

# Annual Training Report 2021

## Executive Summary



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Manuscript completed in April 2022

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022

PDF ISBN 978-92-9400-000-2 doi:10.2847/12212 BZ-07-22-525-EN-N

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## Foreword



As the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) celebrated its 10-year anniversary, it was acknowledged how the provision of common training has contributed to the enhancement of quality and harmonisation in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System. In 2012, the Agency took over the European Asylum Curriculum. Over the subsequent decade, the range of modules expanded. As you will read in the report, 2021 saw further improvements with the development of foundation modules and a broader range of modules on reception.

Voluntary assessments were also introduced as a first step towards being able to offer specific qualifications for practitioners working in the field of asylum and reception.

Having adopted its new Strategy on Reception in 2021, the Agency has developed several reception-related training modules and has been actively involved in enhancing the capacity of national reception services by providing training for reception officers both in EU+ and third countries facing disproportionate pressures on their reception systems. This capacity building has been supported by technical advice from the Agency's Reception Team.

In preparation for the transformation of EASO into the EUAA<sup>1</sup>, a broader training curriculum was launched in order to re-enforce the fundamental role of training within all elements of the Agency's new mandate. This ongoing work is essential to bringing greater convergence to national asylum and reception practices. Part of the new mandate means that the Agency will be able to rapidly deploy personnel to provide operational assistance to Member States, including at short notice. In order to enable these Asylum Support Teams to swiftly become fully operational and ready to provide on-the-ground assistance, the Agency has prepared special induction training that will ideally be conducted in advance of deployment.

This Annual Training Report provides some background on the training delivery figures throughout the year. You will see how the Agency continued to apply online solutions to replace face-to-face sessions with webinars, thereby maintaining high levels of training delivery. Further alignment with European quality standards in the field of education remained at the heart of its training activities and the Agency worked closely with Member States to ensure that these standards can be maintained and enhanced wherever training is delivered.

Quality and satisfaction remain of utmost importance, and, throughout the year, the Agency put in place enhanced support services, as well as a strengthened reporting mechanism which feeds into robust evaluation activities to ensure the continuous improvement of our training.

### **Nina Gregori**

Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Asylum

<sup>1</sup> On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). The information in the report refers to activities carried out by EASO in 2021, but the report is published by the EUAA.



# Introduction

This report gives an overview of the main activities carried out during 2021 by the Agency. Training forms an integral part of the Agency’s permanent support to Member States, along with capacity building in the context of operational support provided to those states whose asylum and reception systems are under disproportionate pressure. Providing common training material enables better cooperation between the Member States in the fields of both asylum and reception. The overarching goal of the training is to promote good practice and the harmonisation of the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

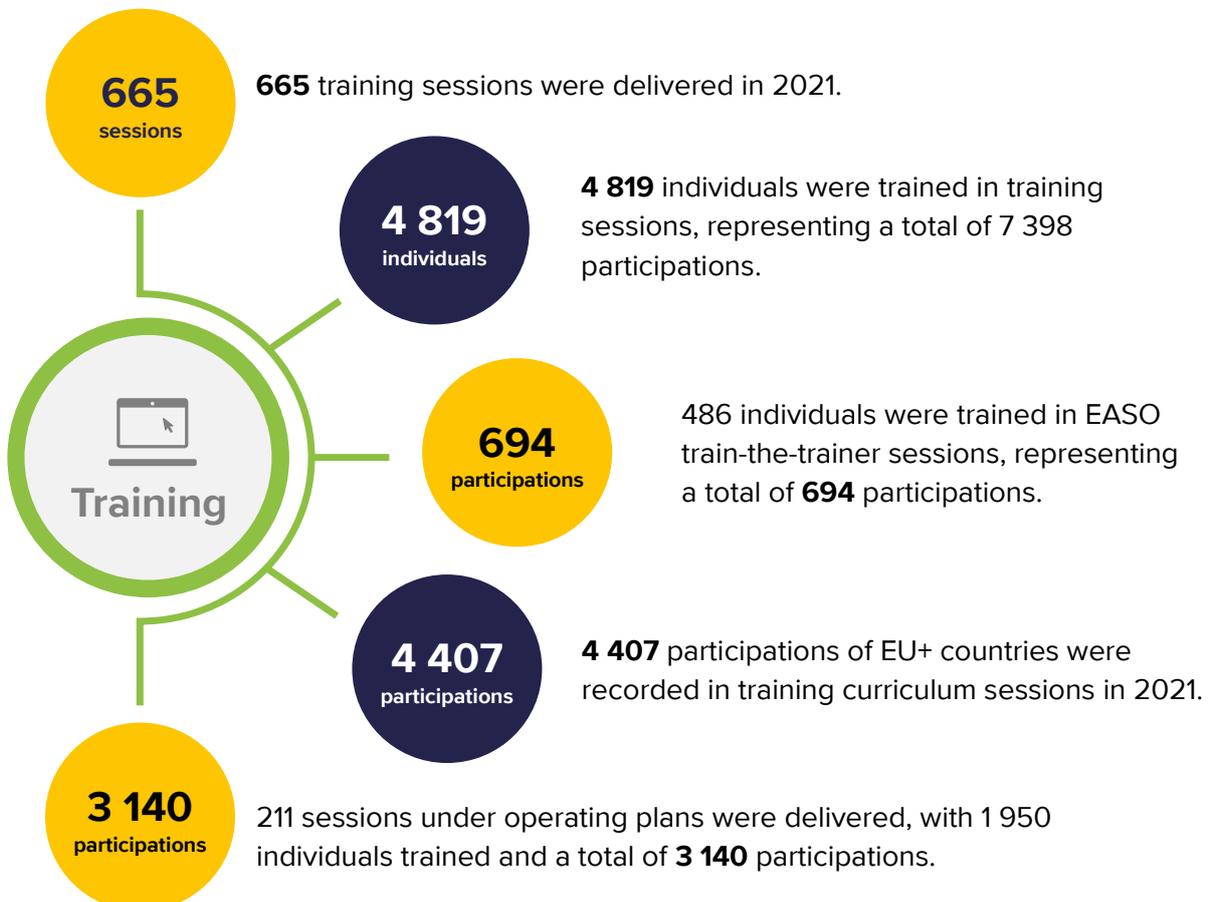
The Annual Training Report provides an update on outcomes achieved throughout the year and includes an overview of the main training activities and more in-depth coverage of specific themes. For more information, see the full Annual Training Report.

## Overview of training activities



In 2021, the total number of participations in training sessions reached **7 398**. Overall participation slightly decreased by 6 % compared to 2020. While participation in modules decreased by 15 %, participation in training activities within operating plans (standard courses, on-the-job coaching and tailor-made courses) saw an increase of 57 %.

### Key figures on training activities in 2021





## Monitoring feedback from training activities in 2021



The Agency takes participant feedback into account to promote a culture of continuous improvement and student-centred learning and strives to ensure that the training it provides is appropriate and takes place in a supportive and effective learning environment. The following figures highlight a high **satisfaction rate** overall.



## In the spotlight



### New design methodology fully implemented

A new design methodology has now been fully implemented when developing new modules and upgrading existing ones. All learning outcomes are defined to closely reflect the actual tasks that learners perform, and any overlap of content has been eliminated.

#### Restructuring of the core modules for learners

The restructuring of the training modules on '**Inclusion**', the '**Asylum interview method**' (formerly 'Interviewing techniques') and '**Evidence assessment**' was completed.

#### Development of foundation modules

New foundation modules were developed to provide basic and transversal knowledge and skills that can then be applied to the entire European Asylum Curriculum:

- **Introduction to the legal framework on fundamental rights and international protection in the EU;**
- **Introduction to ethical and professional standards;**
- **Introduction to communication for asylum and reception practitioners;**
- **Introduction to vulnerability.**



## Courses for trainers

Training specifically aimed at trainers has been developed, including thematic training on the **'Asylum core'** and training aimed at building trainers' knowledge and skills, such as **'Becoming an EASO trainer'**, **'Becoming an EASO assessor'** and **'Introduction to coaching'**.

## Modules in the thematic area of vulnerability

Two new modules - **'Applicants with diverse SOGIESC'** <sup>(2)</sup> and **'Victims of gender-based violence'** - have been developed, and the **'Trafficking in human beings'** module has been upgraded.



### Focus on reception

The Agency has extended the range of training specifically focused on reception. The **'Reception'** module was one of the most popular in terms of participation, alongside the core modules and **Interviewing vulnerable persons**. Two modules focused on vulnerable persons in the context of reception (**'Reception of vulnerable persons – Blocks A and B'**), finalised in 2020, also attracted a significant number of participations. Several reception-related training modules are under development and will form part of the learning path for reception officials:

- **Introduction to reception;**
- **Conflict management and mediation in reception;**
- **Psychosocial support and guidance in reception;**
- **Management in the context of reception.**

## The network of Training National Contact Points for reception

The Agency established a network of **Training National Contact Points (NCPs) for reception**. This is in recognition of the essential role of reception authorities in the effective functioning of the Common European Asylum System and the importance of involving such authorities in regular consultations.

## Operating plan for special support on reception – Spain

The 2021 operating plan for special support on reception signed between EASO and Spain was conceived and implemented in close collaboration with a broad range of reception stakeholders who operate in Spain under the lead of the Secretary of State for Migration. The Agency developed an **induction course on reception**, which introduces new reception staff to

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<sup>(2)</sup> Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics.



the legal principles, standards and procedures in reception according to the Reception Conditions Directive and the national law.



### Coaching in operations

The Agency implemented a joint training plan, which focused on increasing the number and specialised areas of training delivered together with the Greek Asylum Service under the Agency's operating plan for Greece. One of the main training activities was on-the-job coaching that aimed at supporting Greek Asylum Service caseworkers and EASO temporary staff working on the ground as caseworkers.



### Country Desk Coordinators

A significant step in strengthening direct collaboration with Member States is the introduction of the role of **Country Desk Coordinators**, who act as the main point of contact for Training NCPs on asylum and reception.



### e-Learning user experience

Several improvements were made to ensure that learners have a better online experience:

- a **new user interface** for the Learning Management System;
- a **new e-learning module design style** that reduces the number of clicks/steps required to reach a specific content page, with rules-based access in order to prevent the user from navigating freely.

The Agency also introduced the concept of a learning technologies ecosystem encompassing all the integrated tools, platforms, automated workflows, digital services and other components that support the management of online modules, courses and programmes, including their design, production, delivery and learner-experience analysis.

- A **new version of the EUAA Training Enrolment Tool (ETET v2.0)** will encourage active participation of Training National Contact Points in the monitoring of the learner enrolment process.
- **Service desk optimisation** improves issue tracking by implementing a ticketing system.
- A **new Stakeholders Contact Management system** improves the process for sending event invitations, surveys and ad hoc updates.



### Aligning EASO training with European standards

- The Agency completed the development of two methodologies regarding **training needs analysis** and **training evaluation**, which are flexible enough to be





implemented during situations that require either a rapid response or in-depth analysis in the different contexts in which training is delivered (including operations and non-EU-country support).

- The training centre has been working with a group of experts from academia to **enhance its compliance with European quality standards** in the area of higher education.
- To accompany the practical use of the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework, the Agency published the **'ESQF Toolkit'** which provides a range of supporting documents.

## In 2021, we welcomed the first EUAA certified trainers

The Agency launched a procedure to certify experienced trainers through the roll-out of assessments and of a specific module to gain the necessary skills to assess learners. This milestone means that Member State authorities are now able to assess whether their learners have achieved the defined learning outcomes and can therefore demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills to perform their tasks according to good practice and in line with the Common European Asylum System.

## Conclusion

At the end of June 2021, political agreement was reached a political agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the new enhanced mandate that established the **European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)**. In the new mandate, training is explicitly mentioned, including training in reception-related areas. The Training Curriculum was renamed the **European Asylum Curriculum**.

## Towards an EUAA Academy

In accordance with Article 8(4) of the EUAA Regulation, ensuring and further enhancing high-quality fit-for-purpose training, the Agency is focusing on the following aspects:

- quality of content – fit-for-purpose design of the training activities;
- quality of delivery and learner experience;
- quality of outcomes – reliability, consistency and comparability of the training outcomes regardless of the place and mode of delivery.

All developments and improvements in the area of EUAA training design, delivery and quality assurance enable us to achieve another strategic goal: establishing the EUAA Academy, a fully and officially recognised qualifications provider. This status will greatly improve the learner experience by facilitating the official recognition of EUAA training outcomes – certificates, qualifications, degrees, etc. across all EU Member States and beyond.

