common training. EASO's training contributed to the coherent implementation of the CEAS by supporting the establishment of common practices and procedures across the EU. In line with the framework created by the Training Strategy <sup>(8)</sup> adopted in 2012, EASO followed a two-track approach: on one hand, EASO developed relevant training materials and, on the other hand, EASO organised training based

on a train-the-trainer system. The EASO Training Curriculum <sup>(9)</sup> covers core aspects of the asylum procedure by means of 14 interactive modules that follow a blended learning methodology, combining online e-learning and face-to-face sessions. In its work on training EASO closely collaborates with a pool of experts from Member States and Associate Countries. EASO performs regularly targeted consultations with international and civil society organisations in relation to training materials. Of particular importance in this area is the work of a training reference group established by EASO, consisting of representatives from the European Commission, UNHCR, the Odysseus Network and the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) which play an important role in the training development process. In addition, meetings of the training NCPs took place in May and October 2014, while the annual didactic seminar was organised in October 2014.

In the course of 2014, thirteen train-the-trainer sessions were delivered in the following modules: Inclusion, Interviewing Children, Drafting and Decision-making, Evidence Assessment, CEAS, Interview Techniques, Interviewing Vulnerable Persons, COI, Module for Managers, Dublin III Regulation (two sessions), Asylum Procedures Directive and Exclusion. Some 179 trainees from 23 Member States participated in the train-the-trainers' sessions (including nine participants from EASO's staff) and their average level of satisfaction was 80 %. For the first time, and in order to facilitate a broader participation, EASO in 2014 organised regional training sessions covering a combination of modules. Eight train-the-trainer sessions were delivered in four regional training sessions in Warsaw, Vienna, Brussels (in French) and Rome; one session within the EASO External Dimension was organised in Istanbul. Those sessions involved the participation of 108 asylum officers from Member States, from western Balkan countries and from Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco (ENPI countries).

Some 179 national training sessions were administered in 19 Member States, training 2 533 officers.

Major efforts were dedicated in 2014 to broadening the usability of the EASO Training Curriculum by translating different modules into additional languages and by making them available on the e-learning platform. The module on Inclusion was translated into eight languages, Evidence Assessment into three languages, Interview Techniques into two, CEAS and Interviewing Children

<sup>(8)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-Training-strategy.pdf>

<sup>(9)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/BZ0413152ENC.pdf>





**Picture 2: EASO train-the-trainer session**

into one language. Four modules were updated and a Module for Managers was developed. Additionally, EASO started working on the development of the module on Reception and further developed the module on 'Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation', both of which will be finalised in 2015.

Moreover, progress was made in the development of a certification for the EASO training. Meetings were held with the Sectorial Qualification Framework Expert Board and with external consultants to undertake the preparatory work to shift from Learning Objectives to Learning Outcomes, and thus, to reflect this revision in all EASO training curriculum modules.

EASO published handbooks on Inclusion, CEAS and Interview Techniques and developed the handbook on Interviewing Vulnerable Persons.

The aim of these training handbooks is to serve as a reference tool for those who have already completed the online and the face-to-face sessions of the respective training module. The handbooks accompany asylum practitioners in the course of their daily work by providing a summary of the key elements of the training material. The handbooks also serve as a tool to help learners retain the knowledge and skills acquired through the training. In their day-to-day work, they will be able to further reflect on the knowledge and develop the skills and competencies, acquired during the training. Finally, the first Annual Training Report based on the training cockpit was completed. It provides key figures on the progress in the implementation of the EASO Training Curriculum and a compilation of EASO training country factsheets.

### 3.1.2 Quality support

#### EASO's quality support results in 2014

**1 quality matrix mapping exercise**

**3 thematic meetings**

**8 working group meeting**

**3 practical cooperation tools initiated**

**Annual meeting of Quality NCPs**

EASO's work in the field of quality aims at supporting the progressive establishment of quality processes and procedures in all Member States, as well as the further improvement of the quality of the asylum decisions.

The Quality Matrix, launched in 2012, intends to cover comprehensively all areas of the CEAS over a 2-year period. The exercise will result in a database of good practices, quality mechanisms and practical tools, and quality projects and initiatives. The matrix will also enable EASO to identify Member States' support needs. In 2014, the Quality Matrix focused on mapping the core aspects of the determining stage of the asylum procedures, i.e. Access to Procedure and Special Procedures (prioritisation, accelerated procedures, border procedures, safe countries, admissibility procedures, subsequent applications and withdrawals). The findings of the quality matrix were also used in the Contact Committee meetings organised jointly with the European Commission. One quality meeting was organised back-to-back with a Contact Committee meeting on the Asylum Procedures Directive.

As part of the Quality Matrix mapping exercise, EASO continued to build a List of Projects and Initiatives implemented in EU Member States since 2004. The list is intended as a comprehensive and permanent database of projects and initiatives which share the common goal of improving quality. It covers different aspects of the CEAS and is organised by themes including, for example, quality of the procedure, minors, Country of Origin Information, reception conditions. It is developed and regularly updated with information provided by Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

Three thematic meetings were held during 2014 on Quality and Access to Procedure, Quality and Identification of Persons with Special Needs and Quality and Special Procedures. In addition, eight working group (WG) meetings were organised to develop three new practical tools on the Personal Interview <sup>(10)</sup>, Evidence Assessment <sup>(11)</sup> and on the Identification of Persons with Special Needs. A quality reference group composed of the European Commission, UNHCR, ECRE and ad hoc members from civil society depending on the topic considered was also established to contribute to the development of such tools. Finally, the Annual Meeting of the Quality NCPs took place in December with 20 participants from 18 Member States, UNHCR and the European Commission.

### 3.1.3 Country of Origin Information (COI)

EASO's COI results in 2014
<b>115 participants in all 7 COI networks</b>
<b>4 new networks established (Iran, Iraq, Russia and Afghanistan)</b>
<b>16 100 documents and 5 national databases linked via the COI portal</b>
<b>580 users of the COI portal</b>
<b>2 COI reports and 1 practical guideline published</b>

EASO's work in the field of COI aims at developing a comprehensive EU COI system, by raising and harmonising standards together with Member States and the European Commission via a network approach. In line with this objective, in 2014 the EASO COI Network Approach, launched in the previous year, was further developed: four new networks were established on Iraq, Iran, the Russian Federation and Afghanistan, in addition to three networks established in 2013 (Somalia, Syria, Pakistan). The seven networks consist of 115 participants.

<sup>(10)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-Practical-Guide-Personal-Interview-EN.pdf>

<sup>(11)</sup> [https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-Practical-Guide\\_-Evidence-Assessment.pdf](https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-Practical-Guide_-Evidence-Assessment.pdf)

Three practical cooperation workshops were organised on Iraq, Ukraine and Eritrea, in addition to a practical cooperation conference on Syria and Iraq. The development of the EASO Specialist Networks promotes the harmonisation of policies and practices among Member States. Information on COI needs and products are shared and the duplication of efforts avoided. Networks also engage in joint assessment of key sources of COI, discuss specific asylum-relevant issues in countries of origin and offer a framework for joint COI production and jointly answering COI queries. A full-scale evaluation of the work of the COI networks will take place in 2015. In 2014, EASO published two COI reports on topics of particular relevance for status determination within the EU: the Report 'South and Central Somalia — Country Overview' <sup>(12)</sup> and the COI Report entitled 'Chechnya — Women, Marriage, Divorce and Child Custody' <sup>(13)</sup> were published in October 2014. Researchers and experts from various Member States were involved in the drafting and peer reviewing processes. An additional COI Report entitled 'Afghanistan — Security Situation' <sup>(14)</sup> was initiated and finalised in 2015.

Concerning COI methodology, in March 2014, an EASO Conference was held on Online COI Research, where expert speakers presented new technologies and media available for collecting, sharing, filtering and presenting information on countries of origin.

As a follow up to the conference, in June 2014, EASO published the guidelines entitled 'Tools and Tips for Online COI Research', which provide a non-exhaustive overview of practical tools and online possibilities COI researchers have while searching for relevant information. In addition, in 2014, EASO started looking into issues relating to COI research on vulnerable persons.

A workshop on COI and LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Persons) was organised and offered the opportunity to COI researchers, UNHCR and members of civil society organisations to discuss challenges relating to terminology, to share experiences with conducting and presenting information on LGB and research practices and quality tools. The meeting attracted 25 participants, of whom eight were from civil society and academia. After the workshop a working group on COI and LGB was set up with the aim of drafting a practical guide for COI experts doing research on the situation of LGB persons in countries of origin, including a glossary, lists of useful sources and practical checklists. This guide <sup>(15)</sup> was published in 2015. In parallel with the activities

<sup>(12)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/COI-Report-Somalia.pdf>

<sup>(13)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/COI-Report-Chechnya.pdf>

<sup>(14)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Afghanistan-security-situation-EN.pdf>

<sup>(15)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Researching-the-situation-of-LGB-in-countries-of-origin-FINAL-080515.pdf>



**Picture 3: EASO Practical cooperation meeting on Eritrea**

relating to LGB, EASO has been involved as a member of the Advisory Group in a project led by Unicef in the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden regarding COI and Children. The 'Child Notice Project' has developed a methodology for child-specific country analysis and designed child notices on a number of countries of origin. The project will be finalised in 2015.

As regards the general EASO COI Report Methodology published in 2012, EASO aims to revise and update this document in 2015 taking into account recent experiences with drafting different types of EASO COI reports.

In 2014 EASO made substantial progress also in the update and further development of the Common COI Portal. The Portal, which was built by the European Commission and transferred to EASO in 2012, enables asylum officials to access a wide range of COI from a single point of entry. Some 16 100 new COI-related documents were linked via the portal, which has 580 active users. Four training sessions were delivered for users and national portal administrators from Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Slovenia.

Furthermore, a meeting for the COI Portal Advisory Group was organised. A proposal to revamp the COI Portal in order to improve its usability was developed and endorsed by the EASO Management Board in December 2014.

At managerial level, the Strategic Network, composed of COI Heads of Units or experts otherwise responsible for COI from all EU+ countries, met in April and November 2014, providing strategic input and feedback on EASO COI activities and exchanging managerial experiences with regard to COI research.

Finally, in the framework of EASO operational support, EASO delivered COI-related assistance to the Italian National Asylum Commission, preparing a technical study for the upgrade of the national COI system. Specific analyst support was given, structuring existing data and offering criteria for uploading credible information. Furthermore, EASO delivered specialised training to the Italian judiciary on COI research standards.

### 3.1.4 EASO-specific programmes

#### 3.1.4.1 Cooperation with members of the courts and tribunals

Results of EASO's work with Courts and Tribunals in 2014
<b>3 expert meetings on the development of professional materials</b>
<b>Annual conference and advanced workshop for the professional development curriculum</b>
<b>1 support tool related to Article 15(c) Qualification Directive</b>

In order to support the full and coherent implementation of the CEAS, EASO provides support to Member States' courts and tribunals through the joint preparation of professional development materials, the stimulation of dialogue among European and Member States' courts and tribunals and the organisation of advanced workshops for European and Member States' court and tribunal members.

In 2014 EASO enhanced the engagement of the Court of Justice of the EU, the European Court of Human Rights, members of courts and tribunals from Member States and Associate Countries for the development of a common approach for the work with Courts and Tribunals. To this end EASO adopted a methodology for the production of professional development materials and strengthened its cooperative relationship with representatives from the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IALRJ) and the Association of European Administrative Law Judges (AEAJ). EASO also furthered links with UNHCR, FRA, and other relevant partners such as the European Judiciary Training Network (EJTN). Three expert meetings on the development of professional materials on the implementation of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive (QD) were held in Malta. In addition to the annual conference for members of courts and tribunals EASO organised its second advanced workshop for the development of the professional development curriculum in December 2014, which was attended by 32 representatives of courts and tribunals. EASO completed two support tools related to Article 15(c) QD: 'Article 15(c) QD — A Judicial Analysis'<sup>(16)</sup> and the 'Guidance Note for Judicial Trainers on Article 15(c) QD — a Judicial Analysis'. The EASO Consultative Forum was also consulted before publication and provided five contributions.

Within the framework of its operational support to Member States under particular pressure, EASO also organised ad hoc seminars for members of the Bulgarian and Italian judiciaries.

#### 3.1.4.2 Activities within the action plan for unaccompanied minors

EASO's UAM results in 2014
<b>4 EASO thematic practical cooperation expert meetings on UAM</b>
<b>Annual conference on unaccompanied minors</b>
<b>Evaluation of the EASO handbook on age assessment</b>
<b>Network of experts on children's issues further developed</b>
<b>EASO platform for activities on children established</b>

During 2014 EASO continued to provide support and to stimulate practical cooperation among Member States on issues related to unaccompanied minors (UAM) within the framework of the European Commission Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010-2014). Four EASO thematic practical cooperation expert meetings on unaccompanied minors were organised during the year on: Family Tracing, Best Interests of the Child within the Scope of International Protection, Age Assessment and Dublin Regulation-Family Tracing and Best Interests. As a result of the meetings, the network of experts on children's issues was developed and the EASO platform for activities on children was established. Furthermore, a practical tool on family tracing was initiated and its publication is expected in 2015.

Following last year's publication of 'EASO age assessment practice in Europe', a survey for feedback on the publication was launched on the EASO website and the first evaluation of the handbook was finalised. EASO was invited to present the publication in various thematic conferences. Furthermore, the handbook was utilised in support of the activities on age assessment implemented in the framework of the Special Support Plan for Cyprus.

The annual conference on UAM was held on 9-10 December 2014, with the participation of 33 representatives from 17 Member States, the European Commission, FRA, UNHCR and six organisations from civil society.

<sup>(16)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Article-15c-Qualification-Directive-201195EU-A-judicial-analysis.pdf>



### 3.1.4.3 Trafficking in human beings (THB)

EASO's THB results in 2014
Annual practical cooperation expert meeting on THB
2 coordination meetings with the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator
Contribution to the mid-term report on the implementation of the said THB Strategy
Support for the update of CEPOL's curriculum on THB

In the context of the implementation of the Joint Statement 'Together against Trafficking in Human Beings' signed by Heads of JHA Agencies on the occasion of the 5th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2011, EASO played an active role in supporting the coherent development of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings (2012-2016).

EASO attended two coordination meetings of THB contact persons organised by the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in DG Home Affairs of the European Commission. The meetings focused on the joint actions and individual activities undertaken by the JHA Agencies in THB. As a result, EASO coordinated a report on joint actions of JHA Agencies to address THB. The report covers the period from October 2012 through October 2014. The report focuses on areas in which the Agencies have joined forces to support the implementation of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-2016 in line with its five priorities: identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking; stepping up the prevention of human trafficking; increased prosecution of traffickers; enhanced coordination and cooperation among key actors and policy coherence; and increased knowledge of and effective response to emerging concerns related to all forms of human trafficking. The report is annexed to the European Commission's 'Mid-term report on the Implementation of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016'. The mid-term report was presented on the eve of the 8th EU Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October 2014).

Additionally, EASO coordinated a complementary report on individual actions developed by JHA Agencies from October 2012 to October 2014 to address THB.

EASO in 2014 actively contributed to the update of CEPOL's curriculum on THB and organised a practical cooperation expert meeting on THB which was attended by representatives from 16 EU+ countries and nine relevant civil society organisations.

### 3.1.5 Reception

EASO's results in the field of reception in 2014
Built synergies with EPRA and ENARO
Practical cooperation workshop on contingency planning in emergency situations
Development of the Reception training module

In 2014, EASO started building its internal capacity in order to provide support on reception systems and conditions in Member States. To this end, synergies were developed with relevant experts networks in the area, particularly with the European Network of Asylum Reception Organisations (ENARO) and the European Platform of Reception Agencies (EPRA). The ENARO Steering Committee meeting on reception was co-hosted by EASO on 3–4 April 2014 and it was attended by 22 participants who shared best practices on training in the field of reception and on management of reception in emergency situations. An EASO–EPRA meeting on reception was also organised in Malta in June 2014. Furthermore, a practical cooperation workshop on contingency planning in emergency situations was organised by EASO and addressed, among other topics, the possibility of sharing capacity and reception facilities. Furthermore, the development of a specific training module on reception, which will be finalised in 2015, was initiated. The reference group, composed of reception experts from Member States and civil society organisations, met three times to discuss the learning objectives, target group, structure and content of the module.

### 3.1.6 EASO list of available languages

EASO supports Member States in obtaining easily access to available languages in the other Member States through the list of available languages (LAL). In 2014, EASO supported Cyprus with the use of the list to benefit from interpretation services of other Member States. For 2015, an Information Sheet on the LAL and technical solutions to facilitate the use of the list of available languages will be explored.

## 3.2 EASO special support

### 3.2.1 Support to Member States with specific needs

#### EASO's special support results in 2014

**3 Special Support Plans for Cyprus, Italy and Bulgaria**

**11 measures, 39 experts deployed**

Building on the experience of the previous years, in 2014 EASO developed further measures to assist Member States in need of special support in their asylum and reception systems. EASO provided tailor-made assistance to Italy and to Cyprus on the basis of Special Support Plans signed in June 2013 and in June 2014 respectively. This support was rendered in accordance with the request by those Member States and the assessment by EASO based, among others, on its analyses using the EPS.

More specifically, in the context of the Special Support Plan for Italy <sup>(17)</sup>, EASO and Italy worked together on a number of prioritised areas, such as data collection and analysis, Country of Origin Information (COI), Dublin system, reception system, emergency capacity, and training of independent judiciary. Under the Special Support Plan, EASO provided technical and operational support to enhance Italy's instruments for the implementation of the EU asylum *acquis*. In 2014,

seven measures of the Plan were implemented with the participation of 32 experts from 14 EU+ countries. EASO supported the professional development of the members of the Territorial Commissions responsible for granting international protection. A mapping exercise of the Italian asylum data system was conducted with national experts and EASO officers. As a result of the gap analysis, possible areas for development were identified so as to ensure a more efficient data collection process. As a follow-up to the mapping exercise of the reception system in Italy, performed by EASO in 2013, and on the basis of its results as well as the requirements of the recast Reception Conditions Directive, EASO experts defined a set of quality standards and mechanisms for reception. On this basis draft practical guidelines on how to improve current monitoring tools were drafted, in close cooperation with the Italian authorities.

Cooperation with UNHCR, an important implementing partner in Italy, was continuously strengthened in particular on certain aspects of the asylum procedure and reception conditions.

The implementation of the Special Support Plan for Cyprus <sup>(18)</sup> started in July 2014 with the support measures in the field of reception and open accommodation. A needs assessment relating to the operation and management of the Reception Centre for applicants for international protection in Kofinou was conducted. EASO experts drafted standard operating procedures for the expanded Centre, with suggestions



Picture 4: Participants in an EASO training course in Greece

<sup>(17)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-SPP-Italy-ELECTR-SIGNED.pdf>

<sup>(18)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-CY-OP.pdf>

on the structure, operation and management of the Centre. In the context of the support measure on the development, implementation of relevant methodology and training in the field of age assessment, specialised training was delivered in Greek for dentists appointed by the Ministry of Health. In total, in 2014, seven experts from four Member States were participating in the implementation of four activities in the framework of the Special Support Plan for Cyprus.

A Special Support Plan was also signed between EASO and the Minister of Interior of Bulgaria on 5 December 2014 aiming to improve and enhance the Bulgarian asylum and reception system. The plan operates until the end of June 2016 and builds on the results of the evaluation of the EASO Operating Plan to Bulgaria conducted in September 2014 (see Section 3.3).

Finally, EASO dedicated efforts throughout 2014 to strengthen the EASO framework to provide special support to Member States. In this context, EASO further developed standardised procedures, established a monitoring and evaluation system and prepared an operational communication tool.

A breakout session of the 2014 plenary meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum was dedicated to discussing tools and modalities for enhancing civil society contribution to the implementation of EASO OPs/SSPs.

### 3.2.2 Relocation

The EASO's objective is to promote, facilitate and coordinate the exchange of information and best practices on intra-EU relocation. In this framework in 2014 EASO participated in the annual relocation forum organised by the European Commission and updated the report on the evaluation of intra-EU relocation activities from Malta <sup>(19)</sup>.

### 3.2.3 Task Force Mediterranean

#### EASO's results within the Task Force Mediterranean in 2014

**Pilot project on information gathering on the phenomenon of facilitation during the asylum determination process**

**6 pilot projects on joint processing**

The so-called Task Force Mediterranean (TFM) was set up immediately after the tragedy off the coast of Lampedusa in October 2013, when a boat carrying several hundred migrants sank, resulting in the deaths of over 300 people. In order to look into concrete actions that could be taken in regard to this problem, the TFM

brought together experts from all Member States, the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), EASO, Frontex, Europol, FRA, and EMSA. On the basis of the discussions, the European Commission adopted a Communication (COM(2013) 869 final) <sup>(20)</sup> on 4 December 2013 and an action plan. Various lines of action were developed by the TFM, including eight actions earmarked for EASO.

In the framework of the Action Plan of the Commission Communication on the Task Force Mediterranean, EASO together with Frontex, Europol and Eurojust engaged in a joint pilot project to learn more about the phenomenon of facilitation of persons seeking international protection. The pilot project aimed at extracting anonymous data from the information provided by applicants for international protection about the routes taken and the conditions they experienced. This information was obtained at an appropriate stage during the asylum process and in line with current practice in the host Member State in order to achieve greater comprehensiveness than through voluntary debriefings after arrival. Two Member States participated in the pilot project: Italy and Malta. Aggregated and anonymised data collected by the respective competent national authorities from applicants arriving on the same boat in Italy and Malta in September and October 2014 was provided to EASO. The main conclusion was that the methodology of the joint pilot project added new knowledge to the phenomenon of facilitation (especially inside Europe) and created a systematic data collection that can be used for long-term strategic analysis. The approach has the potential for more and better information on the phenomenon of facilitation. As a next step, in 2015, EASO proposes carrying out the pilot project in two Member States that are not at the EU external borders and carrying out the pilot project once again in Italy and Malta.

In the context of the TFM, EASO also conducted six preliminary joint processing pilot projects. The objective was to test elements of the workflow and processes in the asylum procedure and reception, which can be performed jointly by different Member States and supported by EASO Processing Support Teams (experts of EASO and MS) within the parameters of the EU asylum *acquis*. The pilot projects were developed in the areas of unaccompanied minors, COI, Dublin, Registration and Case Management, Vulnerability assessment; 11 Member States were actively involved in the joint processing activities. The development of a second generation of more complex joint processing activities started at the end of 2014 following the presentation to the EASO Management Board of the technical reports on the joint processing preliminary pilots.

<sup>(19)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EUREMA-fact-finding-report-EASO11.pdf>

<sup>(20)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20131204\\_communication\\_on\\_the\\_work\\_of\\_the\\_task\\_force\\_mediterranean\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20131204_communication_on_the_work_of_the_task_force_mediterranean_en.pdf)





**Picture 5: Signature of EASO Operating Plan for Bulgaria**

The results of the completed joint processing pilots show that there are indeed aspects of the asylum procedure that can be done jointly. The analysis of the preliminary pilots concluded that the concept of joint processing is promising although there are some challenges, mainly due to national legislation. This again underlines the need for further and more wide-ranging pilot projects with a continuum of several steps of the asylum procedure. Through the preliminary pilot projects, many MS officials experienced a new level of trust when they got access to other MS actual caseload. Recognising the fact that after all the challenges of a case worker or a decision-maker are in nature the same in the other MS, created an atmosphere of solidarity on a very practical level that should be further increased.

### 3.3 EASO emergency support

In 2014 EASO developed further its activities to support Member States under particular pressure in their asylum and reception system, particularly by providing support to Bulgaria and Greece and by strengthening EASO's capacity to respond in a timely and effective manner to emergency situations.

#### 3.3.1 Operating Plan for Greece

##### EASO Operating Plan for Greece results in 2014

##### Implementation of the Operating Plan Phase II for Greece

**11 Asylum Support Teams, 4 train-the-trainer sessions, 4 study visits**

##### Preparation of the Special Support Plan for Greece

EASO has provided emergency support to Greece since April 2011. With the support of EASO and other stakeholders involved, Greece has taken concrete steps towards establishing a modern asylum and reception system for offering protection to those in need. Whilst Greece has set up an asylum procedure at first and second instance as well as a new reception system, EASO continued to support capacity building and consolidation during 2014 by different support activities. Training in the field of reception, new provisions of Dublin III Regulation, support and capacity building for absorption of EU funding, sharing of best practices with other Member States have been part of the core support in the framework of the EASO Operating Plan II to Greece <sup>(21)</sup>. Operating Plan II ended in December 2014.

Eleven Asylum Support Teams were deployed with 12 experts from nine Member States, four train-the-trainer sessions were attended by Greek asylum officers on

<sup>(21)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-OP-II-Greece.pdf>

EASO Training Curriculum modules and four study visits were organised in different Member States. A total of seven measures of the plan were implemented.

In July 2014 EASO conducted an Interim Assessment of the implementation of the Operating Plan <sup>(22)</sup>. Discussions concerning the continuation of the support and its nature beyond 2014 started between EASO and the competent Greek authorities.

### 3.3.2 Operating Plan for Bulgaria

<b>EASO Operating Plan for Bulgarian results in 2014</b>
<b>Implementation of the Operating Plan Phase I for Bulgaria</b>
<b>17 activities and 59 experts deployed</b>
<b>Preparation of the Special Support Plan for Bulgaria</b>

In the framework of the EASO Operating Plan for Bulgaria <sup>(23)</sup>, which was signed on 17 October 2013, EASO provided technical and operational assistance to Bulgaria until the end of September 2014. The Plan aimed at helping Bulgaria to cope with the increase in the influx of applicants, while at the same time improving and strengthening the Bulgarian asylum and reception system, in the context of the implementation of the instruments of the CEAS.

The EASO measures to support Bulgaria were divided into three categories, namely: operational support, institutional support and horizontal support. A high level expert mission of Member States and EASO experts visited Bulgaria from 17 to 21 February 2014 to conduct a mid-term stocktaking of the EASO support and, as a result, a report was published on 26 February 2014. The report highlighted that EASO operational support to Bulgaria contributed to important achievements, including the optimisation and acceleration of the workflow in the registration and asylum determination procedure. Bulgaria has made significant progress in increasing its reception capacity (to a total capacity of 5 940 beds) and improving conditions.

In September 2014, a team of Member State experts with the support of Bulgarian and EASO officials carried out the final evaluation of the EASO Operating Plan to Bulgaria. The objective was to assess the performance of EASO support (1 November 2013-30 September 2014), especially in the areas of the asylum registration process, the asylum determination procedure, and reception capacity. To further improve and enhance Bulgaria's

asylum and reception systems, an EASO Special Support Plan <sup>(24)</sup> for Bulgaria was signed on 5 December 2014. The plan will cover until the end of June 2016.

### 3.3.3 Preparedness for emergency support

<b>EASO preparedness for emergency results in 2014</b>
<b>238 members of the Asylum Intervention Pool</b>
<b>2 meetings of the AIP NCPs</b>
<b>6 thematic practical cooperation workshops</b>

In order to develop further EASO's capacity to react in a timely manner to emergency situations and to Member States' requests for support, key efforts were dedicated in 2014 to strengthening the functioning of the Asylum Intervention Pool (AIP). EASO updated the pool of experts, which consists of 238 experts to be made available by Member States, kept open communication lines with the AIP NCPs on all matters pertaining to the asylum support teams and provided constant assistance on all issues relating to the conditions of deployment of those teams. Two meetings with the AIP NCPs were organised to discuss different aspects and tools relevant for the deployment of experts, such as a brochure for participation in operational support and an info-pack for selected experts to be shared prior to missions. Further activities EASO could carry out to increase AIP experts' participation were also discussed and an amendment of EASO AIP profiles was agreed. The development of an EASO–National Authority Feedback system was initiated.

Additionally, thematic practical cooperation workshops were organised on contingency planning in emergency situations, joint processing, operational communication, EU funding and for the preparation of an EASO Expo on ICT systems supporting the asylum procedure, planned for 2015.

<sup>(22)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Interim-Assessment-Greece.pdf>

<sup>(23)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Operating-Plan-Bulgaria-SIGNED.pdf>

<sup>(24)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/SSP-BG-2014-12-03.pdf>

### 3.4 EASO information and analysis support

<b>EASO information and analysis support results in 2014</b>
<b>Established an EASO query system</b>
<b>Information and Documentation system under development</b>
<b>Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013</b>
<b>EPS stage II</b>
<b>12 monthly trends and analysis reports and 3 quarterly reports</b>
<b>7 ad hoc reports</b>
<b>2 meetings of the Group for Provision of Statistics</b>

In line with its mandate, EASO plays a key role in gathering, analysing and exchanging relevant information relating to the management of asylum cases and asylum capacity in the EU+ countries. Identifying trends and anticipating needs for Member States who could be subject to particular pressure is vital for the effective functioning of the CEAS.

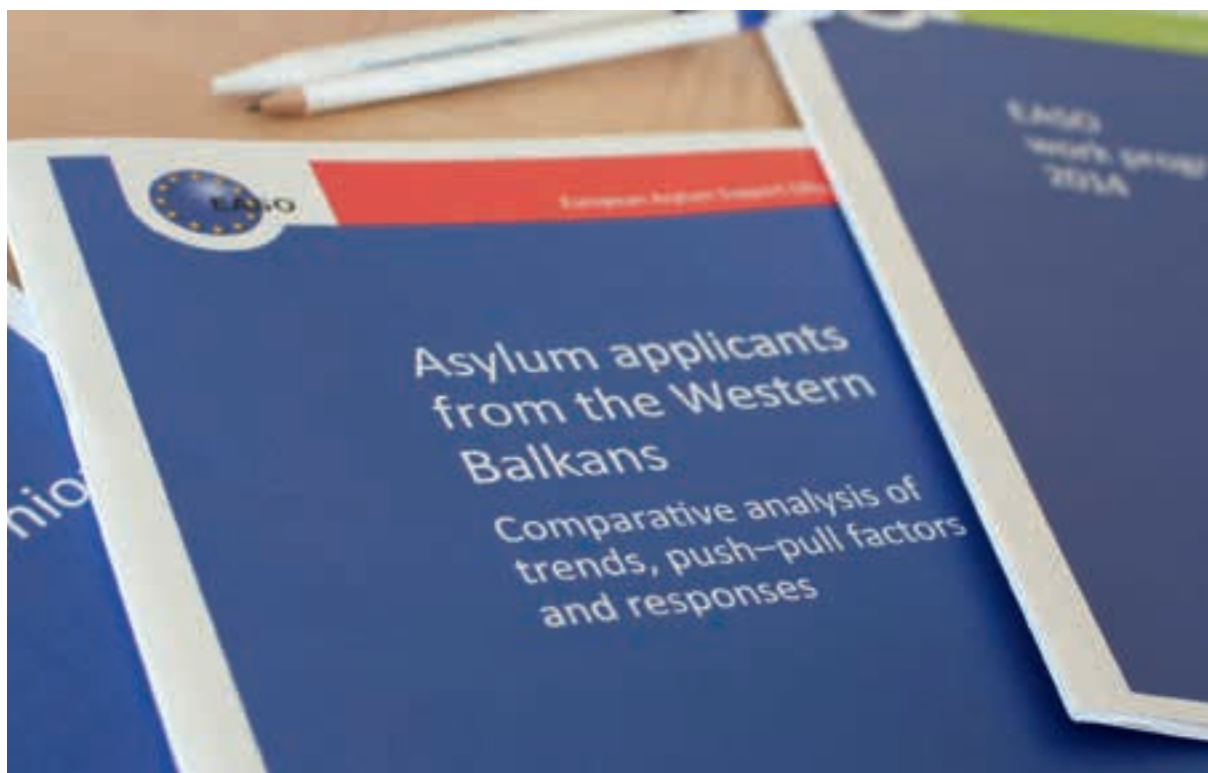
The recast Dublin III Regulation assigned additional competences to EASO in relation to information and analysis support. According to Article 33 of the Regulation, EASO plays a key role in a 'mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis management' in the field of

asylum. EASO's Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS) seeks to provide an accurate picture of current and likely future flows of applicants for international protection to the EU and of Member States' capacity to deal with them according to the asylum *acquis*.

#### 3.4.1 Information and Documentation System (IDS)

In 2014, EASO started the development of a combined content management system and database — the Information and Documentation System (IDS) — in the form of an IT tool which will provide a detailed and up-to-date overview of the practical functioning of the CEAS. IDS will fill a gap in the current asylum and reception documentation scenario, which is characterised by a large amount of information produced by different sources, often not easily comparable or accessible.

IDS is planned to be a searchable library that provides comprehensive overviews of how each key stage of the asylum process is carried out in individual EU+ countries. These key elements include: access to procedure, application for international protection, Dublin procedures, determination at first instance, determination at second instance, reception and detention, return and content of protection/integration. It is planned to form an IDS network of Member States experts to validate the information in the IDS and to update it on a regular basis so that users can consult, compare and analyse asylum practices across the EU.



Picture 6: EASO's publications

In 2014 EASO set up a pilot version of IDS and presented the concept to the EASO Management Board and to civil society in the Consultative Forum plenary meeting in December 2014.

In order to respond to the growing needs reported by Member States, in July 2014 EASO established a query system that allows EU+ countries to post written questions and receive replies concerning practical aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and other matters related to asylum policies and practices in the EU+ within a short timeframe. During the pilot phase of the EASO query system, which lasted 6 months, several queries were launched, including some by the agency itself. The information gathered through the query system will feed the IDS, promoting internal synergies and a coherent management of knowledge.

### 3.4.2 Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013

In 2014 EASO published its third yearly reference report: The Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2013 <sup>(25)</sup>. The Report provided a comprehensive overview of the asylum situation in the EU, by examining requests for international protection to the EU, analysing application and decision data, and focusing on some of the most important countries of origin of applicants for international protection. In particular, the report focused on three asylum flows that underlined the very different characteristics of asylum applicants in the EU: Syria, the Russian Federation and western Balkan countries.

The report also highlighted major developments with regard to EU/national policies, legislative changes and jurisprudence. In particular, 2013 saw the adoption of the EU asylum *acquis* in June, including the revised Reception Conditions Directive, revised Asylum Procedures Directive, revised Dublin Regulation, and the revised Eurodac Regulation, completing the review process (as the revised Qualification Directive was adopted in 2011).

In the framework of Regulation 862/2007, Eurostat was the primary source of statistical data used for the Annual Report. To ensure high quality data, EASO liaises with Eurostat regarding compliance, reminders and consistency of the datasets published on their website. Data gathered by EASO through the EPS data collection system provided additional information, to be used in the report in support of the existing analysis and to expand statistical references in the thematic sections. Furthermore, approximately 40 stakeholders, including 28 Member States, UNHCR and 15 civil society organisations provided input to the report.

The Annual Report was adopted by the EASO Management Board on 26 May 2014 and it was launched to the public in Brussels on 7 July during a conference open to Member States and civil society attended by around 100 participants. In order to promote its broad dissemination, the report was prepared in five languages (EN, FR, ES, DE, IT).

### 3.4.3 Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS)

In March 2014, EASO launched Stage II of its Early warning and Preparedness System. The EPS data collection focuses on the first instance in the asylum process and collects data under four indicators (applicants, withdrawn applications, decisions and pending cases). Thirty EU+ countries regularly provide data on the previous month within 2 weeks after the end of the previous month. The EPS data collection represents a significant accomplishment given the differences in the organisational specificities of the national asylum systems and the major divergences in data collection and reporting across the EU. Since the introduction of the Stage II indicators, EASO has been able to introduce new information into its regular analytical products and to provide timely monthly analysis to EU+ countries and the European Commission.

According to the agreed process, the development of EPS is envisaged to proceed step by step in stages. In November 2014, EASO conducted a survey with Members of the Group for the Provision of Statistics (GSP) on possible additional indicators and breakdowns to include in the next data collection phase — Stage III. On the basis of the survey, potential indicators on access to procedure, reception, Dublin and return were identified and discussed in the December Management Board meeting.

In 2014 EASO issued 12 monthly trend analysis reports, three quarterly reports <sup>(26)</sup> and seven ad hoc reports (i.e. early warning notes, situational updates and impact assessments). While those documents were EU restricted and were addressed to the Members of the Management Board, EASO also provided 10 contributions on Latest Asylum Trends to the EASO newsletter, a public document broadly disseminated.

Various meetings were organised with the GPS members, with the Dublin Advisory Group and with intra-EU institutional partners for GPS. Furthermore, EASO participated in the Eurostat Working Group on Migration statistics and enhanced its cooperation with other JHA agencies, particularly Frontex and eu-LISA in order to share data and statistical analysis. In 2014, EASO's cooperation with Frontex in the field

<sup>(25)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-AR-final1.pdf>

<sup>(26)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/asylum-trends-analysis/quarterly-report>



of data-sharing and joint analysis was enhanced. As a result, the two agencies now share their monthly trend analyses and hold weekly video conferences to exchange relevant information on mixed migratory flows to the EU. Cooperation has continued in the field of the Post Visa Liberalisation Monitoring Mechanism, in contributing to the Frontex Annual Risk Assessment and the EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU and on a number of ad hoc joint reports on Third Countries requested by the European Commission.

In the context of EASO operations, technical support in the field of data collection and data management was provided to Bulgaria, Italy, and [Cyprus](#).

## 3.5 EASO third country support

<b>EASO's results in third country support</b>
<b>Mapping of the resettlement cycles in EU+</b>
<b>10 activities of the ENPI project with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan</b>
<b>External Dimension Network established</b>

The internal and the external dimensions in the migration and asylum field are closely interlinked. Migration and asylum cannot be effectively addressed without taking into consideration cooperation with third countries. EASO third country support is in line with the EASO External Action Strategy<sup>(27)</sup>, which conforms with the overall EU external relations policies and priorities, especially with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EU enlargement strategy.

### 3.5.1 Resettlement

In the field of resettlement, EASO aims to play a coordinating role in exchanging information and best practices among Member States and in close cooperation with UNHCR and IOM. In line with this objective, EASO in 2014 completed a mapping of the resettlement cycles in EU+ countries and the results were discussed in a meeting held in November as part of the EASO external dimension activities.

EASO actively participated in two Syria Core group meetings, the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) and Working Group, the ERN steering committee meeting and the Annual Forum on resettlement and relocation organised by the European Commission. Three scenarios for an EASO Pilot Project on deployment of EU resettlement experts for the Syrian refugee crisis were elaborated.

### 3.5.2 External dimension and capacity building in third countries

EASO's work to implement the external dimension of the CEAS is being coordinated in the framework of the EASO External Action Strategy. In line with this strategy, EASO engaged in a project financed by the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) related to the participation of Jordan in the work of EASO as well as the participation of Tunisia and Morocco in the work of EASO and Frontex. Implementation started on 1 March 2014 and will run for 18 months. It contributes to a better understanding of the function, operations and activities of EASO and Frontex and the role EU Member States play. The project assesses and identifies the technical assistance needs of Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia and the suitability of EASO and Frontex tools for their possible adaptation. The target groups of the project activities are asylum and border management authorities, both having operational responsibilities (including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Interior and the Ministries of Justice) and those performing supporting activities (such as the exchange of information, capacity building, international cooperation and legal activities).

The ENPI project constitutes the first initiative whereby EASO is engaging within the External Dimension of the Common European Asylum System. This is being undertaken with countries with which the EU has concluded an EU Mobility Partnership. Field visits to Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia were carried out in March, April and June 2014, where EASO representatives met the relevant stakeholders and authorities. In total 10 activities of the ENPI project were implemented in 2014, including two study visits for Tunisian and Jordanian officials to Sweden, Austria and the Czech Republic and two thematic seminars in Morocco on accelerated procedures in the airport and appeals procedures. Officials from the three target countries participated in the EASO regional training in November 2014 where the core training modules Inclusion and Evidence Assessment were delivered. A number of key EASO and Frontex publications as well as one EASO training module were translated into French and Arabic.

Furthermore, EASO in 2014 established its External Dimension Network to mainstream communication and share information with Member States, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, relevant JHA Agencies and international organisations. The members of the network convened in a workshop organised in November which focused on EASO instruments to support capacity building in relevant third countries. Dialogue among the relevant stakeholders was enhanced and inputs coordinated for the preparation of the Regional Development and Protection Programmes in North Africa.

<sup>(27)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/EASO-External-Action-Strategy.pdf>



EASO also organised, under its External Dimension mandate, regional training in Istanbul in December 2014 where the core modules Inclusion and Interviewing Techniques were delivered. The training sessions saw broad geographical participation including from the

ENPI project targeted countries and also from Lebanon, the Western Balkans, Turkey and Ukraine. Finally, needs assessments were initiated in the targeted geographical areas (i.e. Western Balkans and the NEP region).

## 4. EASO's framework and network

### 4.1 Management Board

#### EASO's Management Board in figures 2014

**3 Management Board meetings held**

**5 programming documents adopted**

The Management Board is the governing and planning body of EASO. In 2014 it was composed of 31 members and observers (one member from each Member State, except for Denmark, which is invited to attend as an observer, two members of the European Commission and one non-voting member of UNHCR). Moreover, representatives of the Associate Countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) were invited to attend the meetings of the Management Board as observers. Frontex was also regularly invited to take part in the relevant items of the Management Board meetings, especially with regard to the asylum situation in the EU and the Early warning and Preparedness System.

Three Management Board meetings were organised in May, September and December 2014. The UN High Commissioner addressed the Management Board meeting in September.

During 2014, the Management Board adopted the following documents and decisions:

- the Multiannual Work Programme (MAWP) 2016-2018;
- the Work Programme 2015;
- the Multiannual Staff Policy Plan 2016-2018;

— the EASO Budget 2015;

— the Annual Activity Report 2013;

— the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013;

— the Management Board Decision No 21 of 26 May 2014 on the schooling fees for children attending a private/ international school in Malta and the EASO contribution to support their integration in the local environment;

— the Management Board Decision No 22 of 26 June 2014 adopting an opinion on the EASO final accounts 2013;

— the Management Board Decision No 23 of 1 December 2014 adopting the implementing rules for the Staff Regulations.

In 2014 EASO dedicated particular efforts to promoting valuable and constructive discussion during the Management Board meetings. EASO organised brainstorming sessions aimed at exchanging views on the practical management of the CEAS.

The Management Board was provided with regular updates on the asylum situation in the EU+. Trends, challenges and best practices were discussed among Members and Representatives.

The Management Board discussed the progress concerning the implementation of the activities in the framework of the Task Force Mediterranean and the EASO support measures to Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Cyprus. Particular attention was given to training



Picture 7: EASO Management Board

and professional development, to quality processes and to COI and the development of the COI portal. Regarding EPS, the Management Board discussed the implementation of Stage II of the process and received the monthly and quarterly reports on asylum. Finally, the EASO Management Board endorsed the EASO Communication strategy, appointed the members of the steering committee of the EASO external evaluation and was regularly updated on the evaluation process.

## 4.2 Cooperation with the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament

<b>EASO's cooperation with EU institutions results in 2014</b>
<b>Regular meetings with the European Commission</b>
<b>2 High level visits organised with the Council of the EU and the European Commission</b>
<b>10 meetings with the Council of the EU</b>
<b>3 Joint Contact Committee meetings</b>

As an independent EU agency, EASO acts within the policies and institutional framework of the EU. In 2014 EASO submitted to the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission, among others, its annual Work Programme, its Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU, its Annual Activity Report, its final accounts and a stocktaking report on the situation in Bulgaria; furthermore, EASO presented to the EU institutions its contribution to the JHA multiannual guidelines.

With regard to the European Commission, regular bilateral meetings were organised between EASO and the Commission at different levels. The structured cooperation continued with the European Commission in its capacity as formal member of the EASO Management Board. Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström visited EASO in September to discuss EASO's achievements and the progress made in enhancing the implementation of the Common European Asylum System, as well as to discuss the latest asylum trends.

Relations between EASO and DG Home Affairs were further developed. EASO worked closely with DG Home Affairs on administration and on policy and operational issues. Furthermore, EASO worked closely with the Commission in organising joint and back-to-back meetings with the Contact Committees meetings on Qualification Directive, Asylum Procedures Directive and Dublin.

Moreover, EASO coordinated with the European Commission and the European Migration Network (EMN) the processes for the drafting of the respective annual reports on asylum. In 2014, EASO participated regularly in EMN Steering Board meetings and NCP meetings.

In 2014 EASO also enhanced its cooperation with other directorates-general and services of the Commission, such as DG International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and the EEAS for the development of the EASO External Action Strategy and the implementation of the ENPI project, and Eurostat with regard to the collection of data on asylum. Regular cooperation on budgetary and financial aspects, as well as on human resources, was promoted in 2014 with DG Budget and DG Human Resources and Security, respectively.

With regard to the Council of the EU, EASO participated, under the Greek and the Italian Presidencies of the Council, in four meetings of the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers' Council and six meetings of the Strategic Committee of Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA) and high level working group meetings. EASO contributed in particular in the discussions on the asylum situation in the EU, with particular focus on Syria and the Mediterranean, on the EU Action Plan on Migratory Pressures, on the joint processing of applications for international protection and on the actions within the Task Force Mediterranean. Finally, EASO hosted a high level visit of a delegation from the Council of the European Union led by Mr Rafael Fernandez-Pita, Director-General Justice and Home Affairs.

Concerning the European Parliament, EASO participated in several meetings of the CONT (Budgetary Control) and LIBE (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs) Committees, providing factsheets on trends and analysis and presenting the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU and the EASO Annual Activity Report 2013. Furthermore, EASO organised in June an EASO info day in the European Parliament in Brussels, providing information material to the activities of the agency.



Figure 2: EASO's network of stakeholders

### 4.3 Cooperation with UNHCR and other international organisations

#### EASO's cooperation with UNHCR and other international organisations results in 2014

High level meeting with UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Bilateral meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

Regular participation in GDISC and ICG meetings

In fulfilling its tasks, EASO in 2014 acted in close cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and with other relevant international and intergovernmental organisations. EASO and UNHCR signed a working arrangement in 2013 which enabled a strengthened cooperation in all areas covered by the EASO Regulation. In 2014 the cooperation with UNHCR covered in particular the areas of training, quality processes, trends and analysis, unaccompanied minors, resettlement, the external dimension of the CEAS, special and emergency support. A high level meeting with the High Commissioner

António Guterres was held in September 2014 and one senior management consultation was hosted by EASO in August 2014. UNHCR participated in the EASO Management Board as a non-voting member and shared punctual factsheets. Furthermore, the UNHCR permanent liaison office to EASO based in Malta actively participated in EASO's activities throughout the year attending over 30 meetings and workshops.

A bilateral meeting between UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants (UNSRM), Mr Crépeau, and EASO took place in December 2014 on the occasion of his country visit to Malta. EASO shared information on its work and provided an overview of the recent asylum trends and statistics in EU+.

EASO maintained also close contacts with other relevant international and intergovernmental organisations working in the area of asylum, such as the Council of Europe, the General Directors of Immigration Services Conference (GDISC), the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Concerning the Council of Europe and IOM, EASO regularly exchanged views and contributed to their work. With regard to the GDISC, EASO participated in the GDISC Steering Board meetings, conferences and workshops,

and on the basis of an exchange of letters with the IGC, EASO has been attending regularly the IGC working groups and the executive director took part in the IGC full round.

## 4.4 Cooperation with the Associate Countries

### EASO's cooperation with Associate Countries results in 2014

**Provisional implementation of the arrangement for the participation of Norway in EASO**

The Council of the European Union Decision 2014/301/EU concerning the conclusion of the arrangement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway on the modalities of its participation in the European Asylum Support Office was adopted in May 2014. Between August and September representatives from Norway and from EASO met twice in Malta and in Oslo in order to finalise the practicalities related to the arrangement, which is provisionally applicable from March 2014. A financial contribution from Norway was included in EASO's budget and Norwegian officers actively participated in the activities organised by EASO. The Council of the European Union Decision 2014/344/EU concerning the conclusion of the arrangement between the European Union and Liechtenstein on the modalities of its participation in the European Asylum Support Office was also adopted in May 2014.

The arrangements with the other Associate Countries (Iceland and Switzerland) have been initialled in 2013 and are under different stages of the negotiation and ratification process.

## 4.5 Cooperation with the EU Agencies

### EASO's cooperation with EU agencies in figures 2014

**3 contact group meetings with JHA Agencies organised**

**Head of JHA Agencies meeting organised**

**JHA press officers and communication multipliers meeting organised**

**Working arrangement with eu-LISA signed**

**Participation in 4 EU agencies' network meetings**

In 2014 EASO took over the Chair of the JHA Agencies' network. During this year, the JHA Agencies have focused their bilateral and multilateral activities around two main levels: strategic and horizontal cooperation, on one side, and operational cooperation on the other. The European Commission (both through DG Home Affairs and DG Justice as partner directorates-general) as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS) have been closely involved and have actively participated in the work of the JHA Agencies' network.



Picture 8: Consultative Forum plenary meeting



During 2014, the JHA Agencies have maintained permanent formal and informal contacts and held regular meetings regarding their activities. In order to further enhance their overall cooperation and coordination channels, three meetings of the JHA Contact Group were convened at EASO headquarters in Malta in January, April and September, and a meeting of the Heads of the JHA Agencies was organised by EASO in November. A significant number of activities have been planned and implemented throughout the year within the network of JHA Agencies. EASO organised an expert meeting on trafficking in human beings, a training coordination meeting and a JHA press officers and communication multipliers meeting with the participation of the JHA Agencies.

At the strategic level, EASO worked closely with the JHA Agencies network to develop a [joint document](#) <sup>(28)</sup> identifying the cross-cutting issues of common interest and the interagency cooperation contribution for the effective implementation of the strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning for the coming years in the JHA field, adopted by the European Council in June 2014. EASO coordinated the preparation of the final report of the JHA Agencies cooperation activities in 2014. The report was presented to the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation in Internal Security (COSI) in December by the Executive Director of EASO and it was shared with the European Parliament and the European Commission.

EASO and eu-LISA signed on 4 November 2014 a [working arrangement](#) <sup>(29)</sup> to strengthen the cooperation between both agencies active in the area of Justice and Home Affairs.

In the context of the broader network of the EU decentralised agencies, EASO actively participated during 2014 in four Heads of Administrations and Heads of Agencies meetings, and provided input to various consultations and surveys.

## 4.6 Consultative Forum

<b>EASO Consultative Forum results in 2014</b>
<b>3 focused consultations groups created</b>
<b>70 organisations consulted</b>
<b>1 day and an half plenary meeting in Brussels with thematic conference</b>
<b>100 contributions received from civil society</b>
<b>Conference to launch the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013</b>

<sup>(28)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/20141105-HoAgencies-Joint-statement-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>(29)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Working-arrangement-EASO-eu-LISA.pdf>

Civil society operating in the field of asylum is characterised by a considerable number of active and diverse organisations at local, regional, national, European and international level. These organisations, in their various forms and functions, play a key role in the debate on and implementation of asylum policy and practices at the national as well as at the EU level, and have been instrumental in supporting the fairness and accuracy of asylum procedures, particularly by bringing certain cases to the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. EASO has been developing a two-way dialogue with civil society alongside its activities during the whole year. In 2014, three focused consultation groups were established, over 70 organisations from civil society were consulted on key EASO documents, including the Work Programme 2015, the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013, training material, quality tools and COI reports. The Annual Report was launched to the public in Brussels on 7 July during a conference attended by around 100 participants from civil society. Consultative Forum members were invited by the Executive Director via an open call for input published on the EASO website in 2014 to provide information about work that they carried out throughout the year which in their view contributed to the implementation of the CEAS, at a local, regional, national or European level.

EASO took into consideration all relevant input received from civil society. EASO held the Consultative Forum plenary session <sup>(30)</sup> in December 2014 in Brussels. The aim of the meeting was to look at the experience of the past year of working together with civil society, identify lessons learned and earmark areas of future cooperation. Over 100 participants registered for the 2014 meeting representing around 60 different organisations. Besides the usual focused discussions on the involvement of civil society in the different areas of EASO's work, the 2014 meeting included a full day thematic conference with over 20 speakers focusing on contingency planning, Member State responses to the flow of Eritrean asylum seekers, different protection statuses granted to Syrian applicants and the use of Article 15 of the Qualification Directive (on qualification for subsidiary protection). Participants expressed their satisfaction with the activity and called for further engagement between EASO and civil society.

<sup>(30)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/easo-consultative-forum/report-of-the-4th-consultative-forum-plenary-meeting>

## 5. EASO organisation

### 5.1 Management of resources

In 2014, EASO's internal organisational structure was headed by its Executive Director, who was directly supported by an Executive Office, by four Heads of the following units/centres, as well as by the Accounting Officer:

- General Affairs and Administration Unit (GAAU)
- Centre for Information, Documentation and Analysis (CIDA)
- Centre for Operational Support (COS)
- Centre for Training, Quality and Expertise (CTQE)

Throughout the year, the Executive Director and the four Heads of Unit/Centre convened a weekly Management Team Meeting to monitor the progress of EASO's activities and organisation and discuss the upcoming activities. These were supplemented by senior thematic meetings organised on key horizontal content-related matters affecting the organisation.

Without prejudice to the detailed information provided in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2014, the staff and budget overview was as follows in 2014. EASO had 79 staff members at the end of 2014, including 34 Administrators, 14 Assistants, 19 Contract agents and 12 Seconded National Experts. Twenty-three nationalities of EU Member States' were represented in EASO at the end of 2014. EASO completed 25 recruitment procedures, while several competitions for posts foreseen in the 2014 establishment plan were only finalised at the beginning of the following year. The gender split amongst EASO staff was 47 female staff members (59 %) and 32 male staff (41 %). The EASO Staff Committee, elected in September 2013, regularly performed its activities according to its mandate.

In 2014 EASO carried out the first annual exercise for staff appraisal. The first appraisal report exceptionally covered the year 2012 together with 2013 for staff members that were in active employment during those years. Following the performance appraisal, the first

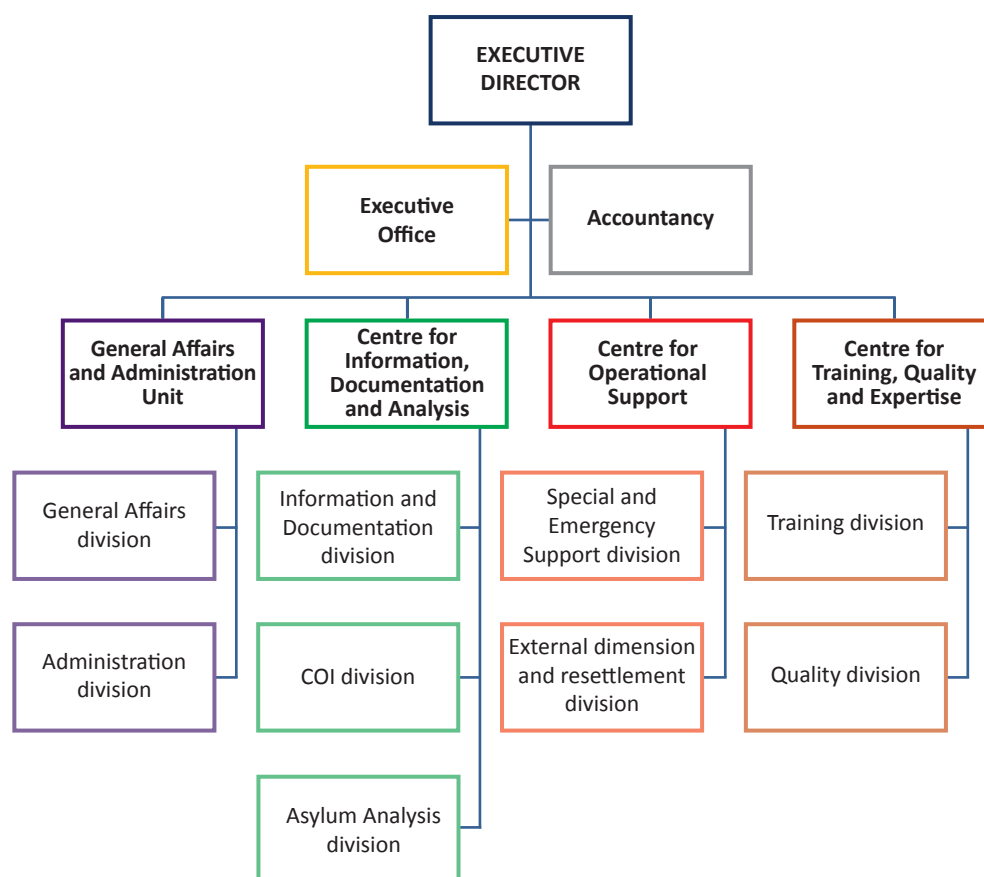


Figure 3: EASO's organisational chart

reclassification will take place in 2015 as some of the temporary and contract agents have been recruited as from the second half of 2011 and will therefore be eligible for promotion to a higher grade. The rules and procedures applied by EASO comply with the relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations, namely Articles 43 and 45, and Articles 15, 54 and 87 of the CEOS.

The Management Board adopted in May 2014 a Decision on the EASO contribution to school fees for children attending a private/international school in Malta and to support their integration in the local environment. The Decision foresees the provision of adequate financial support to staff members whose children attend these schools, also taking into account the development of a sustainable and balanced approach between the financial support to the annual school fees and the Agency's expenditure. Several cultural and social events for the staff, including eight thematic activities, were organised by EASO in 2014. They aimed to keep EASO staff informed on important issues and to serve as team building activities.

Concerning the budget and its implementation, EASO's budget in 2014 amounted to approximately EUR 15.6 million in commitment and payment appropriations, including the earmarked funding for the ENP project and the financial contribution from Norway. A mid-term and a year-end review of the budget were performed and two budget amendments were adopted in 2014.

EASO further consolidated the planning, monitoring and reporting with regard to procurement and contracting processes. It successfully implemented the procurement plan 2014, supporting the conduct of five open calls, five tenders below EUR 60 000, 83 negotiated procedures below EUR 15 000 and two exceptional negotiated procedures. In total, 2 200 advices related to procurement were given and constant follow-up provided.

In the field of information and communication technology (ICT), the ICT infrastructure was enhanced to support operational activities, particularly in the field of EPS, the Common COI portal and information dissemination. Twenty ICT projects were successfully executed, a Project Management Governance Plan was adopted and the ICT Strategy was drafted. The disaster recovery technical infrastructure was completed and ready to be moved to eu-Lisa.

In line with the recommendations by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors, EASO implemented and developed further its internal controls according to the Internal Control Standards adopted in November 2012. In addition to the audit on the annual accounts, in 2014 an audit report on EASO operational support was delivered by IAS and an action plan to address the recommendations included in the report

was developed. References to the activities in this regard are included in Section 1 of Part II of this Annual Activity Report.

## 5.2 Internal and external communication

In the area of internal and external communication important developments were achieved by EASO in 2014 aiming at increasing the outreach and at mainstreaming the dissemination of information. As a result, newsletter subscribers increased by 78 %, EASO's presence in the press doubled and the visits to EASO's webpage increased by 30 % compared with 2013. A communication strategy was adopted by the Management Board in June 2014, 20 press releases and 10 editions of EASO newsletter were issued, two press conferences and 15 interviews were held. Daily press extracts and daily press monitoring were performed. EASO effectively managed the EASO info mailbox and answered 600 e-mail requests. A week ahead note with information to staff has been delivered on a weekly basis since March and the internal intranet portal was established. New channels of communication using social media were developed, using Facebook and YouTube. EASO in 2014 signed a new framework contract for the website upgrading, maintenance and hosting for a 4-year period.

EASO strengthened its relationship with strategic members of relevant media organisations. Moreover, a communications multipliers meeting was organised and an EU-wide EASO info day was held on 19 June in all Member States and also in the European Parliament.

In 2014, 34 publications, including programming documents, reports, training materials, handbooks and brochures were published by EASO in line with its visual identity. The production of an EASO corporate video <sup>(31)</sup> started and was finalised in early 2015. Merchandise was also distributed.

Concerning document management, the Classification and Retention Schedule for Administrative documents was approved and the Document Management Policy was drafted.

Five notifications under Article 25, Regulation 45/2001 were received and three prior checks to the EDPS (Article 27, Regulation 45/2001) were submitted. The inventory of personal data processing operations and the Register of Personal Data Processing (Article 26, 45/2001) were updated. The Charter of Tasks and Responsibilities of the Data Protection Officer was adopted and the first induction training on data protection was provided to new staff.

<sup>(31)</sup> <https://easo.europa.eu/download/75282>



**Picture 9: EASO's info day in Belgium**

The EASO Security Policy was approved in June and the Security procedure for handling EUCI classified documents was completed.

continue during the first semester 2015. The final report is expected to be delivered by the contractor by July 2015.

### 5.3 EASO external evaluation

Article 46 of the EASO Regulation states that EASO shall commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements. The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess the EU value added, impact, efficiency, effectiveness and working practices of EASO in its first years of operation in the implementation of its mandate, thereby contributing to the implementation of the CEAS, including the new asylum legislative package. The independent evaluation will cover the period June 2011-June 2014.

The EASO Management Board nominated two of its members to form part of the Steering Group together with two staff members of EASO. Following the adoption of the Terms of Reference and the implementation of the applicable procurement procedure, the contract was awarded in October 2014 to Ernst & Young.

A kick-off meeting on the evaluation took place in Malta on 20 October 2014 and an inception report was delivered by the contractor in December. The data collection phase started with the participatory observation of the Management Board meeting and plenary of the Consultative Forum in December and with desk review. Methods to gather data were developed in order to launch a survey to the EASO key stakeholders, to conduct semi-structured interviews and to develop focused case studies. The data collection phase will



## 6. Annexes

### 6.1 Budget execution and financial report

Table 1 2014 Budget execution of commitment appropriations

Commitment appropriations					
Budget title	Fund source	Current budget (EUR)	Current execution (EUR)	Remaining balance (EUR)	Ratio (%)
Title 1	C1	6 130 000.00	5 650 007.36	479 992.64	92.17
	C4	1 454.12	1 115.63	338.49	76.72
	C5	447.45	447.45	0.00	100.00
	C8	149 606.18	78 579.70	71 026.48	52.52
	R0	100 000.00	6 000.00	94 000.00	6.00
Total Title 1		6 381 507.75	5 736 150.14	645 357.61	89.89
Title 2	C1	2 509 844.94	2 185 386.17	324 458.77	87.07
	C5	29 045.91	29 045.91	0.00	100.00
	C8	540 269.20	464 878.50	75 390.70	86.05
	R0	235 349.36	43 569.59	191 779.77	18.51
Total Title 2		3 314 509.41	2 722 880.17	591 629.24	82.15
Title 3	C1	6 027 000.00	4 585 582.71	1 441 417.29	76.08
	C4	12 496.32	1 020.12	11 476.20	8.16
	C8	1 922 539.53	1 559 682.69	362 856.84	81.13
Total Title 3		7 962 035.85	6 146 285.52	1 815 750.33	77.19
Title 4	R0	661 780.21	614 645.40	47 134.81	92.88
Total Title 4		661 780.21	614 645.40	47 134.81	92.88
<b>Total commitment appropriations</b>		<b>18 319 833.22</b>	<b>15 219 961.23</b>	<b>3 099 871.99</b>	<b>83.08</b>

**Table 2 2014 Budget execution of payment appropriations**

Payment appropriations					
Budget title	Fund source	Current budget (EUR)	Current execution (EUR)	Remaining balance (EUR)	Ratio (%)
Title 1	C1	6 130 000.00	5 432 167.53	697 832.47	88.62
	C4	1 454.12	1 115.63	338.49	76.72
	C5	447.45	447.45	0.00	100.00
	C8	149 606.18	78 579.70	71 026.48	52.52
	R0	100 000.00	0.00	100 000.00	0.00
Total Title 1		6 381 507.75	5 512 310.31	869 197.44	86.38
Title 2	C1	2 509 844.94	1 576 537.73	933 307.21	62.81
	C5	29 045.91	29 045.91	0.00	100.00
	C8	540 269.20	464 878.50	75 390.70	86.05
	R0	235 349.36	0.00	235 349.36	0.00
Total Title 2		3 314 509.41	2 070 462.14	1 244 047.27	62.47
Title 3	C1	6 027 000.00	3 453 372.96	2 573 627.04	57.30
	C4	12 496.32	11 514.45	981.87	92.14
Total Title 3		6 039 496.32	3 464 887.41	2 574 608.91	57.37
Title 4	R0	661 780.21	254 105.23	407 674.98	38.40
Total Title 4		661,780.21	254 105.23	407 674.98	38.40
<b>Total payment appropriations</b>		<b>16 397 293.69</b>	<b>11 301 765.09</b>	<b>5 095 528.60</b>	<b>68.92</b>

## 6.2 Breakdown of EASO staff as of 31 December 2014

Function group and grade	2014			
	Authorised under the EU Budget		Filled as of 31.12.2014	
	Officials	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts
AD 16	0	0	0	0
AD 15	0	0	0	0
AD 14	0	1	0	1
AD 13	0	0	0	0
AD 12	0	0	0	0
AD 11	0	1	0	0
AD 10	0	4	0	3
AD 9	0	4	0	4
AD 8	0	8	0	8
AD 7	0	9	0	9
AD 6	0	3	0	3
AD 5	0	7	0	6
<b>AD total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>
AST 11	0	0	0	0
AST 10	0	0	0	0
AST 9	0	0	0	0
AST 8	0	0	0	0
AST 7	0	0	0	0
AST 6	0	0	0	0
AST 5	0	0	0	0
AST 4	0	2	0	2
AST 3	0	6	0	6
AST 2	0	1	0	1
AST 1	0	5	0	5
<b>AST total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48<sup>(32)</sup></b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>		<b>48</b>

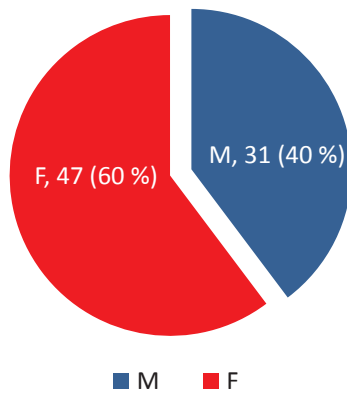
SNE	Authorised 2014	Recruited as of 31.12.2014
Total	14	12

Contract Agents	Authorised 2014	Recruited as of 31.12.2014
FG IV	8	7
FG III	8	8
FG II	3	2
FG I	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19<sup>(33)</sup></b>

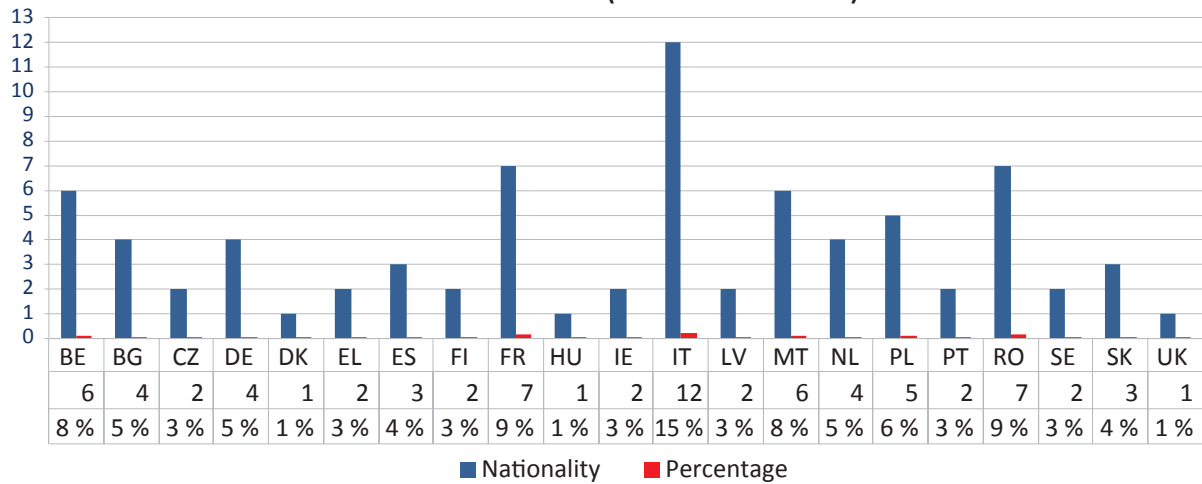
<sup>(32)</sup> Including offer letters.

<sup>(33)</sup> Ibidem.

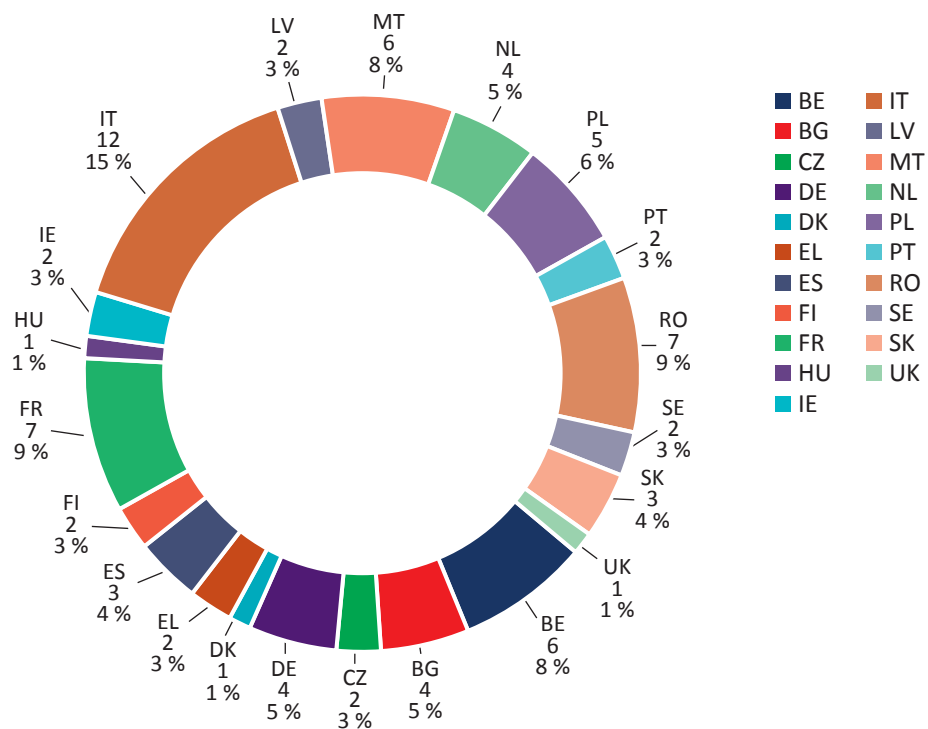
Total staff by gender (data until 31.12.2014)



EASO National Balance (data until 31.12.2014)



EASO National Balance (data until 31.12.2014)



## 6.3 EASO publications in 2014

Title	Language
10 issues of EASO Newsletter	EN
EASO Communication Plan 2014	EN
EASO Communication Strategy 2014	EN
EASO Work Programme 2015	All EU languages
Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2016	EN
EASO Annual Activity Report 2013	All EU languages
EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2013	EN, FR, ES, DE, IT
Brochure on JHA Agencies	EN
EASO External Action Strategy	EN
12 issues of monthly trend analysis report	EN
EASO Brochure 2014	All EU languages, Arabic
4 issues Quarterly Asylum Reports	EN
EASO Training Curriculum. Handbook on the Common European Asylum System Module	EN
EASO Training Curriculum	EN
Stock taking report on the Asylum Situation in Bulgaria	EN
Joint assessment on preparedness of selected EU Member States for a possible influx of persons from Ukraine	EN
Quality Matrix Report: Eligibility	EN
Assessment of possible migratory and security impacts of future visa liberalisation for Georgian citizens	EN
EASO Flyer	EN
EASO Operating Plan for Greece: Interim Assessment of Implementation	EN
Quality Matrix Report: Evidence Assessment (restricted version)	EN
Quality Matrix Report: Personal Interview (restricted version)	EN
Quality Matrix Report: Eligibility (restricted version)	EN
EASO Training Curriculum: Handbook on the Inclusion module	EN
EASO Training Curriculum — Handbook on the Interview Techniques module	EN
Terms of reference for EASO's Training and Expert Pool	EN
EASO Practical Guide: Personal Interview	EN
Article 15(c) Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU). A judicial analysis	EN
EASO Practical guide: Tools and Tips for Online COI research	EN
EASO COI Report on Somalia: Country overview	EN, SK
EASO COI report on Chechnya: Women, Marriage, Divorce and Child custody	EN, IT, FR, DE, PL
Update on Iraq	EN
Update on Ukraine	EN
Update on Eritrea	EN



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