

EVALUATION OF THE USE AND IMPACT OF EUAA COUNTRY INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE PRODUCTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CG	Country guidance
CGNet	Country Guidance Network
COI	Country of origin information
CSO	Civil society organisation
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
EU+	EU Member States and associated countries (Switzerland and Norway)
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
NCP	National contact point
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SAR	State Agency for Refugees (Bulgaria)
StratNet	Country of Origin Information Strategic Network
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

ABSTRACT

The objective of this evaluation was to provide a more thorough understanding on the use, usefulness, useability, and impact of the European Union Agency for Asylum's (EUAA) Country of Origin Information (COI) and Country Guidance (CG) products in the daily work and decision-making processes of their intended users, mostly the interviewers and decision-makers in asylum-determining authorities. This evidence-based study considered, as required by the Better Regulation Guidelines of the European Commission, five main evaluation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and European Union (EU) added value). The findings stem from a mix of qualitative and quantitative research and analysis (desk research, survey of users of COI and CG, fieldwork interviews in ten countries, and horizontal interviews with COI and CG network members, administrations from third countries, and international organisations). Following this, a long-term monitoring, evaluation and learning framework was developed that allows for the regular and continued monitoring of COI and CG products. The key outcomes of the evaluation study show that the EUAA's COI and CG products are widely used by intended users, are relevant and of high quality, and represent an authoritative source in their fields. Some areas for improvement should be considered, which are presented as recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document forms the final report of the **Evaluation of the use and impact of the EUAA's Country Information and Guidance Products**. The EUAA compiles and routinely revises reports and various documents that offer precise, dependable, and updated information about relevant third countries, EUAA products known as Country of Origin Information (COI). These resources assist asylum and migration authorities in EU Member states and associated countries (EU+) in making informed and fair decisions regarding international protection applications. Moreover, with the aim of fostering convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection, the EUAA develops, together with EU+ countries, a common analysis based on COI, which is known as Country Guidance (CG). The purpose of these products is to promote greater convergence of practices and decisions, in line with the Common European Asylum System, both of the national determining authorities at first instance and of the appeal authorities of EU+ countries.

The study, which ran from December 2022 to October 2023, was awarded by the EUAA to a Consortium led by Ramboll Management Consulting and further consisting of Milieu Consulting. It aimed to support the EUAA with an **independent, evidence-based evaluation of the use and impact of COI and CG products**. The evaluation covered the period from 2018 until 2022.

This evaluation was conducted according to the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox¹. The study focused on two main tasks:

1. Providing a more thorough understanding of the **use, usefulness, useability, and impact of the EUAA's COI and CG products** in the daily work and decision-making processes of their intended users, mostly the interviewers and decision-makers in asylum determining authorities.
2. Developing a **long-term monitoring, evaluation and learning framework** that allows for regular and continued monitoring of the COI and CG products over time.

Methodology

The evaluation relied on mixed methods, by combining desk research, an online survey with COI and CG users that had a total of 423 respondents from EU+ countries, fieldwork interviews in a selection of 10 countries, and horizontal interviews with members of the COI and CG networks, representatives from third countries, and international organisations. These methods were used to collect stakeholder feedback on the use and impact of COI and CG products. Evidence collected through these methods was triangulated in order to provide answers to a set of evaluation questions pertaining to the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value of COI and CG products. The findings and recommendations were validated with stakeholders during two in-person validation workshops held in Malta.

Summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations

The effectiveness of the EUAA's COI and CG products

The EUAA's COI products are well used, primarily by case officers. They frequently use the EUAA's COI products in conjunction with other sources, such as COI produced at the national level or information from international organisations and non-governmental entities. **The EUAA's CG products are widely used, primarily by policymakers** and especially by the ones involved in the development of national guidance, as well as in second instance decision-making. The use of CG among case officers is mixed, but this can in part be attributed to the integration of the EUAA's

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

guidance into their national guidance. The use of COI and CG products is being monitored to different extents by the EUAA and not in a systematic or regular way, therefore the Agency could consider monitoring their use more systematically.

The **dissemination activities** that the Agency is carrying out to promote and distribute the COI and CG products it produces are regarded as effective by COI and CG network members. COI network members find the methods most employed by the EUAA to disseminate its COI products (i.e., email communication and presentations in network meetings) to be **highly effective in achieving their intended purposes**. In relation to **CG products**, users learn about the EUAA's CG primarily through the Agency's website and via word of mouth (colleague/peer and via a manager/supervisor). At the same time, outreach activities are increasingly organised and diversified both in their form (with the launch events having increasing prominence) and target audiences (with judges reporting the increasing usefulness of activities). National administrations are disseminating COI and CG to their user base to varying degrees. A point for improvement on the dissemination of the EUAA's CG is the lack of a digital communication strategy specific to CG products.

The efficiency of the EUAA's COI and CG products

Regarding the efficiency of the production the **EUAA's COI**, there are great fluctuations in drafting, reviewing and translation costs associated with these products. In terms of dissemination, the two most widely used and effective dissemination methods for COI products (i.e., email communication and presentations in network meetings) might be less costly than other means, but more data is needed to make a robust assessment. Collecting data on the resources invested in disseminating the EUAA's COI would be useful to understand the relation it has to its outreach to target users.

For the EUAA's CG products, investments in **CG production** significantly increased, leading to expanded and manifold outreach activities that received positive feedback and are in high demand. Participation in EU-level CG production incurs significant human costs, especially for those countries that maintain their national guidance documents but is considered valuable. CG dissemination activities have increased sharply, and the target group of these activities has diversified greatly - no longer focusing only on case officers but increasingly on the judiciary, national contact points (NCPs), policy makers, academics, mixed groups and the general public.

The relevance of the EUAA's COI and CG products

The EUAA's **COI products are generally perceived as relevant, complete, and of high quality by a diverse range of users**, regardless of their national COI production experience. COI products are used for a variety of purposes beyond the CG framework, ranging from supporting decision-making, advocacy to responding to the more operational needs of stakeholders. While there is a slight preference towards having shorter thematic COI reports, other stakeholders appreciate the length and comprehensiveness of the reports. There is **limited awareness among users about the possibility to submit COI queries**, suggesting the need to build more awareness of this possibility.

Similarly, in the case of CG, most users were satisfied with their **usability, usefulness, quality and completeness, and geographical coverage**. There are differing opinions across users on **the length of the documents**.

Importantly for both EUAA COI and CG products, the main critical aspect pertaining to the relevance of these products concerns the **need for up-to-date information** which, in the view of stakeholders, is compromised by the long production/update process and the length of the reports.

The coherence of the EUAA's COI and CG products

For the EUAA's COI, there is a **large degree of alignment** between these **products and other interventions aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection** (most notably, the EUAA's COI methodology). Evidence collected reveals that the EUAA's COI methodology and related practices are embedded in the national practices of EU+ countries' administrations regardless of their level of engagement in EUAA activities and/or degree of maturity of their asylum administration. The fact that many countries have continued to produce **their own COI products** has in large part not translated into a duplication of efforts: the EUAA's COI and national COI products are, in many respects, complementary, and are often used in tandem. Complementarity arises with respect to countries covered, themes covered, depth of information provided, language needs, variety of perspectives, as well as timeliness of information.

Similarly, the EUAA's CG documents sit within a framework of various Agency products aiming at **harmonising the examination of international protection claims across the EU** and are meant to be complementary. EU-level CG consistently refers the user to other EUAA products, primarily to the practical guides, and stakeholders did not mention any inconsistencies between EU-level CG documents and other EUAA interventions. In relation to the **coherence between the EUAA's CG and national guidance**, while the primary reason why EU+ countries continue to produce their own national guidance is to maintain national sovereignty over the guidance, evidence gathered as part of this evaluation shows that there are in fact no major inconsistencies between EU-level and national guidance, but they are rather complementary in nature.

The EU added value of the EUAA's COI and CG products

The added value of the EUAA's COI products compared to national sources is well-substantiated and originates from a variety of reasons ranging from its authoritativeness to the knowledge sharing associated with it, though the degree of added value brought about varies depending on the EU+ country concerned. At the same time, evidence suggests that a few COI users believe that convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the existence of EU-level COI products; if EU-level COI products did not exist, the gap could be filled at national level, be it by the country in question or another country.

The EUAA **CG's added value vis-à-vis national guidance documents** is well corroborated and stems from its **authoritativeness, methodology and collective production process – and the level of harmonisation it can bring about**. CG users were largely undecided during this evaluation about the added value of the EU-level CG as compared to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Eligibility Guidelines, but nevertheless, believed that the comparative added value of the EU-level CG lies in it being more detailed, informative, up-to-date as well as more concrete and comprehensive than UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, several recommendations have been put forward – a selection of which are presented below. These recommendations may be considered by the EUAA if they are deemed relevant and appropriate.

- The EUAA could seek more systematised feedback on the use of COI and CG products by using the monitoring and evaluation framework created as part of this study.
- The Agency could capitalise on the COI and CG networks by increasing the involvement of (NCPs) in reporting on the use of the products in their country.
- To increase the possibility of accurately mapping the use of CG products, the Agency could request that EU+ countries systematically provide the EUAA with their national guidance. In addition, the Agency could ask EU+ countries to encourage references to the EUAA's CG products and request that NCPs and other counterparts make explicit mention of these documents.

- The EUAA could mainstream the promotion of COI and CG products through the EUAA's activities, including through preparing brief promotion materials, such as a few slides that can be inserted at the end of each thematically-relevant presentation that would direct the audience to the products.
- The Agency could create more opportunities for webinars/workshops and informative sessions to understand how the EUAA's COI and CG products can be used in the work of different target users.
- The EUAA could consider putting in place a dedicated digital communication strategy for COI/CG products that could also increase the effectiveness of the dissemination efforts already in place. For instance, set up social media marketing campaigns on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter that are specific to the products and target users that are likely to use them.
- The Agency could gather a more detailed account of the type of costs involved in COI and CG production and dissemination in a more systematic way and gather data on their correlation with the use of the products, to understand the efficiency of the resources in relation to the benefits of these activities.
- For both COI and CG, the EUAA could consider creating platforms/events for 'peer-learning/exchange of experiences' where EU+ countries that directly use the EUAA's COI and CG or national guidance aligned with it could share specific efficiency gains with those who continue using their national products.
- To increase the timeliness of COI and CG products, the Agency could release updates with a narrower scope that would enable higher frequency, and potentially consider more structured collaboration with some national COI and CG units that produce high-quality work that could be expanded or amended.
- To address the translation needs of users, the Agency could conduct a brief needs mapping to confirm the need for translation ahead of the launch of a COI/CG product.
- If shortening the EUAA's COI reports proves challenging, it is advisable to extensively promote the option of submitting COI queries to EU+ countries, including national administrations and civil society organisations.
- To increase the EU added value of the COI/CG products, the Agency could consider striking a balance between producing more frequent updates (which the evaluation suggests is the most pressing need of stakeholders) and ensuring that all the countries for which there is a clear added value at EU level are covered by the EUAA's COI and CG.

INTRODUCTION

This is the final report for the [evaluation of the use and impact of country of origin information \(COI\) and country guidance \(CG\) products of the European Union Agency for Asylum \(EUAA\)](#). The evaluation is intended to support the EUAA in understanding whether, to what extent, how and why its COI and CG products are used by national authorities and other asylum practitioners. Having this knowledge will allow the EUAA to assess the impact of its activities and products on the ground, improve its products to ensure they achieve their goals, and, ultimately, improve their effectiveness in implementing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

The purpose of the evaluation was thus to [provide a more thorough understanding of the use, usefulness, useability, and impact of the EUAA's COI and CG products](#) in the daily work and decision-making processes of their intended users, mostly the interviewers and decision-makers in asylum determining authorities. Other primary user groups for these products are national policymakers at the first-instance level, as well as members of courts and tribunals dealing with international protection matters. Following on from this evaluation, [the project should develop a long-term monitoring, evaluation and learning framework that allows for the regular and continued monitoring of the COI and CG products over time](#).

In line with these targets of the study, the use and impact of COI and CG documents were analysed in [European Union \(EU\) Member States as well as associated countries](#) (Switzerland and Norway). To a lesser extent, for the assessment of COI reports and queries, relevant non-EU+ countries have also been taken into account.² Moreover, [a more in-depth collection of data and analysis was conducted in 10 EU Member States and associated countries \(EU+\)](#) in view of providing a more qualitative representation of the use and impact of the COI and CG documents.

For this study, the reports considered include countries that have been the subject of both COI and CG (Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria) and countries that have only COI products (e.g., Eritrea, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Venezuela). The subjects of this assessment were COI and CG products that fall [within the timeframe 2018-2022](#), with overtime evolutions in use and impacts characterising this temporal dimension of analysis.

Chapter 1 presents the background of this study, followed by Chapter 2 which presents the methodology and data collection techniques used to collect the relevant information for this evaluation. Chapter 3 presents the evaluation findings for each evaluation question (EQ) in line with the Technical Specifications to this study, and Chapter 4 presents the conclusions and recommendations for each evaluation criteria. Lastly, the deliverables and work plan for the study are presented in Chapter 5.

Annex 1 to this report present the results to the targeted survey. Additionally, we provide: the table of figures (Annex 2), the intervention logic (Annex 3), the Evaluation Questions Matrix (Annex 4), the survey questionnaire (Annex 5), the interview guide in countries selected for fieldwork (Annex 6), the guide used for horizontal interviews (Annex 7), an overview to the fieldwork interviews (Annex 8), and an overview of conducted horizontal interviews (Annex 9).

² Stakeholders from Türkiye and Montenegro were consulted as part of horizontal interviews since the countries' use EUAA COI products and/or have received relevant training and/or are in the process of building their own COI unit.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The EUAA

The European Union Agency for Asylum is a decentralised Agency of the EU mandated with supporting EU+ countries in applying the package of EU laws that governs asylum, international protection and reception conditions, known as the CEAS. The Agency was established in 2021 by Regulation (EU) No 2021/2303 (hereafter, EUAA Regulation) and began its mandate in January 2022. It replaced and succeeded the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) which was established in 2010.

Amongst other things, the Agency's enhanced mandate aims to foster greater convergence to asylum and reception practices, for which purpose COI and CG are paramount. In this respect, Article 9 of the EUAA Regulation establishes that the Agency shall be "a centre for gathering relevant, reliable, objective, accurate and up-to date information on third countries in a transparent and impartial manner, making use of relevant information, including child-specific and gender-specific information, and targeted information on persons belonging to vulnerable and minority groups". The Agency should "draw up and regularly update reports and other documents providing information on relevant third countries at Union level, including on thematic issues specific to relevant third countries".

Against this background, since 2012, the Agency has been developing and publishing COI products to inform and support decision and/or policymaking processes in the field of international protection. The EUAA drafts COI with information on countries of origin of persons applying for international protection. This information can then be used in procedures for the individual assessment of applications for international protection. Moreover, in 2016, the Council of the EU agreed on the creation of a senior-level policy network, involving all EU+ countries and coordinated by the EUAA, tasked with carrying out a joint assessment and interpretation of the situation in main countries of origin.³ In particular, this policy network delivers guidance documents to EU+ countries that can use them for making case-by-case assessments of applications for international protection from third-country nationals of the countries of origin concerned.⁴ Since January 2022, the development, review and update of CG is regulated under Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation, which further introduces an obligation for EU+ countries to take the common analysis and guidance notes into account when examining applications for international protection (as per Article 11(3) of the EUAA Regulation). The intervention logic, depicting what the EUAA is seeking to achieve with its products through a series of causal links from inputs through to impacts, is described in detail in Annex 3.

1.2 Focus of the study

This study focuses on the two main products developed by the EUAA to assist competent authorities in making asylum decisions: COI products and CG documents. COI and CG products are prepared in close collaboration between the EUAA and the dedicated networks. The Agency coordinates and organises the work of a diversity of professionals from EU+ countries making up the twelve COI specialist networks, the CG Network (CGNet) and the drafting teams. The European Commission and UNHCR are also consulted in the development of CG documents, and UNHCR and other external experts may be asked to review COI products. Through the COI query system, national authorities can submit questions on specific aspects of the CEAS to facilitate mutual exchange of information across national administrations.

³ Council of the European Union, Outcome of the 3461st Council meeting, 21 April 2016, 8065/16, pp. 10-12.

⁴ Council of the European Union, Outcome of the 3461st Council meeting, 21 April 2016, 8065/16.

COI products provide information about the socioeconomic, legal, political, human rights, security, conflict and humanitarian situation in third countries at a given time, and act as an evidence base for asylum decisions in the EU+ countries. They are crucial for the examination of the application for international protection because they enable case officers to assess applicants' statements and other evidence concerning their need for protection, and to establish whether the applicant qualifies for international protection. Moreover, COI products form the factual basis for the common analysis in CG documents.

COI products may be used at different stages of the procedure: during the preparation of the interview, when conducting the interview and when assessing the application for international protection. COI products help case officers and decision-makers to become familiar with the general political, security and/or socioeconomic situation in a country of origin and support them in examining the core substance of an application for international protection. COI does not dictate decisions; it supports evidence assessment.

COI products can be accessed on the [EUAA's website](#) and dedicated [COI Portal](#) (the latter also includes national EU+ countries' COI production), and cover a plethora of countries. For the purpose of this assignment, as per the Technical Specifications (p. 3-4), only those produced and published between January 2018 and August 2022 were considered. These concern Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Somalia, Syria, and Venezuela.

Country-specific guidance and policy documents are produced at national level by asylum authorities to assist their case officers, to foster convergence and make decision making more efficient by giving advice and direction on how cases should be assessed. They set out the authorities' overall or topic-specific assessment and policy regarding applications from the particular country, by assessing the relevant elements according to the national, international and EU legislation (in particular the Directive 2011/95/EU,⁵ also known as the Qualification Directive (recast)). These documents present a legal interpretation and evaluation of the situation in a given country.

CG documents produced by the EUAA present the joint assessment of EU+ countries regarding the standards for qualification for international protection against the background of the situation in the relevant country of origin. They include a detailed common analysis and guidance notes for examining applications for international protection. CG documents are based on up-to-date COI and are drafted taking into consideration the applicable international and EU law, relevant case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, and general EUAA guidance. The most recent UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from the specific countries of origin are also taken note of. Common analysis and guidance notes are reviewed regularly and updated as needed, according to how current developments in the country of origin can affect the assessment of international protection of applicants originating from that country.

CG documents produced by the EUAA can be accessed on the EUAA website, and currently cover five countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria.

Both COI and CG products are intended for various target users at national level, such as case officers, COI researchers and CG experts, policy officers or other personnel responsible for national

⁵ European Union: Council of the European Union, Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast), 20 December 2011, OJ L. 337/9-337/26; 20.12.2011, 2011/95/EU

guidance, legal representatives at the national authorities and legal representatives for the applicants, judges, and, in some cases, management staff in determining authorities.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used for this evaluation study. The evaluation took a mixed methods approach, combining desk research with stakeholder consultations. The bulk of the data collection consisted of a targeted online survey of EUAA COI and CG users, in-depth fieldwork in EU+ countries, and horizontal interviews with EU stakeholders, international stakeholders, a sample of third country representatives and COI and CG network members in countries not covered in fieldwork.

2.1 Data collection

2.1.1 Targeted survey

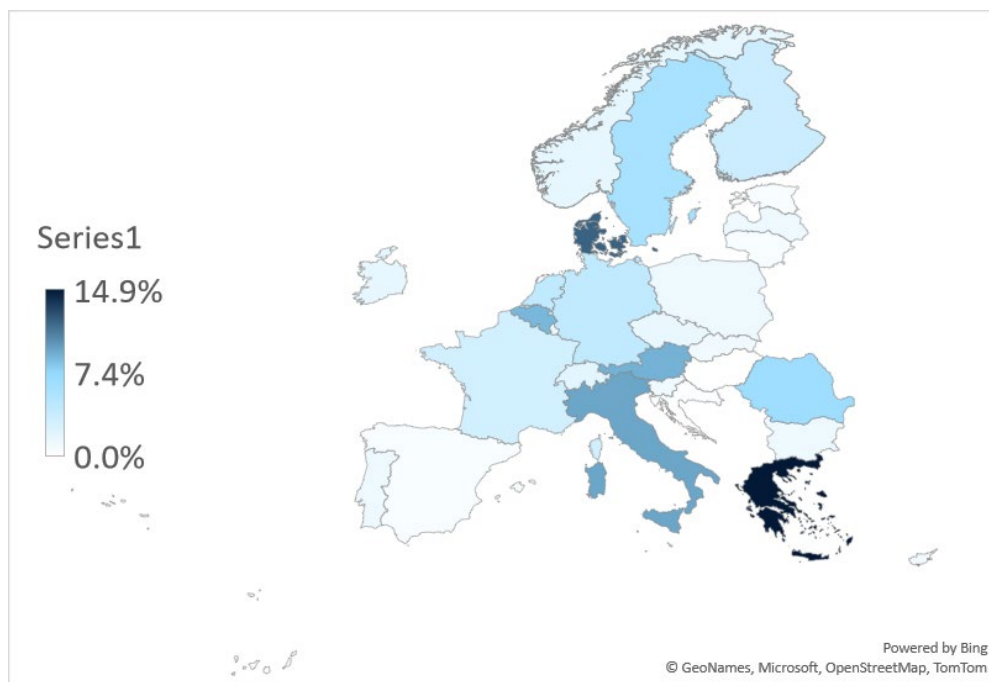
A targeted survey targeted COI and CG users, namely COI researchers, case officers, judges, legal practitioners, policy makers, CGNet members and CSOs. It was launched on the 9th of June 2023 and closed for responses on the 5th of July. During this period, a functional mailbox was set up and regularly monitored to answer and/or address any questions and/or issues identified by the respondents.

Envisaging the possibility that some respondents would be able to answer questions relating to both COI and CG (e.g., decision-makers in some countries may also be COI researchers), [one smart survey was created by using a complex set of activations for which users would get only the questions relevant to their work.](#)

[Respondents were recruited using the snowball sampling technique.](#) This method allowed the survey to reach a large number of stakeholders for which no contact information was available. One caveat with this sampling technique is that the total number of stakeholders to which the survey was disseminated is unknown. SurveyXact and Microsoft Excel were used to clean, analyse, and visualise the data collected. Out of the 423 respondents who filled in the survey, 43 (10%) completed the profiling section but did not fully complete the questionnaire. Both complete and partially complete questionnaires were considered, provided that respondents answered questions beyond the profiling section.

Figure 1 presents a map of the respondents in terms of the geographical representation in the sample of respondents to the survey. [Greece is the most represented country \(15% of total responses\), followed by Denmark \(12%\), Italy, Austria, and Belgium \(each around 9%\).](#) Apart from Hungary and Liechtenstein (not represented at all) the least represented countries are Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, and Spain – less than two respondents declared working in each of them. Finally, three respondents (1%) declared working in a country other than those on the map.

Figure 1. Country coverage of respondents (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The following list presents percentages of respondents based on their function in international protection procedures, out of a total of 423 who answered this profiling question:

- Case officer responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection: 51.8% of respondents
- Case officer responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection: 39.7% of respondents
- COI and CG researchers/experts: 29.3% of respondents⁶
- Judge: 9.5% of respondents
- Legal advice on related legal and policy issues: 7.8% of respondents
- Policymaking and/or development of guidance on specific countries of origin, broadly: 5.9% of respondents
- Legal representation in individual cases 5.7% of respondents
- Head of COI Unit: 4.3% of respondents
- Policy advocacy related to specific countries of origin, broadly: 1.2% of respondents

A total of 51% of survey respondents indicated being aware of/willing to answer questions on both COI and CG. 31% indicated being aware of/willing to answer only questions on COI, while only 5% of respondents did so for CG. Finally, 13% of respondents indicated not being aware of/willing to answer questions on neither of the two.

Overall, there is a rather balanced mix between country of work and function of respondents. As anticipated, [several respondents simultaneously perform different functions in international protection](#). The numbers of respondents in this situation are presented in Table 1.

⁶ CG products: 'CG experts' is a more accurate term for this category, which will be used for analysis purposes.

Table 1. Targeted survey respondents performing more than one function

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
One function	235	55%
More than one function	188	44%
Total	423	100%

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Among respondents that perform more than one function, 81% indicated working as case officers responsible for both interviewing/hearing of applicants for international protection and examining/making decisions on applications for international protection.

Respondents working for the EUAA constitute less than 4% of total survey respondents. They represent 4% of respondents among COI researchers or CG experts, about 5% of respondents among case officers, 9% of respondents among legal advisers, and 8% of respondents among policy makers/ developers of guidance on specific countries of origin.

More information on survey findings and associated methodological limitations can be found in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 Consultations with targeted users in fieldwork countries

Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Sweden were selected as fieldwork countries on the basis of the preparatory desk research, interviews, and exchanges with the EUAA. The sample considered the country size and location, refugee flows from countries covered by CG products, comparative recognition rates, participation to COI and CG network meetings, production of national country-specific guidance and the existence of a COI unit in the country.

National experts approached the focal points to schedule and conduct interviews with relevant users of COI and CG products in the fieldwork countries. The guidance package with relevant materials and instructions shared with the experts can be found in Annex 6. In total, national experts conducted 73 fieldwork interviews between June and September 2023. Annex 8 presents an overview of the targeted users consulted as part of the fieldwork research. The interviews notes were translated into English by the national experts and analysed by the evaluation team using NVivo.

2.1.3 Horizontal interviews

A total of 73 horizontal interviews with EU stakeholders, international stakeholders, third country representatives⁷ and COI and CG network members in countries not covered in fieldwork were conducted to follow up on specific survey findings and to gather more detailed information from respondents in terms of data gaps for the study.

Horizontal interviews allowed for views on more sensitive issues to be collected, as well as for a better understanding of the range of opinions or perspectives on the use of the products, as well as contextual information needed to ensure that problems are tackled in a targeted manner.

Annex 8 presents an overview of the stakeholders consulted as part of this method. Interview guides can be found in Annex 6.

⁷ Stakeholders from Türkiye and Montenegro were consulted as part of horizontal interviews since the countries' use EUAA COI products and/or have received relevant training and/or are in the process of building their own COI unit.

2.2 Monitoring and evaluation framework

The second part of the project concerned a proposal for a monitoring and evaluation tool for the COI and CG products to provide tangible evidence of the use and impact of EUAA COI and CG products in the long run. Work on the tool started at a later stage, so as to build on the findings collected through the evaluation.

The tool was fine-tuned during an in-person workshop with the EUAA in Malta which saw the participation of approximately 20 people working on COI and CG.

2.3 Data analysis and synthesis

2.3.1 Triangulation of findings

After all quantitative and qualitative data were gathered, processed and analysed as explained in previous sections, a process of triangulation was carried out.⁸ Three types of triangulation were applied:

- **Data source triangulation:** the views of different stakeholder groups were compared and contrasted. This helped the evaluation team put into perspective the differences and similarities in the opinions of different stakeholder groups and brings them together to reach overarching conclusions.
- **Method triangulation:** different types of data collection tools were used to gather information. In general, we aimed to include data gathered from existing sources of evidence, as well as from the survey, interviews, and direct observations when answering each evaluation question.
- **Investigator triangulation:** two or more experts were involved in the same study to provide multiple observations and conclusions. In case of this evaluation, there were several levels of checks and quality assurance, which ensured that issues were looked at from different angles, thus reducing the possibility of individuals' bias. Most importantly, the experts carrying out the fieldwork are not the ones drafting the report.

In order to formulate succinct answers to the evaluation questions, the evaluation team held an internal workshop involving all team members who were involved in the analysis, synthesis and triangulation of findings. The answers to each evaluation question clearly indicate the source of the evidence presented and include a commentary on the robustness of the evidence base as well as possible limitations related to the data or analytical methods applied. Where necessary, additional details are provided in an annex, to ensure the chapter on evaluation findings is as succinct as possible while still conveying all relevant information.

2.3.2 Validation workshop

The validation workshop on the use and impact of COI and CG products took place in Malta in the context of the EUAA Country Information and Guidance Conference organised by the EUAA.

The aim of this workshop was to provide the opportunity for the [validation of cross-cutting results of this evaluation](#), with a view to ensuring transparency and allowing participants to provide any final feedback, as well as their views about the feasibility and potential impact of the proposed recommendations. The presentation from the study team focused on the purpose of the workshop,

⁸ The principle of triangulation suggests that a hypothesis set out in the intervention logic(s) can only be confirmed if different types of stakeholders support it and different data sources provide relevant evidence. Thus, it aims to facilitate validation of data through cross-verification of findings from more than two sources. It tests the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments and increases the chance of control or, at the very least, identification of some of the potential factors influencing the results.

the objectives and scope of the study, study methodology, findings and recommendations, then followed by a session of questions and answers from the public. As part of the [questions and answers](#), the audience, primarily consisting of national administration representatives responsible for COI and CG, civil society organisations, judges and others, had the possibility to ask any questions or to address comments on the basis of what was presented by the study team. The study team facilitated the questions and answers session by engaging the audience with a Mentimeter⁹ live poll. The table below presents the questions addressed to the audience and the number of responses associated to them.

Table 2. Summary of the results to the live poll from the validation workshop – questions and answers session (n=43)

Question	Responses
To what extent do you agree with the findings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a great extent: 15 participants • To a certain extent: 23 participants • To a limited extent: 2 participants • Not at all: 1 participant • Do not know: 2 participants
Are any of the findings surprising to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 3 participants • No: 37 participants • Do not know: 2 participants
To what extent do you agree with the recommendations made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a great extent: 8 participants • To a certain extent: 30 participants • To a limited extent: 1 participant • Not at all: 2 participants • Do not know: 1 participant

Source: elaboration of the consortium (2023) based on the responses from the validation workshop

Overall, there was a large agreement with the findings and recommendations (first and third question). Only 3 participants out of 43 did not agree with either the findings or recommendations. 37 out of 43 participants to the live poll did not find the findings surprising. Topics that were most brought up in the session were regarding translations and the length of products.

⁹ <https://www.mentimeter.com/>

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents the evaluation findings for COI and CG products, in regard of the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value outlined in the Technical Specifications for this evaluation. Under each evaluation criteria, findings are presented for all individual evaluation questions (EQs). The evaluation findings below are based on triangulated results from exploratory interviews, desk research activities, the targeted survey, fieldwork with selected countries and horizontal interviews.

3.1 Effectiveness

The sub-sections below present the findings for the criterion of effectiveness, which assesses the use and dissemination of COI and CG products, as well as the effectiveness of CG in informing national guidance, the impact of COI on contributing to a common understanding, and the impact of CG products on convergence of practices and decisions. These correspond to the following EQs:

- EQ 1: To what extent are COI and CG products disseminated to relevant users?
- EQ 2: To what extent and how are COI and CG products used by the intended users?
- EQ 3: To what extent have CG documents informed corresponding national guidance documents when relevant?
- EQ 4: To what extent have COI reports contributed to a common understanding of the situations at stake?
- EQ 5: To what extent have CG documents contributed to a common assessment of the situation in main countries of origin and to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries?

The box below presents the key findings for the criterion of effectiveness, for both COI and CG products. These findings will be further discussed in the conclusions and recommendations chapter.

Box 1. Key findings for the criterion of effectiveness

Key findings for the effectiveness of COI:

- EUAA COI products are a key source of information that is frequently referred to and used, particularly by case officers.
- Some EUAA COI products are more widely used than others, e.g. Afghanistan products.
- Often the use of EUAA's COI products is to complement other sources, such as COI produced at national level or other sources produced by international organisations / non-governmental organisations.
- The two main reasons for using EUAA COI are: to obtain updated information on the security, human rights, and political situation in a country of origin and to gain background information on a country of origin.
- Ensuring that the information in EUAA produced COI is up to date is important for their use.
- Based on the survey, the main way that COI network members responded having become aware of EUAA COI is through a colleague / peer in their organisation or via the EUAA website.

- COI network members consider that the two main means that the EUAA is using to disseminate EUAA COI products (i.e. email communication and network meetings) are the most effective.
- National administrations primarily rely on email communication for dissemination of EUAA COI to their user base, but also on other methods and sometimes no dissemination activities are carried out.
- The role of EUAA COI in facilitating and supporting a more unified approach to decision-making processes in EU+ countries was identified by case officers.

Key findings for the effectiveness of CG:

- CG documents are well used, particularly by policy makers. The CG on Afghanistan is especially widely used.
- Users learn about the CG documents primarily through the EUAA website and via word of mouth (colleague/peer and via a manager/supervisor).
- Outreach activities are increasingly organised and diversified both in their form (with the launch events having increasing prominence) and target audiences (with judges reporting the usefulness of activities increasingly). Points of improvement are that a digital communication strategy targeting practitioners (such as lawyers, case officers, judges) is lacking and more training is requested.
- The majority of stakeholders involved in policy making and/or the development of guidance on specific countries of origin frequently refer to the EU-level CG documents, in particular in countries that develop national guidance.
- The results of the targeted survey suggest that EU-level CG documents inform national country guidance work to a great extent.
- The CG production process itself also has an impact on national guidance, as it leads to changes in national guidance, sometimes even before the EU-level CG is published.

3.1.1 Degree of use of COI & CG products (EQ 2)

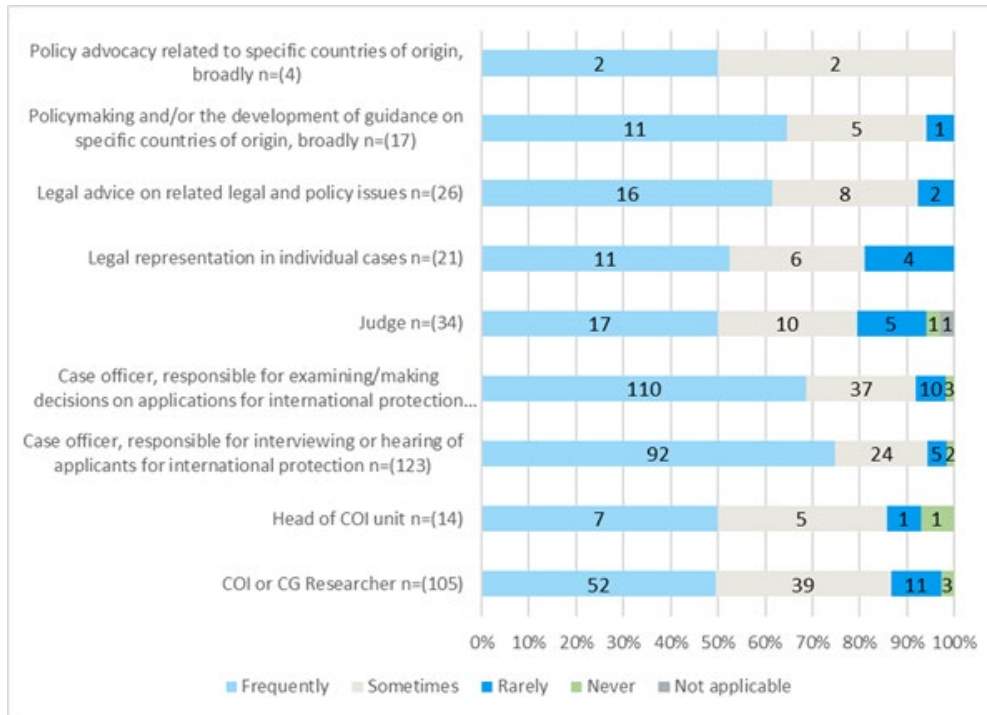
Country of origin information

EQ 2: To what extent and how are COI and CG products used by the intended users?

Despite the decreasing number of downloads of EUAA COI reports between 2018 and 2022, evidence from data collected as part of this study suggests that EUAA COI products are generally well used and referred to, particularly by case officers. Although the number of downloads of EUAA COI from the COI Portal seems to have decreased on the basis of the information on the most downloaded products presented in COI Strategic Network (StratNet) meetings,¹⁰ evidence from our study shows that EUAA COI reports are frequently cited. Previous studies found that EUAA COI reports were consistently the most frequently cited products within the EUAA across all EU+ countries in both 2019 and 2020, with 8,478 references in appeal body decisions. Moreover, sixty percent of respondents to the targeted survey out of a total of 323, mainly from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, and Sweden, frequently use EUAA's COI products in their work, but a minority from Austria, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, reported never referring to EUAA COI (Figure 52). The figure below describes this in more detail per targeted user.

¹⁰ The 2018 COI report on [Nigeria](#) (in Italian) witnessed a significant number of downloads (nearly 600 downloads) after a [large influx of refugees coming from Nigeria to Italy](#). Subsequent years witnessed a decrease in downloads, with the most downloaded COI report in 2022¹⁰ having registered only 149 downloads.

Figure 2. How frequently do you refer to the EUAA's COI documents in your work? (n=323)

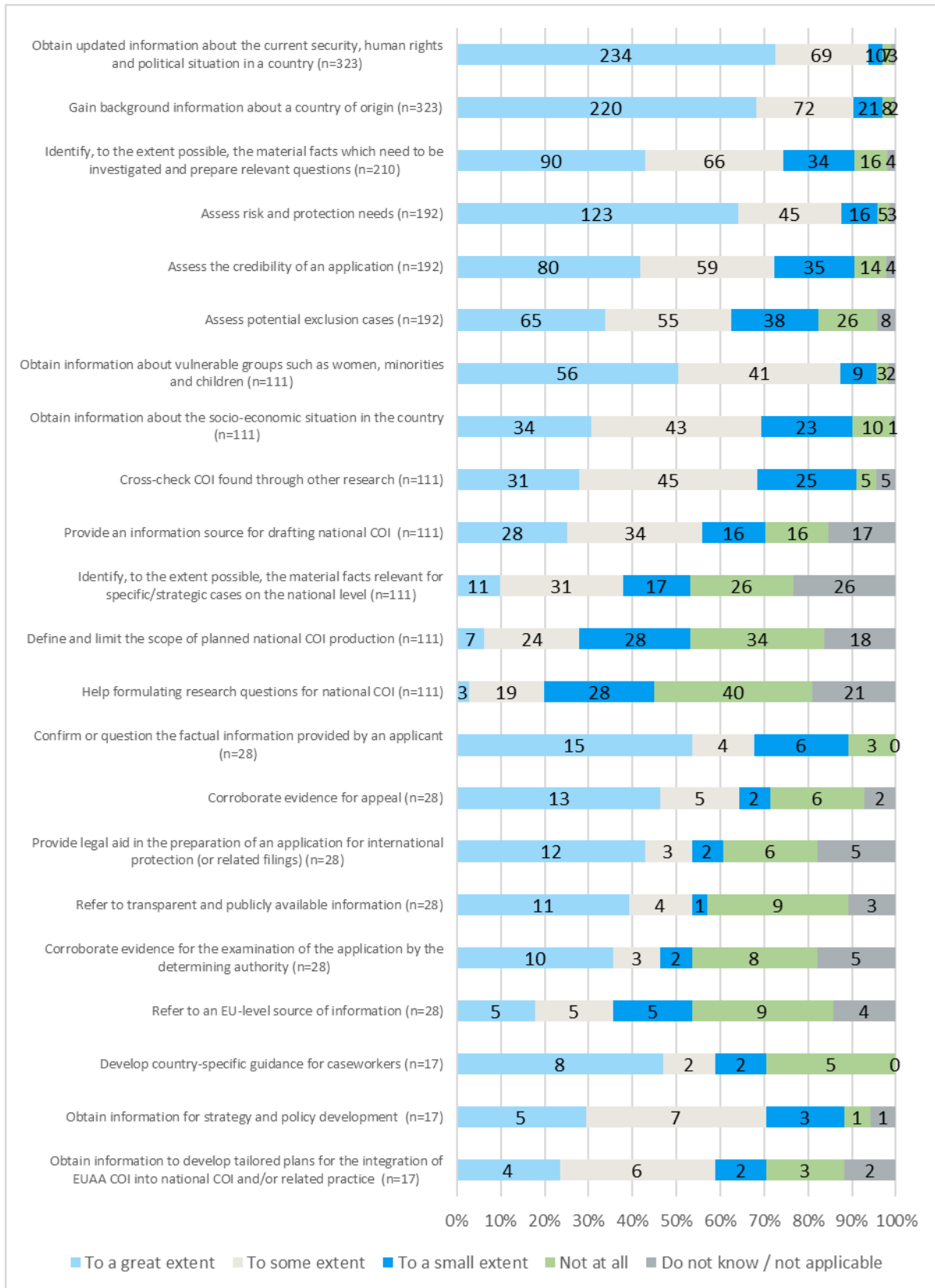


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

While generally used, some of the EUAA COI target users seem to attest to a more frequent use of these products in comparison to others. The majority of case officers reported a frequent use of EUAA’s COI in their work more than other types of users. 110 out of 160 case officers responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection said that they frequently use EUAA COI in their work, and 37 out of the 160 said that they sometimes use (Figure 53). Similarly, 92 out of 123 case officers responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection answered that they frequently use EUAA COI in their work and 24 said that they sometimes use it. More than 60% of policymakers working on the development of guidance on specific countries of origin have also reported a frequent use of EUAA COI, as well as people working in legal advice on related legal and policy issues. Views were more mixed from the side of COI researchers or CG experts, people working in policy advocacy related to specific countries or origin, legal representation in individual cases, judges, and heads of COI units.

The main reason EUAA COI is used across its users is to obtain updated information about the current security, human rights and political situation in a country, and to gain background information about a country of origin. The figure below presents these results from the targeted survey. These two main reasons were consistent across different target groups. The question was not addressed to policymakers and people working in policy advocacy.

Figure 3. To what extent have you used the EUAA's COI documents for the following?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The key reason of 'obtaining updated information about the current security, human rights and political situation in a country' was the case of the majority of all types of users (i.e. people in the legal presentation in individual cases, legal advice on related legal and policy issues, case officers, judges, head of COI units, and COI or CG researchers). Similarly, the reason of gaining background information about a country of origin had similar results when looking per type of user, while views were more split in the case of other options presented for this question.

[Use across different EUAA COI products varies, with the most widely recognised and used being the 'Afghanistan \(2018-2022\)- Security situation' report.](#) Evidence from the targeted survey points to over 70% of respondents across various groups indicating familiarity with Afghanistan-related products (Figure 60 in Annex 1). Moreover, the previously mentioned report was highly referenced in national appeal body decisions, particularly for Afghanistan cases, and approximately 80% of respondents (excluding COI network members) in targeted survey groups knew or had used this report, with an additional 20% being aware of it, but not having used it (Table 62). These reports also experienced substantial downloads throughout the years analysed for this evaluation (2018-2022). The annually updated COI report on Afghanistan's security situation was notably valued for offering current background information, and case officers attested to an extensive use of Afghanistan-related products. Following the Afghanistan report in terms of levels of usage are the 'Iraq - Targeting Individuals' and 'Pakistan - Security situation' reports. Conversely, the 'Russian Federation - Situation of Chechens' report is among the least known or used, with no updates since 2018.

[Providing up-to-date information is important to ensure the effectiveness of EUAA COI,](#) as underscored by EUAA COI target users, particularly when dealing with abrupt power shifts in Afghanistan and swiftly changing circumstances in regions like Iraq. During fieldwork interviews, many case officers, judges, and COI or CG researchers/experts consistently stressed the significance of up-to-date information within EUAA COI. Some targeted survey respondents expressed that they would like to see even more frequent updates in countries where the situation is dynamic and rapidly changes frequently occur.

[EUAA COI most often complements national COI and information from international / non-governmental sources.](#) As part of the fieldwork, case officers from Poland, Greece, Germany, and Belgium reported most often using EUAA COI to fill gaps from their national COI, thus often using EUAA COI as a complementary source. According to these case officers, national COI is preferred when available because it is more tailored to their needs and the countries with more asylum applicants, as confirmed by survey results. Conversely, in some countries without their own COI production, like Latvia and Portugal, EUAA COI plays a more substantial role in supporting case officers due to its comprehensiveness and up-to-date content. In countries where COI is produced at national level¹¹, based on the targeted survey, 30% of the 250 respondents who answered the question said that they *frequently* use EUAA COI instead of their national COI and 38% said that they *sometimes* use EUAA COI instead of their national COI. Most of these respondents detailed their answer and said that they use EUAA COI when their country lacks national COI on a specific topic or country. One case officer explained that some case officers in the specific country rely on EUAA COI for Nigeria because the country's COI unit does not produce it since these products already exist at EU level.

[EUAA COI is also, to some extent, employed in the creation of national COI reports.](#) According to a Bulgarian judge, COI documents are employed as necessary and prove invaluable in crafting national COI reports and providing training, particularly for countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and

¹¹ Based on data collected for this study, the following countries produce their own COI: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland. This was self-reported by participants to the survey and fieldwork.

other nations with substantial asylum seeker numbers. When asked about their use of EUAA's COI products in developing their own country's COI, respondents from Italy, Greece, Belgium, and Sweden reported frequent use.

The findings did not yield a definitive conclusion regarding the relationship between publishing CG and its influence on the use of EUAA COI. Nevertheless, the findings suggest a potential increase in the use of EUAA COI even when CG is published. As explained by a COI or CG researcher/expert from Sweden, COI usage has risen due to references made in CG documents. Additionally, a case officer from Belgium mentioned using COI even if the information is covered in CG.

Some barriers to using EUAA COI were highlighted. [A key challenge that was mentioned as part of fieldwork and horizontal interviews is that having EUAA COI available only in English can act as a barrier to its use.](#) Discussions with a Bulgarian judge and a case officer in Poland revealed that the exclusive availability of these products in English hinders their use for some of their users who do not know the language. One COI or CG researcher / expert mentioned that they prefer to have EUAA COI reports to be translated in Greek, especially for case officers because they need to include parts of it into the decision. In addition, in certain countries, preference is given to COI produced by nations with shared or similar languages; for instance, case officers in Sweden sometimes use Norwegian COI, Finnish users occasionally rely on Swedish COI, and German case officers mentioned using COI from Austria and other German speaking COI.

Country guidance

EQ 2: To what extent and how are COI and CG products used by the intended users?

[The results of the data collected for this study show that CG documents are well used.](#) According to the results of the targeted survey, when asked how often they refer to EU-level CG documents in their work, 51.6% of 213 respondents to this question indicated that they refer to CG products in their work, while 28.2% indicated that they 'sometimes' refer to them (Figure 98). When asked which sources survey respondents mostly consult to find guidance on the assessment of the situation in main countries of origin and on the qualification of related applications for international protection, more than 60% of the 275 respondents highlight CG, either online on the EUAA website or in a downloaded version, as a frequently used source of information (Figure 36). Nearly 30% of those respondents report using CG very frequently as a source. This was supported by the fieldwork and horizontal interviews conducted, as the majority of respondents confirmed the use of CG products.

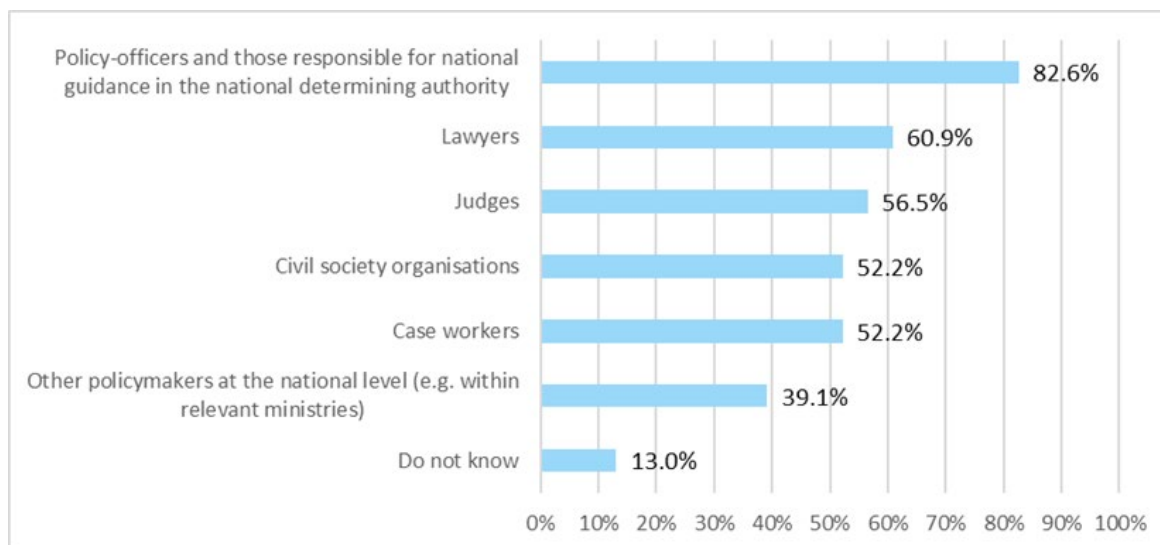
Several respondents mentioned that they do use EUAA CG documents, but that it is one of the sources they use in their work, and not the only one. Figure 36, which shows the sources most frequently consulted by survey respondents to find guidance on the situation in main countries of origin and on the qualification of related applications, also identifies Refworld and internet searches as frequently used sources for this information. Furthermore, some countries, such as France or Germany, tend to use the EUAA CG documents upstream by incorporating them into their national guidelines on which case officers will base their work, making it difficult to get a clear picture of the extent of their use in these countries.

According to 24 policy makers and advocacy officers surveyed, CG documents are predominantly used by policy makers.¹² These survey results point to policy officers responsible for national guidance as the primary direct users of CG documents (82.6% of the 23 respondents), followed by lawyers (60.9%) and judges (56.5%). Furthermore, according to the survey results, only half of the respondents identified case officers as direct users of the CG documents. However, it is

¹² The question was only shown to survey respondents who identified as policy makers or advocacy officers, resulting in a total number of 24 survey respondents for this particular question.

important to note that case officers also use CG in an indirect manner in countries where CG are integrated in or used to develop national guidance. See Evaluations Questions 3 and 15 for further information.

Figure 4. Which stakeholders are users of the EU-level CG documents in your national context? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=23)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Previous studies on references to EUAA products in jurisprudence of national appeal bodies showed significant variance in the references to EUAA products in publicly available appeal body decisions across the EU+ countries over the period 2019-2020, with appeal bodies in some EU+ countries making much more frequent references to EUAA products than others. This conclusion also applied specifically for CG. For instance, CGs were most frequently referred to in appeal body decisions in Austria (in 26% of all publicly available appeal body decisions with references to EUAA products) and Belgium (7.5%) while references to CG in publicly available decisions in the other EU+ countries were scarce or no references were identified.¹³

Of all EUAA products analysed in previous studies, CG products were the second most used EUAA product in that timeframe in the appeal body decisions (20% of all EUAA product references), with the CG on Afghanistan as the most frequently referred to. This was both the case for lower appeal bodies, where 24% of the references to EUAA products concerned CG, and for supreme court decisions, where 30% of the references to EUAA products concerned CG. Previous studies identified a total number of 3,890 appeal body decisions containing references to CG in 2019 and 2020.

- **Afghanistan:** The appeal body decisions most often referred to the CGs on Afghanistan. A total of 21% of the decisions referred to the CG on Afghanistan of June 2018 and another 17% to the June 2019 updated CG. The vast majority of references (80%) to the June 2018 CG on Afghanistan were made in Austria. A further 15% of references were made in the decisions of the Belgian national appeal bodies. Similarly, more than 73% of the references to the June 2019 CG on Afghanistan were made in Austria, and 20% in Belgium. For both CGs on

¹³ In four EU+ countries, no decisions referring to CGs were identified, i.e., Luxembourg, Sweden, Cyprus and Norway (although in Sweden, not all appeal decisions are made publicly available).

Afghanistan, a significant number of references could also be found in the decisions of the German appeal bodies in the different federal entities.¹⁴

- **Iraq:** A total number of 244 references (or 2%) of the total number of references to EU-level CGs in the decisions of the national appeal bodies in 2019 and 2020 related to the CG on Iraq of June 2019. The majority of the references (60%) to the CG on Iraq were made in Belgium. 23% of the references are made in the decisions of the Austrian national appeal bodies.¹⁵
- **Nigeria:** In the decisions of 10 EU+ countries, references were made to the CG on Nigeria of February 2019. 36 of the total number of references to EU-level CGs in the decisions of the national appeal bodies in 2019 and 2020 related to the CG on Nigeria. The majority of the references (36%) to the CG on Nigeria were made in Ireland, Italy and Germany respectively.¹⁶

The use of CG documents by judges is however not limited to their references in jurisprudence. As mentioned above, 56% of 23 survey respondents identify judges as primary users of CG. Moreover, a number of judges interviewed in the framework of this study emphasised that they frequently use CG as part of their research but do not always quote them in their decisions. It is important to note though that other interviewees noted that the use of CG by judges is not systematic and depends on the personal preferences of the judge, even more so for the judiciary because of judicial independence.

The CG on Afghanistan is particularly used across target groups. The survey results show that the CG on Afghanistan is the most widely known/used (from 2020 onwards, with a particular increase in 2022 –Figure 38). Several respondents confirmed the higher use of the Afghanistan CG, explaining it with the sudden takeover of power in Afghanistan and the lack of knowledge about the deep and rapid changes that had taken place, and the fact that the EUAA was among the first to publish documents relating to Afghanistan. A number of interviewees used this as an illustration of the need for regularly updated documents, as the need for reliable information is all the more important when a situation is changing so rapidly.

CG documents are primarily used for three reasons based on the analysis of the survey results:

- To get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the risk of persecution of particular groups (with 73% of 163 respondents indicating this as the purpose of CG use 'to a great extent');
- To get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the main actors of persecution or serious harm in the country (with 71% of 163 respondents indicating this as the purpose of using the CG 'to a great extent');
- To gain background information on recent developments in the applicant's country of origin (with 66% of the 163 respondents indicating this as the purpose of using the CG 'to a great extent').

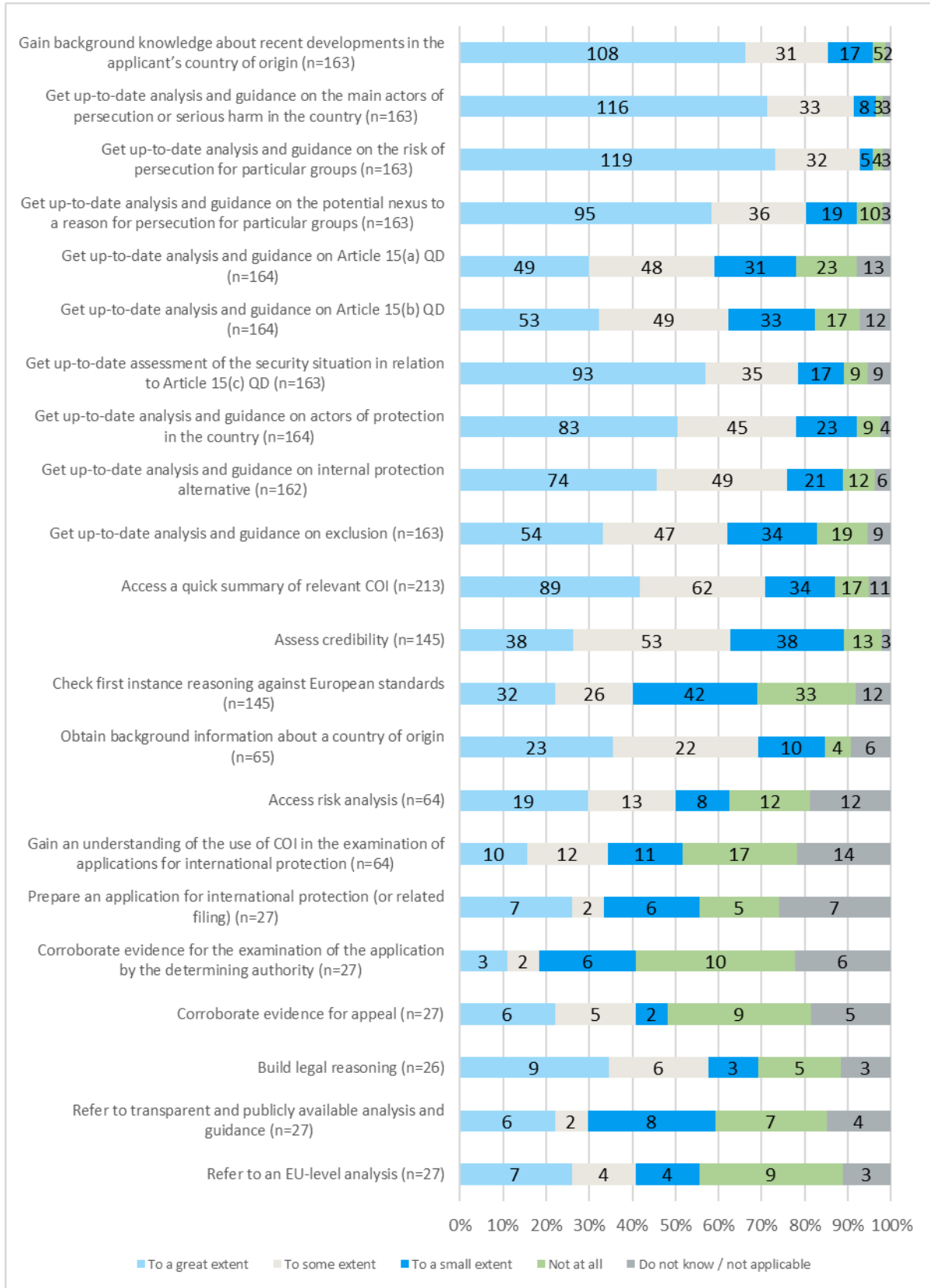
The figure below provides further details on the reasons for using CG documents.

¹⁴ [Pilot study on references to products of the European Union Agency for Asylum in national jurisprudence.](#)

¹⁵ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁶ [Ibid.](#)

Figure 5. Use of CG documents by purpose



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Further reasons for the use of CG documents and the degree of this use were identified by stakeholders interviewed as part of the horizontal and fieldwork interviews. They confirmed the strong link between the level of usage of the CG documents and national caseload/main nationalities of asylum seekers in each particular countries. Moreover, interviewees highlighted that the structure of CG documents, their easy access, their recognised authority as a well-researched and complete document and the possibility to search for specific questions in it all contribute to their use by stakeholders. Some case officers also mentioned that they use CG documents in preparation for interviews with applicants for international protection in order to have general background information on the country and specific information about the group they belong to, and after the interview to assist with the writing of the decision on the application.

National decision-makers are not systematically instructed to use the CG documents, according to policy makers and advocacy officers surveyed in the context of this evaluation.

Only around 18% of policy officers and survey respondents responsible for national guidance (23 respondents) indicated that practitioners, especially case officers, are instructed to directly use the CG documents in their countries (Figure 107). 30% responded that the CG documents are communicated to them, but they are not specifically instructed on their use. This finding should be read together with Evaluation Questions 3 and 15 which indicate that EUAA guidance is, however, to a large extent reflected in national guidance. As shown in Figure 91, no policy officer responded to the survey that they do not use EUAA guidance when developing national guidance.

Policy officers and case officers confirmed, during interviews, that the integration of EUAA guidance in national guidance is an instruction of their hierarchy. Case officers therefore may indirectly use the CG and not necessarily be aware of it, nor be instructed to use the EUAA CG.

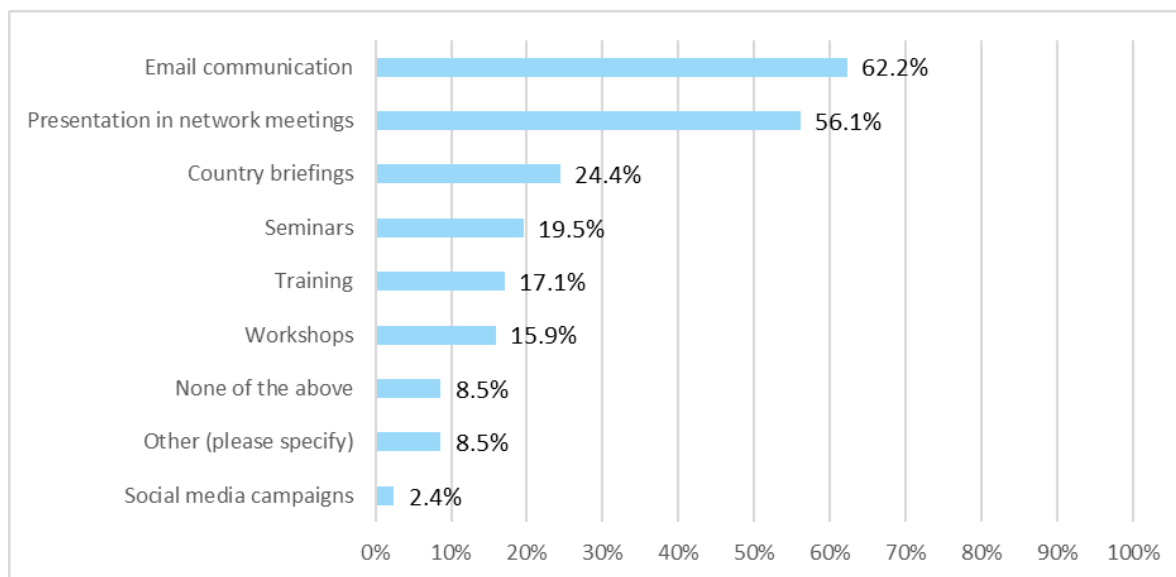
3.1.2 Effectiveness of dissemination activities (EQ 1)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 1: To what extent are COI and CG products disseminated to relevant users?

The majority of respondents from various target users became aware of EUAA COI either through a colleague or peer within their organisation or via the EUAA website. As options to the question, specific activities that the EUAA carries out to disseminate EUAA COI products to national administrations were provided: workshops, seminars, country briefings, training, email communication, presentation in network meetings. The figure below presents the results.

Figure 6. What type of efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI products to your national administrations and staff? (n=82)

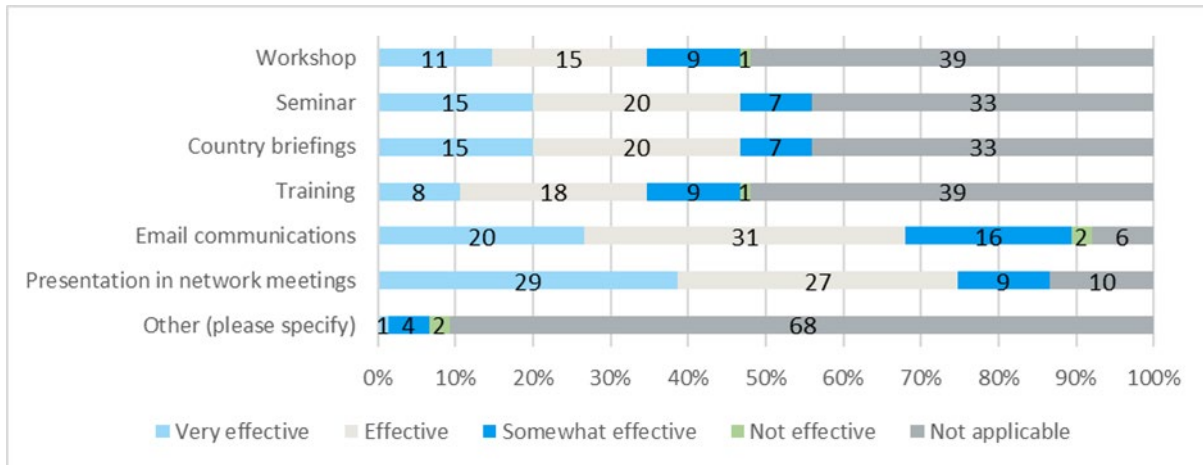


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

44.3% out of the 82 respondents to the survey mentioned learning about EUAA's COI through a colleague or peer within their organisation, while 41% discovered it through the EUAA website. Notably, at a closer look, for respondents engaged in policy advocacy related to specific countries of origin, the EUAA COI portal played a more significant role in their awareness of products. EUAA social media channels and peers outside their organisations appeared to be less prominent sources of awareness for target users (Figure 41). As part of the fieldwork and horizontal interviews, several respondents reported using *ecoi.net* to find out about new EUAA COI.

COI network members consider the two main means employed by the EUAA to disseminate COI products to be the most effective. According to respondents to the targeted survey, email communication and presentations in network meetings are the two main ways of that the Agency disseminates EUAA COI products to national administrations and staff (Figure 43), followed by country briefings and seminars. This aligns with what respondents believed to be the most effective ways carried out by the EUAA to distribute and promote EUAA COI products: email and presentations in network meetings.

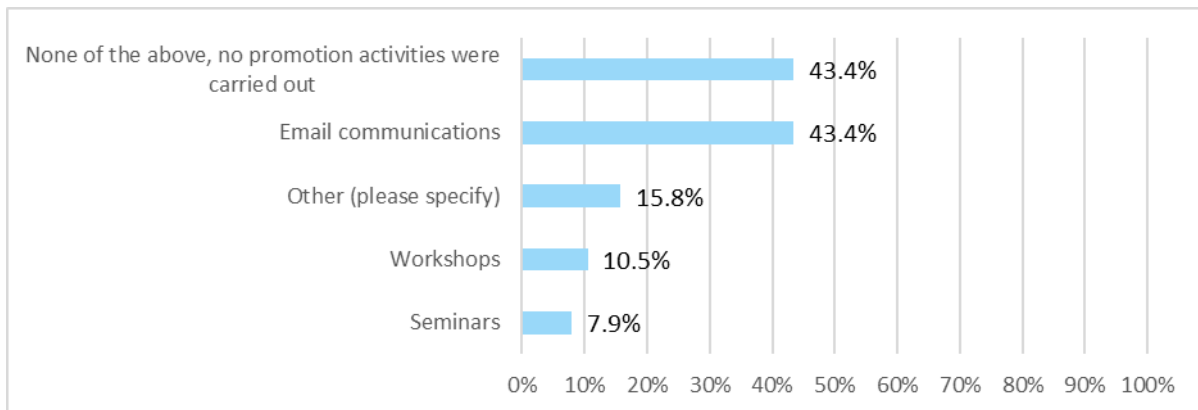
Figure 7. Please rate the effectiveness of the specific activities carried out by the EUAA to distribute and promote COI products (n=75)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

An equal number of respondents answered that their organisation uses email communication to disseminate EUAA produced COI within their administration, while an equal number of respondents answered that they use none of the options provided in the question or that 'no dissemination activities were carried out'. Results are presented in the Figure below.

Figure 8. Did you or others in your organisation implement any activities to promote the use of EUAA COI within your administration? (n=76)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

While email communication seems to be widely used, for survey respondents who indicated that none of the provided options applied to them regarding the dissemination of EUAA COI, some of these responses could stem from alternative approaches being employed by national administrations to share EUAA COI within their respective user base. Variations in dissemination methods at national level exist, influenced by factors like unit size and internal tools such as repositories or portals, which have been detailed in the follow-up open-ended question. For example, in France, EUAA COI reports are integrated into the national database, and staff within the asylum authority can subscribe to alerts for new reports. French COI experts also incorporate EUAA reports into their presentations and training for case officers focusing on relevant countries. In Portugal, informal methods like word of mouth are effective for information dissemination. Romania maintains an internal portal for colleagues to access relevant materials, occasionally

printing materials for reference. There are respondents who reported that no dissemination activities are carried out by their administration.

While the dissemination efforts of the EUAA are generally well-regarded by its target users, feedback from several stakeholders indicates that there is room for improvement. Two case officers suggested that the website of the EUAA should be improved as it is sometimes difficult to find specific reports. One judge from Greece and a representative from a non-governmental organisation from Latvia reported that there should be more awareness raising about the differences between COI and CG and how these should be used.

Country guidance

EQ 1: To what extent are COI and CG products disseminated to relevant users?

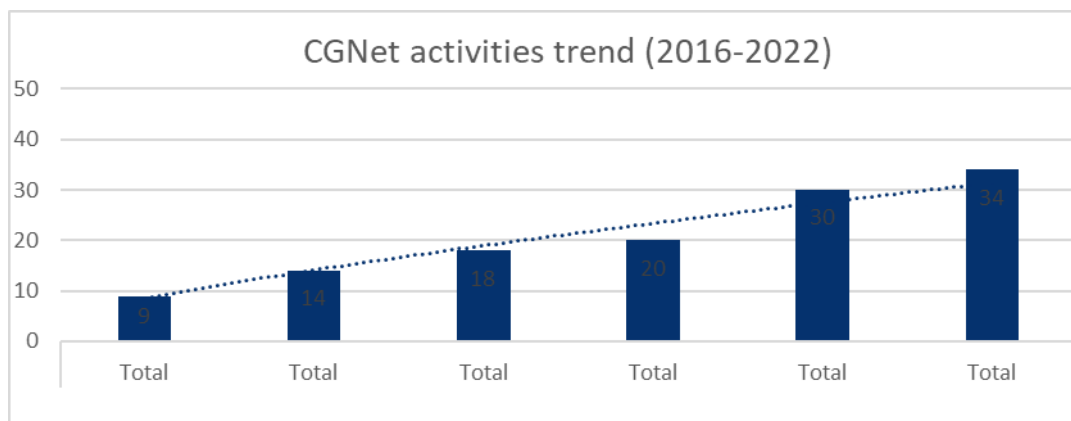
The main channels of dissemination of CG documents are the EUAA website, by a colleague/peer and by a manager/supervisor. The responses to the survey, based on the answers of 214 respondents, show that the main ways in which respondents heard about the EU-level CG products were from the EUAA website (40.7%), from a colleague/peer (38.8%) and from a manager or supervisor (30.8%) (Table 64 in Annex 1). Respondents could choose up to 3 possible answers to this question. The other main dissemination platforms mentioned were the EUAA COI products (29%), training (27.1%) or own research (17.8%). This therefore shows a different result from the results of the EUAA 2021 public survey, where respondents indicated that the most effective dissemination channel was through colleagues (41%), events (40%), research on the EUAA website (37%), social media (11%) or training and others.¹⁷ It is interesting to note that there are differences in the way stakeholders find out about CG products in different countries, as for instance, colleagues and peers play an important role in Finland and Romania (around 80% of the nine and ten respondents for Finland and Romania respectively indicated finding out about EUAA's CG products through them), and a much less important role in countries such as Greece and Italy (where only 33% and 23% of the 43 and 22 respondents indicated the same) (Figure 85). The different dissemination channels identified in the survey and in the desk research were also raised in the horizontal and fieldwork interviews, for example, several stakeholders mentioned that information was passed on by colleagues or superiors (especially for smaller administrations), or several mentioned that they found out about the products through self-research in the course of their own work. Two stakeholders also indicated that they share information with their case officers after their involvement in a production process.

The trends in the dissemination activities mirror that of the production activities. Since the beginning of the CG pilot process in 2016-2017, the number of surveys, meetings, and written consultations associated with the CG processes has steadily increased. There were nine CGNet activities held in 2016-2017, 14 in 2018, 18 in 2019, and 20 in 2020. In 2021, the CGNet was engaged in 30 activities.¹⁸ In 2022, the CGNet was engaged in 34 activities, marking +12% compared to 2021 and around +70% compared to 2020¹⁹ as shown in the table below.

¹⁷ EUAA, Country Guidance Network reports.

¹⁸ EUAA, Country Guidance Network reports.

¹⁹ EUAA, Country Guidance Network reports.

Figure 9. CGNet engagement statistics

Source: elaboration by the contractor (2023) based on EUAA Monitoring database 2016-2022

Several outreach activities were organised between 2018 and 2022 targeting mainly EU+ national asylum authorities' staff and/or EUAA operations or relevant networks.²⁰

- The launching events for new CG publications were introduced in the autumn of 2021. Since then, six events have been organised with an average of 51 participants per event and 305 participants in total.²¹ CGNet welcomed the launching events, and some EU+ suggested to have more in depth or focused outreach [Greece, Sweden]²². It is, however, notable that there are a number of Member States that, according to 2020-2022 data, are still not members²³ or actively participate in the CGNet.
- Nine webinars were organised in 2020-2022, targeting mainly EU+ case officers and members of courts and tribunals (in English except for one for which interpretation service was offered).²⁴
- The CG team took part in 19 events in 2021-July 2022.²⁵
- In the reference period, EUAA published ten news items on the website to advertise the new publications. Social media posts on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter have also been disseminated to promote the recent publications, translations of the 2021 guidance notes and the public survey.²⁶

During the fieldwork, interviewees voiced several suggestions on how to increase the dissemination of the products, including conducting campaigns to publicise them, for instance, through Bar Associations or the national website on immigration law. One interviewee flagged the need for an online webinar where questions could be asked from the EUAA staff preparing the documents. At the same time, several stakeholders considered that an increased level of investment in dissemination would not be useful as the CG products are already known and used in their contexts.

An area for improvement is the **lack of communication strategy specific to the CG products and targeted directly at practitioners**. They are an important target group for the use of EUAA products, however, the current external EUAA Communication Strategy largely misses them. Although emails

²⁰ Outreach activities data provided by the EUAA.

²¹ Outreach activities data provided by the EUAA.

²² EUAA, Country Guidance Network Strategic meeting report.

²³ Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain.

²⁴ [Outreach activities data provided by the EUAA...](#)

²⁵ EUAA, Country Guidance Network Strategic meeting report.

²⁶ Outreach activities data provided by the EUAA.

are sent to the relevant networks when a document is published and contact points are asked to disseminate the information, none of the interviewees in the horizontal or fieldwork interviews mentioned that they would have learnt about the products via channels such as social media. However, each publication of a new CG document is accompanied by a 'news' item on the EUAA website, in addition to social media coverage, and (non-public) launch events are also increasingly used. The recent efforts of the Agency to disseminate through launch events and via colleagues in operations are steps toward a more tailored strategy, which need to be expanded on. Practitioners interviewed suggested that one particular dissemination tool could consist of more specific newsletters, focused on the information needs of the end users. Current newsletters by the EUAA are more general and focused on the Agency's activities rather than on content-related information of direct relevance for the work of practitioners.

Although the level of information on EU-level CG documents is good, more training was mentioned as an area for further improvement. The majority of stakeholders interviewed felt that they were sufficiently informed about the products of the EUAA. Several judges interviewed mentioned that the EU-level CG documents are quite well known and that a large majority of people working with immigration law or handling cases are aware of them. A Latvian lawyer mentioned that although they are sufficiently informed, their level of information could be improved through training (e.g., via a webinar) as well as through better visibility of EUAA documents (e.g., via Google search). Several interviewed stakeholders also specifically requested more training (e.g., judges from Belgium, Greece or Latvia). One stakeholder felt that training was the most effective way of informing officials of their national refugee authority. A Bulgarian judge stated that training is particularly important, its impact on practice and decisions is visible, but judges from the regional courts should also receive it, not only in Sofia, as the stakeholder highlighted that all training invitations usually go to the judges of the Supreme Administrative Court, but do not reach the lower administrative courts. Finally, one judge from Belgium noted that language limitations (only English) exclude or discourage a significant number of judges who do not feel sufficiently comfortable in English from participating in the training activities.

3.1.3 Effectiveness of CG products in informing national guidance (EQ 3)

Country guidance

EQ 3: To what extent have CG documents informed corresponding national guidance documents when relevant?

While there is no publicly available data on the content of national country guidance documents, nor on the exact source of a particular content, the results of the targeted survey conducted for this evaluation show that 90% of the 23 respondents working on policymaking and/or the development of guidance on specific countries of origin refer to the EU-level CG documents to some extent or even frequently (Figure 99 in Annex 1). Taking this survey result together with the one showing that the primary users of the CG document are policy officers and those responsible for national guidance at the national determining authority (82.6% of the 23 respondents), as well as policymakers at the national level, for instance within ministries (39% of the 23 respondents) (Figure 106 in Annex 1), suggests that EU-level CG documents informing national country guidance work to a great extent.

In addition, nearly 50% of the 19 policymakers responding to this survey question indicated that the EU-level CG is fully or largely reflected in their national guidance. In response to the question on the extent to which EU-level CG products are taken into account in the development and updating of national guidance, 42% indicated that EU-level CG analysis and guidance are largely reflected in their national guidance, with some differences in assessment; 26% replied that it depends on the

country of origin; 16% replied that EU-level CG analysis and guidance is fully reflected in national guidance; and 16% replied that they consult EU-level CG but that their national guidance is not necessarily reviewed (Figure 91). More specifically, **over 50% of 213 survey respondents indicated that they frequently refer to EU-level CG in their work, and another nearly 30% indicated that they refer to them sometimes** (Figure 98).

The use of CG products varies between EU+ countries, depending on whether they refer directly to EU-level documents in their national decisions or integrate them into their national guidance. Some countries advise case officers to directly refer to CG document in their national decisions (Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden), while other countries integrate the CG in their national policy, which leads case officers to indirectly rely on CG in their decision (Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands, Norway).²⁷ For example, several Belgian stakeholders interviewed during the horizontal and fieldwork interviews explained that EU-level CG is translated into national policy and that this explains their involvement in the production process, as the better the EU-level CG is, the better their own material becomes. An example of this is the EUAA's analysis on Afghanistan after the Taliban seized power, which showed that the Hazaras were at risk and led to Belgian national policy being adapted accordingly. Other examples of changes in national guidance due to EU-level CG documents were mentioned in the fieldwork interviews, such as Greek stakeholders raising that until the issuance of the first CG on Afghanistan, Kabul was not considered as a safe alternative for internal relocation, and after the publication of the EU-level CG, the approach changed to it being considered an international protection alternative. Similarly, the EUAA guidance on Afghan women and girls was immediately and publicly adopted by some EU+ countries, such as Sweden. Most of the stakeholders of EU+ countries interviewed did not mention any change that would have been considered necessary with the entry into force of the provision of Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation, as CG documents were, reportedly, already being taken into account.

In cases where there is no formal national guidance but there is a distinct national practice, differences vis-à-vis EU-level CG were reported. In this regard, in Finland the national practice differs from the EUAA CG on Syria regarding the assessment of the level of indiscriminate violence under the Article 15(c) QD. One interviewed case officer from Latvia did not notice any changes in national policies or practices resulting from the EU-level CG documents, as their national policy is, reportedly, formed on the basis of legislation and case law as well as the specific national context.

The CG production process itself has also had an impact on the extent to which EUAA CG influences national guidance. An EUAA official interviewed in the explanatory interviews explained that the systematic and structured methodology of the EUAA CG led to more transparent and structured reasoning. However, as some countries do not follow such a structured approach, this may fit less with their national guidance. Nevertheless, this approach to reasoning is important for the EUAA as the Agency aims not only to facilitate convergence but also to formulate well-reasoned opinions and examinations to that end.

The impact of the production process itself was flagged during the exploratory interviews, where, for instance, an EUAA official raised that while EU+ countries often adapt their national guidance once a CG document is released, they may also already change their national guidance before the publication of the EU-level CG document. The interviewee gave the example of Sweden, which adjusted its national guidance before the CG was published, to reflect that women and girls from Afghanistan would be generally granted asylum,²⁸ although Sweden was difficult to convince during the CG process. The interviewee also mentioned Germany, which had often adapted its own

²⁷ EUAA, Country Guidance Network Strategic meeting, Meeting report.

²⁸ The Swedish Migration Agency assesses that the situation for women in Afghanistan has become so difficult that all asylum-seeking women and girls should be granted refugee status, which entails a three-year residence permit, <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Nyhetsarkiv/2022-12-07-Women-from-Afghanistan-to-be-granted-asylum-in-Sweden.html>

guidance in the process as a result of its involvement in the development of the CG. In this context, stakeholders interviewed in other EU+ countries with an approach similar to Sweden's explained that they argue strongly in the CG production process precisely because they intend to implement the guidance. The same interviewee expressed frustration that other EU+ countries may be quick to support views within the CG process - knowing that they will not actually have to deal with implementation.

3.1.4 Effectiveness of COI & CG products in contributing to a common understanding and to convergence (EQ 4, EQ5)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 4: To what extent have COI reports contributed to a common understanding of the situations at stake?

The role of EUAA COI in facilitating and supporting a more unified approach to decision-making processes in EU+ countries was confirmed by case officers. Findings in this regard are from case officers interviewed as part of fieldwork in the ten selected countries. Case officers from Bulgaria, Latvia, Belgium, Sweden, and Poland attested to the support provided by EUAA COI in establishing a unified process from the initial stages of the asylum procedure. Additionally, a case officer from Latvia emphasised that the products offered by EUAA COI contribute to fostering a shared understanding of decision-making processes. For COI or CG researchers / experts, EUAA COI contributes to a more harmonised decision-making process across EU+ countries, according to fieldwork in Bulgaria, Greece, and Belgium. Moreover, a Belgian COI or CG researcher / expert pointed out that, in the past, one of the reasons to produce COI was the large differences in decision-making between EU+ countries. The interviewee highlighted that the EUAA has contributed to a more unified approach in decision-making at EU level. In the case of two judges from Greece and Bulgaria, they reported that EUAA COI were often used to support positions and that these products contribute to a more equitable assessment grounded in factual information.

EUAA COI has sometimes helped resolve differences in views and a few such examples were identified by case officers. A case officer from Poland reported that in their office, whenever there are different views on an issue, case officers consult the EUAA COI documents. This was referred to as having been the case for applications of asylum seekers from Somalia, for example. In Greece, according to a case officer, COI reports typically contribute to discussions among case officers on rule interpretation, but disputes requiring COI intervention are infrequent.

It was not possible to gather robust evidence on the role of EUAA COI in supporting convergence as many survey respondents were not able to provide a response. 37% out of 74 respondents considered that the question was not applicable to them (Figure 77), only 16% stated that EUAA COI contributes to convergence, and 26% suggested that it occasionally has an impact. Similarly, when asked about the possibility of achieving convergence in the absence of EUAA COI, 40.5% out of the 74 respondents said that they do not know, while the majority indicated that such convergence would be minimal or entirely unattainable (Figure 78).

Country guidance

EQ 5: To what extent have CG documents contributed to a common assessment of the situation in main countries of origin and to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries?

Although no measurable evidence of convergence is available, the majority of the users of the EU-level CG documents consider that those have contributed to convergence, although to varying

degrees. According to the results of the targeted survey carried out for this study, 36% of the 217 survey respondents answering this question believe that EU-level CG documents contribute to convergence to some extent, 16% to a great extent and 8% to a small extent. 39% of these 217 survey respondents did not know and less than 1% considered that the CG documents did not contribute at all to convergence in the assessment of international protection needs in EU+ countries (Figure 118).

At the same time, stakeholder interviews have shown that the degree of convergence is not a reflection of the quality of the EU-level guidance document. As one stakeholder put it: “the fact that convergence is not yet reached cannot be attributed to a design fault in the documents”. There are a variety of factors that influence convergence that cannot be directly influenced by the EU-level guidance, such as (perceived or actual) differences in national jurisprudence and the national legal system, history and the country’s overall stance on migration or approach to EU integration. More specifically, some survey respondents pointed to the persisting difference in recognition rates by country of origin (e.g., for Syria and Afghanistan) to show that the use of national guidance still prevails over EU-level guidance - noting, for instance, that “[i]n 2021, the recognition quota of people from Afghanistan fluctuated between 9% in Bulgaria and 100% in Spain and Portugal”. A judge from Belgium noted that “guidance cannot harmonize the examination of credibility, specific to each judge, and there are procedural differences which hinder completely convergence, but for the appreciation of risk profiles or security conditions in countries of origin, I think that this unifies the substantive analysis of the files.” A judge from Germany thinks that convergence can only be achieved with a higher European court – a view that was echoed during the horizontal interviews, where one of the interviewees pointed to the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union underlining that “the other part of the convergence will need to come from the top”. Finally, it emerged that practice and habits, which are difficult to change, might further hinder convergence.

Significant changes in convergence have yet to be observed and are difficult to assess without a monitoring mechanism. In this context, an EUAA official explained that they had not seen significant changes in convergence over the last five years, apart from when the Taliban took over, when the change in the country of origin was sudden and the EUAA managed to issue an update of the CG on Afghanistan. The interviewee hoped that perhaps the new mandate of the EUAA, as set out in the EUAA Regulation,²⁹ to promote CG documents as the benchmark for achieving European convergence on asylum and helping to consolidate new concepts, might lead to a clearer impact, but that this would be difficult to assess until the EUAA had a monitoring mechanism in place. The addition of Article 11(3) to the Regulation, which provides that Member States “shall take into account the common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection” was mentioned several times during the interviews, without being perceived as significant, as most fieldwork interviewees reported that they already take into account the EU-level guidance.

Although the majority of stakeholders interviewed agreed that convergence would be beneficial, not many were optimistic that it would be achieved. Several stakeholders interviewed during the fieldwork and horizontal interviews seemed to have an ambivalent position, as they would be in favour of moving towards convergence and would describe it in beneficial terms, but also mentioned that they would be satisfied as long as the EUAA products did not contradict their national policies or their own practices. A Finnish interviewee saw the EU-level CG as a step towards harmonisation of European asylum policy and supported it, but at the same time stressed that countries have specific circumstances, such as Finland, which has a long border with Russia, and that this makes European harmonisation difficult. A couple of interviewees from Belgium and Germany were of the opinion that convergence and the CEAS would not be achievable as long as the CG documents at

²⁹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2303 on the European Union Agency for Asylum.](#)

EU level are not binding and as long as the EUAA documents are only an additional source of information and not the decisive source of assessment.

While this aspect was not part of the evaluation, a few interviewees during the exploratory and horizontal interviews mentioned that [an obstacle to convergence seems to lie at the political level](#). One interviewee argued that the CEAS could not be achieved by simply referring to the EUAA products; which per se would not lead to a common treatment of asylum cases, as that would involve political decisions. Another stakeholder interviewed as part of the horizontal interviews stated that a real help to convergence would come from the involvement of more senior/political national stakeholders in the EUAA's production process. This would help them to gain a better understanding of the involvement of their own national officials in the EU-level production processes and how agreements are reached throughout these processes. The interviewee felt that real change could only happen if there was buy-in at the highest political level.

3.2 Efficiency

The sub-sections below present the findings for the criterion of efficiency. This criterion looks at the efficiency of the production and dissemination process for COI and CG, efficiency gains for national administrations, as well as at the extent to which COI and CG networks enabled to avoid duplication of work and to create synergies between EU+ countries. The following EQs are concerned:

- EQ 6: To what extent have the resources invested by EUAA in COI and CG production been proportionate to the results, in terms of actual use of the products by the primary target groups?
- EQ 7: Has the EUAA invested sufficient time and resources in ensuring wide dissemination of COI and CG products?
- EQ 8: To what extent have COI and CG products enabled national administrations, in particular those producing their own national COI and CG, to save time and resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing (for COI) and policymaking and providing guidance to national case officers (for CG)? Have the time and resources invested by Member States in these processes been cost-effective to them?
- EQ 9: To what extent have COI and CG networks enabled to avoid duplication of work and to create synergies between Member States?

In the box below we present key findings for the criterion of efficiency, for both COI and CG products.

Box 2. Key findings for the criterion of efficiency

Evaluation findings for the efficiency of COI products:

- While the number of human resources invested in COI production has not fluctuated greatly over 2018-2022, the financial resources invested have seen a large change. The financial resources invested in drafting of EUAA COI increased between 2018 and 2022, while the costs for the review and translation of these products decreased.
- There is no available yearly data on the actual use of EUAA COI that could be compared with the annual changes in financial and human resources invested in production.
- Despite the prevalent concern and demand for translations, in the years 2021 and 2022, there was a notable decline in translation costs compared to expenditures in previous years.

- While the activities that the EUAA is performing in disseminating EUAA COI are perceived to be effective by COI network members, there is no data about the costs related to these activities.
- EUAA COI products have proven to be time-saving tools for case officers in their daily tasks in some countries who produce their own COI but also in the ones in which there is no nationally produced COI.
- While for case officers EUAA COI products have proven to be time-saving tools for their daily tasks, for COI and CG researchers / experts, there are mixed views on the time and resource savings provided by having EUAA COI, stemming from them being involved in the drafting EUAA COI.
- EUAA COI networks were perceived as efficient in terms of promoting the sharing of views, creating synergies across countries, and avoiding the duplication of work.

Evaluation findings for the efficiency of CG products:

- Since 2018, the EU-level CG budget has seen a nearly tenfold increase, with the number of involved staff also going from one to eight. Given the stretched capacities of the CG team, the Agency's ambitious plan to add one CG country each year until reaching ten – while also keeping the current CG products up-to-date - may put dedicated human and financial resources to the test.
- Throughout the evaluation period, the outreach activities significantly increased with 17 workshops, webinars and presentations delivered in 2022 compared to the 15 in 2021, 7 in 2020 and only two in 2018. Their target audience also diversified.
- Nearly half of all policymakers surveyed reported that the use of EU-level CG products has, to some extent, saved their administration time and/or financial resources in terms of policymaking and/or decision making, while 28% indicated it translated in an increase in time and resources needed.
- Most CGNet members who responded to the survey report that their workload increased due to their participation. More specifically, EU+ countries that also produce their own CG document significant time investment to check alignment or to address the lack thereof, while the ones not producing national guidance document more efficiency gains.
- The survey showed evidence that within countries not producing national guidance, the most common reason for not doing so it the existence of EUAA country guidance.

3.2.1 Efficiency of the production and dissemination process (EQ 6, EQ 7)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 6: To what extent have the resources invested by EUAA in COI and CG production been proportionate to the results, in terms of actual use of the products by the primary target groups?

While the number of human resources invested in COI production has not fluctuated greatly over 2018-2022, the financial resources invested have seen a large change. Based on information provided by the EUAA in relation to the available data on costs of EUAA COI production and dissemination (see table below), the financial resources invested in drafting of EUAA COI increased between 2018 and 2022, while the costs for the review and translation of these products decreased. According to the data, all these activities have been largely outsourced to other actors. Outsourced

drafting in 2018 incurred a cost of EUR 4,300 for the EUAA, and this expense has seen a significant annual increase. Costs of reviewing EUAA COI fluctuated also, with an increase until 2021 and decrease in 2022, and translation costs decreased considerably in 2021 and 2022.

Table 3. Overview of available data on the resources invested by the EUAA in production and dissemination process of EUAA COI products and the outputs in terms of EUAA COI products and meetings

Year	Human resources	Type of activity					No. of COI products	No. of meetings held
		Drafting	Review	Translation	Publication and print	Total		
2018	10	€ 4,300	€ 27,360	€ 66,274.61	€ 738.95	€ 98,673.56	23 ³⁰	22 ³¹
2019	15	n/a	€ 29,546	€ 266,841.5	n/a	€ 296,387.5	35 ³²	11 ³³
2020	14	€ 25,350	€ 40,380	€ 257,665.75	€ 8,480	€ 331,875.75	22 ³⁴	11 ³⁵
2021	17	€ 232,773	€ 41,540	€ 4,266	n/a	€ 278,579	2,836 (total number of pages) ³⁶	17 ³⁷
2022	15	€ 215,750	€ 4,715	€ 25,164	n/a	€ 245,629	2,995 (total number of pages) ³⁸	30 ³⁹
Total	71	€ 478,173	€ 143,541	€ 620,211.86	€ 9218.95	€ 1,251,144.81		

Source: Elaboration by consortium (2023) based on data provided by the EUAA and the Consolidated Annual Activity Reports of the EUAA

There is no available yearly data on the actual use of EUAA COI that could be compared with the annual changes in financial and human resources invested in production. Based on the evidence collected for this study, the degree of use of the products could not be identified for each year, as data collection primarily focussed on an overall degree of use of EUAA COI products for the entire evaluated period (2018-2022). In terms of resources invested in COI production, they seem to have fluctuated across the years since 2018 until 2022.

With a prevalent demand for translations pointed out by stakeholders in this study, in the years 2021 and 2022, there has been a notable decline in translation costs compared to expenditures in previous years. Based on the data provided by the EUAA, translation costs are very different across the years and they do not fluctuate in tandem with the annual number of produced COI products.

³⁰ The expected target was up to 14 COI products.

³¹ The target was 15. The actual outputs were 20 thematic meetings on countries of origin, and 2 EUAA COI StratNet meetings.

³² The expected target was 18 COI products.

³³ The expected target was 10 COI products.

³⁴ The expected target was 20 COI products.

³⁵ Number of COI networks managed, which is understood to mean at least 1 network event organised; management of communication, questionnaires/surveys, information exchange, and COI queries in the network. Expected target was 10.

³⁶ Total number of pages of COI reports, query responses and other products produced/updated (including introductions, bibliographies, etc). Target was 2,000.

³⁷ Target was 20. Number of COI-related workshops, meetings and conferences organised, including minimum 1 specific event for each COI network.

³⁸ Above target.

³⁹ Target was 25.

In 2018 and 2019, translation costs seemed to increase in tandem with the total number of EUAA COI products (i.e. higher costs, higher number of products), but this did not hold true in 2020, when the translations seemed to cost more than in 2019 and there were fewer products. In 2021 and 2022, the number of COI products was measured differently than in previous years⁴⁰ (i.e. total number of reports vs. total number of pages). At the same time, in those two years the translation costs declined considerably. Throughout the course of this study, numerous stakeholders pointed to the need to translate COI materials into national languages. As presented in Section 3.1.1 under the findings for the criterion of effectiveness, for some case officers and judges, having EUAA COI products only available in English may constitute a challenge when there is no translation provided at the level of EUAA or at national level.

The timeliness of the production process was discussed as part of recommendations to improve the efficiency of EUAA's involvement in COI production. While it is true that outsourced drafting costs rose between 2018 and 2022, several interviewees identified prolonged timelines for the production of EUAA COI as an issue. Two COI or CG researchers/experts from Finland and one from Belgium mentioned that the production of EUAA COI products as drafters or reviewers takes time. One head of a COI unit reported that although case officers are happy with the reports and are using them, the length of the production process affects its efficiency. Another head of a COI unit suggested that the changes/developments covered by COI occur rapidly, and the production process needs to be better adapted to that.

EQ 7: Has the EUAA invested sufficient time and resources in ensuring wide dissemination of COI and CG products?

While the activities that EUAA is performing in disseminating EUAA COI are perceived to be effective by COI network members, there is no data about the costs incurred by these activities. As presented in Section 3.1.2 when describing the effectiveness of the dissemination activities carried out by the EUAA and by national administrations, members of the COI network considered that the two main means that the EUAA is employing to disseminate EUAA COI products (i.e. through email communication and network meetings) are also the most effective.

Dissemination through emails is likely not as costly as other activities used to disseminate EUAA COI, such as meetings (in-person and online), workshops and others. The second most effective dissemination activity, according to the survey results, are presentations in network meetings. Presentations on newly released COI in network meetings are one segment of the overall meeting. The data provided by the Agency does not contain specific information about the costs incurred by these presentations in network. According to the Consolidated Annual Activity reports of the Agency, the number of COI meetings increased between 2018 and 2022 (see Table 3), with a total of 30 meetings in 2022. More information is needed to understand how EUAA COI products are disseminated as part of these meetings and the costs entailed.

Country guidance

EQ 6: To what extent have the resources invested by EUAA in COI and CG production been proportionate to the results, in terms of actual use of the products by the primary target groups?

The EUAA's Consolidated Annual Activity Reports present the total human and financial resources invested in CG, as presented in the following table for the evaluation period of 2018-2022.

⁴⁰ Key performance indicators in the Consolidated Annual Activity Reports.

Table 4. Human and financial resources invested by the EUAA in all CG information, analysis and knowledge development

Year	Total number of human resources	Financial resources
2018 <i>*Country Guidance for Convergence</i>	1	€ 58,027.28
2019 <i>*Country Guidance for Convergence</i>	3	€ 110,833
2020	5	€ 14,473.12
2021	6	€ 435,500.00
2022	8	€ 558,212.86

Source: elaborated by the contractor (2023) based on EUAA's Consolidated Annual Activity Reports (2018-2022)

Since the elaboration of the first CG document (following the pilot in 2016-2017), the EUAA has steadily increased its financial and human resources invested in the development of CG products and related activities, with the exception of 2020 that saw a steep drop in financial resources. Over the past five years, the CG budget has seen a near tenfold increase, with the number of involved staff also going from one to eight and with the creation of the CG sector at the EUAA in 2020. It is, nevertheless, noted that the human and financial resources invested in the CG process and products during that same period are less than the half of those invested in the COI products. While the number of publications and activities explain such differences, the sufficiency of the available human and financial resources for CG may likely be tested by [the EUAA's ambitious plan to add one CG country each year until reaching 10 – while also keeping the current CG products up-to-date](#). It is further noted that the budgetary allocations in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report do not reflect actual spending. For instance, significant part of the CG budget indicated in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report was, reportedly, not spent on the development of CG products and related activities, strictly speaking, but rather covered initiatives that benefitted the unit more broadly.

An interviewed EUAA official explained that, despite the increase in human resources, [the production process is quite intensive for the CG team and there is usually no time for anything else when a CG process is ongoing](#). While EU+ countries participate to different extent in the EU-level CG production process, stakeholders interviewed in the context of this study estimated that they usually get around one day to fill in a survey, three days for written consultation, three days for meetings, and two days for written confirmation at the end, therefore about ten days in total. As estimated by the EUAA official, the time commitment for the experts participating in the respective drafting team is approximately 25 days, including in addition to the meetings at CGNet level, one week of drafting, three days for revisions, additional meetings and studying the COI as part of the drafting. The exploratory interviews supported this estimation with, for instance, France reporting that the national administration invests around 20 working days per draft on average. This is inclusive of the drafting tasks, meetings and travels when relevant. While the time investment is significant, interviewees also reported that they find the investment to be worthwhile.

The interviewed EUAA official explained that over time they have managed to reduce the process by a few weeks, but as EU+ countries need to consult internally and get clearance, it is necessary to give them enough time to read and then for the EUAA to compile and analyse. This stakeholder believed that this is as far as the CG process can go in terms of efficiency as long as EU+ countries want to stay involved. This stakeholder also flagged that it might be overall more efficient for EU+ countries to leave more control to the EUAA which could then take a bigger part in the drafting process – as happened with the CG on Somalia.

EQ 7: Has the EUAA invested sufficient time and resources in ensuring wide dissemination of COI and CG products?

During the evaluation period, **CG dissemination activities increased sharply**, with 17 workshops, webinars and presentations delivered in 2022 compared to the 15 in 2021, 7 in 2020 and only two in 2018. Notably, **the target group of these activities diversified greatly and no longer focused only on case officers but increasingly on the judiciary, NCPs, policy makers, academics, mixed groups and the general public**. Fieldwork interviews repeatedly echoed how useful the activities, in particular the ones targeting judges, have been. CG launch events have also gained increasing prominence, not only because the Agency have consistently organised events for new products, for Nigeria, Afghanistan and Syria in 2021, and for Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq in 2022, but also because the satisfaction rate among participants is very high, above 90% on average. The awareness raising potential of the launch events is evidenced also by the increasing number of registered participants, which in case of the 2022 CG on Afghanistan reached 130.

The increase in the **EUAA digital communication** is in line with the increase in the number of CG products, although still extremely limited, with ten news items and social media posts combined for the entire CG sector in 2022. The limited engagement rates also suggest that no corresponding social media marketing campaigns are in place which is a **notable efficiency loss for the dissemination of the products**.

An EUAA official interviewed at the exploratory phase of this study explained that judges, in particular, have shown great interest in the outreach activities that the EUAA has increasingly developed for them, including via the Courts and Tribunals network and through conferences and meetings organised for judges. Reportedly, these dissemination and outreach efforts have created a shift from a certain reluctance to be too explicit about sharing guidance (in order not to be seen as interfering with the independence of judges) to having good contact with judges and them now asking for this information. In light of this, the invested resources seem to have been worthwhile as judges are one of the most important target groups for the CG products. This was well confirmed by the fieldwork and horizontal interviews with several judges specifically praising the workshops/trainings.⁴¹ For instance, a judge from Austria explained that "workshops are the most effective, because you can discuss with your colleagues from different EU+ countries, how they do group exercises, very helpful." Another judge from Bulgaria underlined that "trainings are particularly important, because there are new, young judges in the courts, who speak more languages, and at the same time judges are busy and if there is no specific dedicated time in training or workshop, they will not spend time by themselves" She, nevertheless, stressed the need to reach lower administrative courts that usually do not receive invitations to trainings directly. She confirmed the impact of such trainings: "Judges, who have been on such trainings, it is very visible in their practice and decisions."

In addition to targeted dissemination efforts, production related activities also play an important role in maintaining the engagement level of the participating countries and with that increases the chances of awareness raising via word of mouth. This is of relevance as word of mouth continues to be the most prominent way of learning about the CG products, with 70% of the 214 survey respondents doing so from a colleague/peer or a manager/supervisor.

⁴¹ Although the EUAA terminology uses 'training' only in relation to C2 training, it should be noted that the stakeholders interviewed did not make this distinction and were referring to 'trainings' broadly, likely meaning workshops and webinars.

3.2.2 Efficiency gains for national administrations (EQ 8, EQ 9)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 8 To what extent have COI and CG products enabled national administrations, in particular those producing their own national and CG, to save time and resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing (for COI) and policymaking and providing guidance to national case officers (for CG)?

EU+ countries produce their own COI to a large extent, with at least 18 out of 30 EU+ countries producing their national COI, while 12 do not. The table below presents which countries produce their national COI based largely on responses to the targeted survey, as well as information from fieldwork and desk research.

Table 5. EU+ countries who produce national COI

National COI production	Country
Yes	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland
No	Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Montenegro

Source: elaboration of the consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey with COI and CG users, desk research, and fieldwork in selected countries

The extent to which these countries produce their own COI however also varies depending on the degree to which they use EUAA COI to produce their own COI. As results from the targeted survey suggest, respondents from Italy, Greece, Czechia, Belgium, and Sweden mentioned that they frequently use EUAA's COI documents to develop their own COI documents (Figure 62).

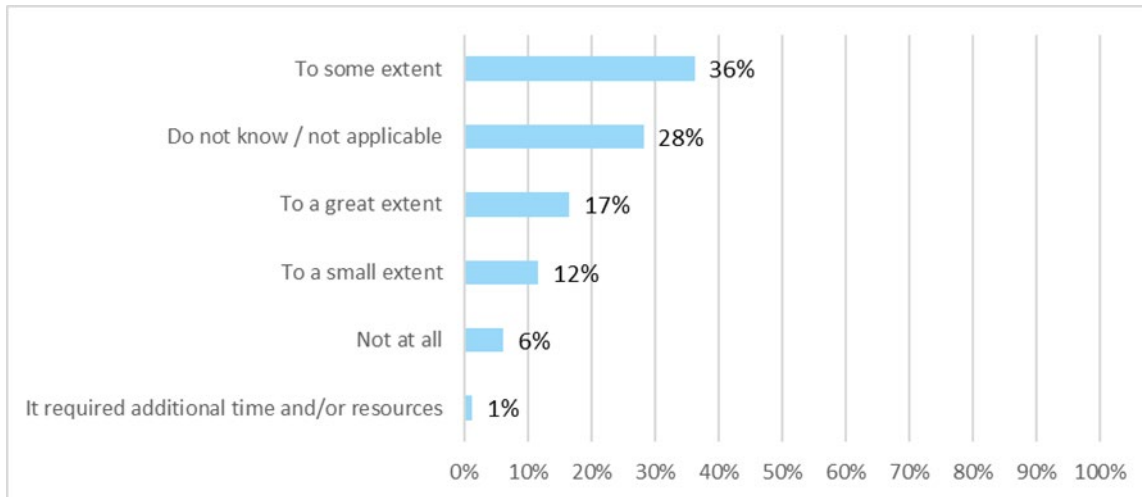
EUAA COI products have proven to be time-saving tools for case officers in their daily tasks in some countries who produce their own COI but also in the ones in which there is no nationally produced COI. The fieldwork and interviews conducted point to efficiency gains associated with EUAA COI from several countries. In particular, case officers from countries such as Sweden, Latvia, Bulgaria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, and Austria attested to the time savings achieved through the use of EUAA COI. Except in the case of Latvia, the other countries have nationally-produced COI. These users noted that these resources expedite the interview preparation process and the groundwork involved in research and analysis. Despite the general agreement, a Belgian case officer highlighted that while EUAA's COI undoubtedly streamlines their work and saves valuable time, there can be instances where the abundance of information requires careful navigation to extract the pertinent details.

For COI and CG researchers / experts, EUAA COI save time in terms of time spent gathering information, but it is time consuming for the users involved in their production. On the one hand, EUAA COI helps provide information that would take more time to gather in some cases, as suggested by two COI or CG researchers / experts from Italy and Bulgaria. At the same time, one COI or CG researcher / expert from Sweden reported that, while taking part in the drafting and writing process at the EUAA level, there is no decrease in workload.

EUAA COI products are perceived to provide time savings for policymakers and COI network members in terms of both information collection and sharing within their administrations. A total of 65% of 163 respondents reported time savings, though to varying degrees - 36% indicated that the EUAA COI products contributed to savings to a certain degree, 17% noted that they did so

significantly and 12% indicated that it provided time and resource savings to a small extent (see figure below). Only 6% indicated that EUAA COI products did not save their administration time and resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing.

Figure 10. To what extent has the use of the EUAA COI products saved your administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing? (n=163)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

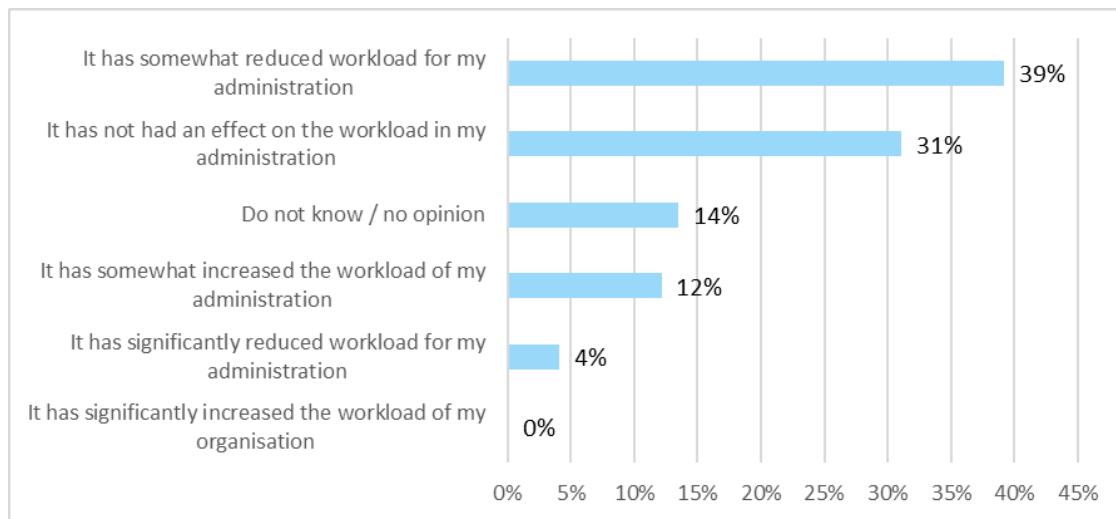
When detailing their answers (Figure 74), the majority of respondents suggested that EUAA COI products provide centralised information which in turn contributes to time savings in relation to information-collection. However, in the context of information-sharing, one respondent stated that reports in some countries need to be translated in order to be disseminated to users, which in turn leads to more time spent instead of time savings.

EQ 9: To what extent have COI and CG networks enabled to avoid duplication of work and to create synergies between Member States?

Horizontal interviews pointed to an overall satisfaction with the COI networks and their role in avoiding duplication of work. Interviewed heads of COI units from four countries reported that networks on COI are beneficial and that they helped with duplication, as well as improved synergies between EU+ countries.

Based on the targeted survey, a good proportion of COI network members stated that EUAA COI networks somewhat reduced the workload in their administration. This is presented in the figure below, where a limited amount of respondents (4% of the 74) indicated that EUAA networks on COI have been beneficial in relation to workload.

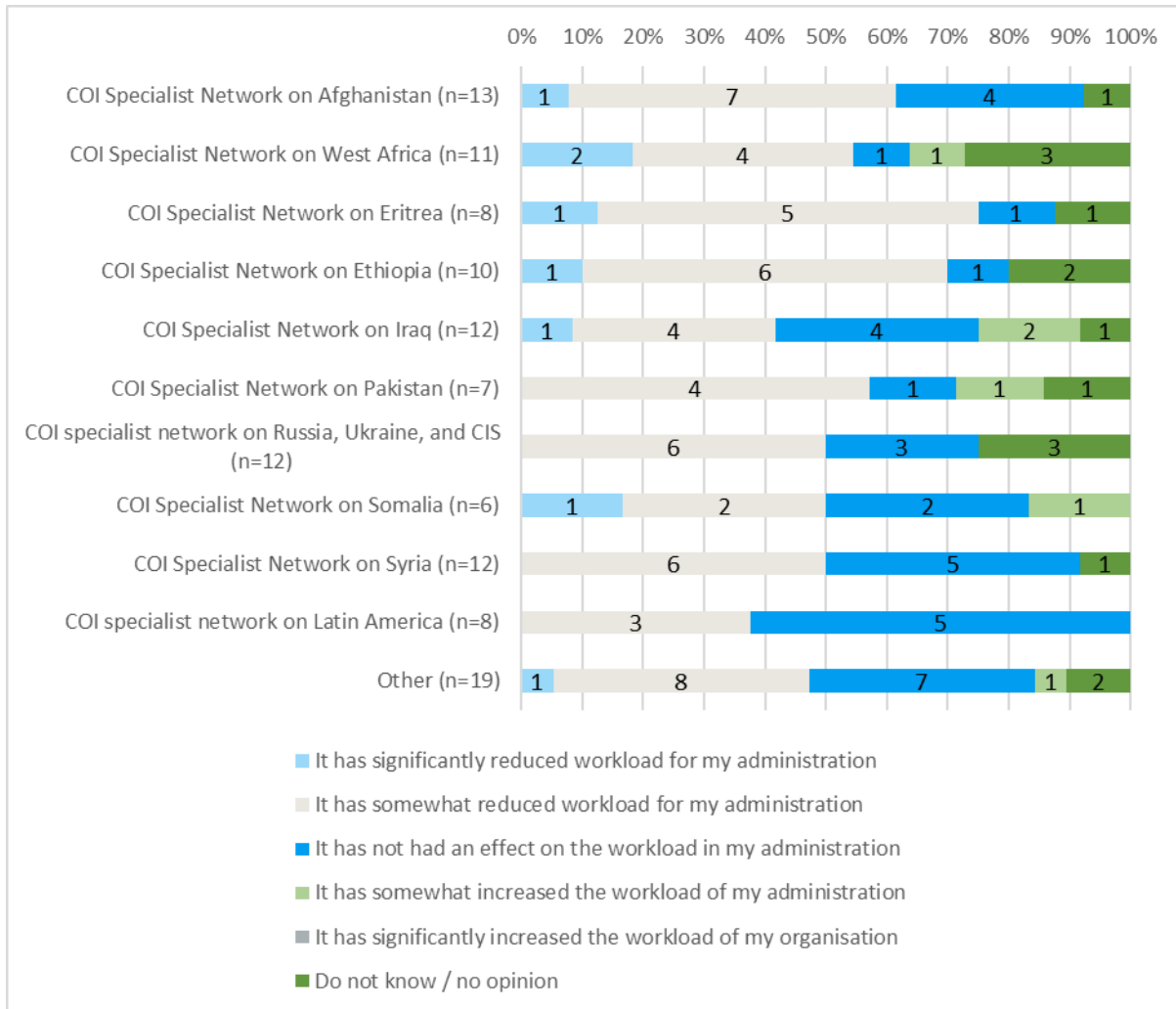
Figure 11. To what extent do you think your participation in EUAA networks on COI has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own COI)? (n=74)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The figure below presents a breakdown of respondents' views based on the network they are part of.

Figure 12. To what extent do you think your participation in EUAA networks on COI has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own COI)? Crossed with: Please specify which COI Specialist Network(s) you are a member of.



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Country guidance

EQ 8 To what extent have COI and CG products enabled national administrations, in particular those producing their own national and CG, to save time and resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing (for COI) and policymaking and providing guidance to national case officers (for CG)?

EU+ countries largely produce their own national CG, as shown in the table below: 16 out of 29 EU+ countries produce their own documents and 13 do not. The information presented in the table below shows the countries that produce their own CG documents and is based on responses to the targeted survey, as well as information from fieldwork and desk research.

Table 6: EU+ countries who produce national CG

National CG production	Country
Yes	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland
No	Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Montenegro

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey⁴²

The survey results show that nearly half of all 21 policymakers surveyed reported that the use of EU-level CG products had saved their administration time and/or financial resources “to some extent”, while 28% indicated that it required additional time and resources (Figure 117). This mixed result was also reflected during the interviews.

On the one hand, **for EU+ countries that have their own national guidance, the EU-level CG does not save costs for the national administrations that participate in the production process; on the contrary, it generates additional costs to ensure synergies between the national and EUAA approaches.** This finding already surfaced during the exploratory interviews. For instance, in the French context, it was indicated that the national administration invests around 20 working days per CG draft on average. This includes the drafting tasks, with all the meetings and travels when relevant. Most of the time is invested when there are differences between the national and EUAA approaches. In those instances, they have to organise meetings to understand the reasons for the difference and the way to reconcile them. In these cases, they also have to evaluate whether there is a risk in terms of litigation in front of national court. While there are not many issues on which the French approach substantially differs, additional considerations and meetings are still required, for instance, when the national approach provides for a higher level of protection than what is foreseen in the EU-level CG. This finding was further corroborated by the fieldwork interviews, where it was reported from several EU+ countries, notably Sweden and the Netherlands, that CG products translate into an increase in workload even if they are not part of the drafting team. On the other hand, there can be evidence of the positive impact of EU-level CG on national guidance in terms of efficiency, as Sweden for instance noted in the 2022 CGNet Strategic meeting that its production process of national guidance had sped up thanks to the EU-level CG on Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria which are all directly referenced in the rather short Swedish national guidance documents.⁴³

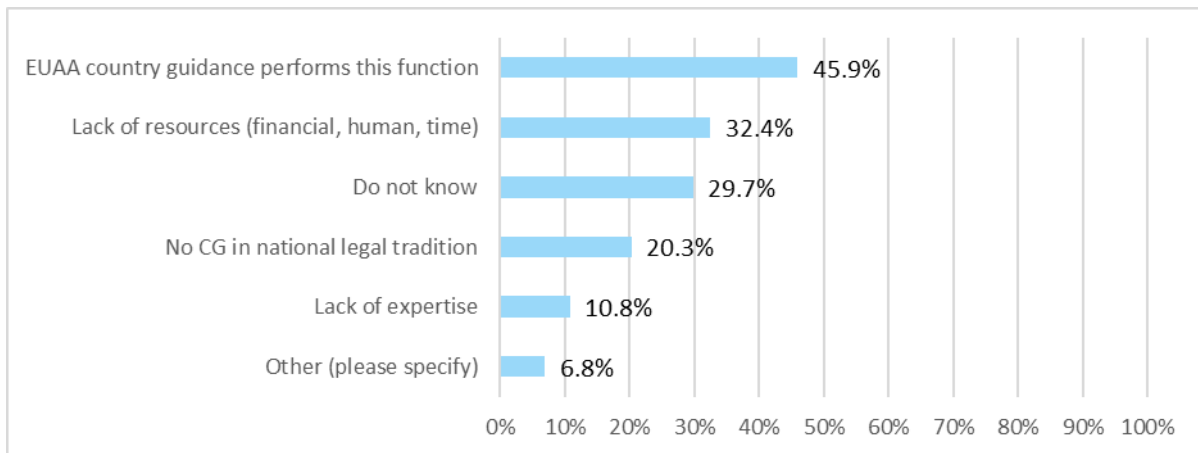
At the same time, **for those EU+ countries that do not produce their national guidance, even though the costs of participation in the process is still significant, the efficiency gains are high.** As explained by a Greek stakeholder during the exploratory interviews, it is because the national administration would simply not be able to produce guidance to the same quality as the EUAA. The efficiency gain in terms of the reduction of the time needed to research relevant information was also reported during the fieldwork interviews, for instance, from Latvia where the EU-level CG saved the national administration resources in terms of policymaking and decision making. This finding is also supported by the survey results that show that for those countries that do not produce national guidance, the most common reason for not doing so is the existence of EU-level country guidance

⁴² The number of EU+ countries considered in this table is 29, as information could not be found for two countries. The results of the targeted survey did not give a clear result for Spain, as 50% of the respondents answered that they had a national CG production and 50% that they did not. Information on whether or not Liechtenstein has a national CG production could not be found through the results of the targeted survey, the desk research or the results of the interviews.

⁴³ [EUAA, Country Guidance Network Strategic meeting report.](#)

– with over 45% of the 74 respondents citing this as a reason. This suggests a significant cost and time saving for the EU+ countries that embraced the EU-level CG performing this function.

Figure 13. What are the reasons for not producing national guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=74)



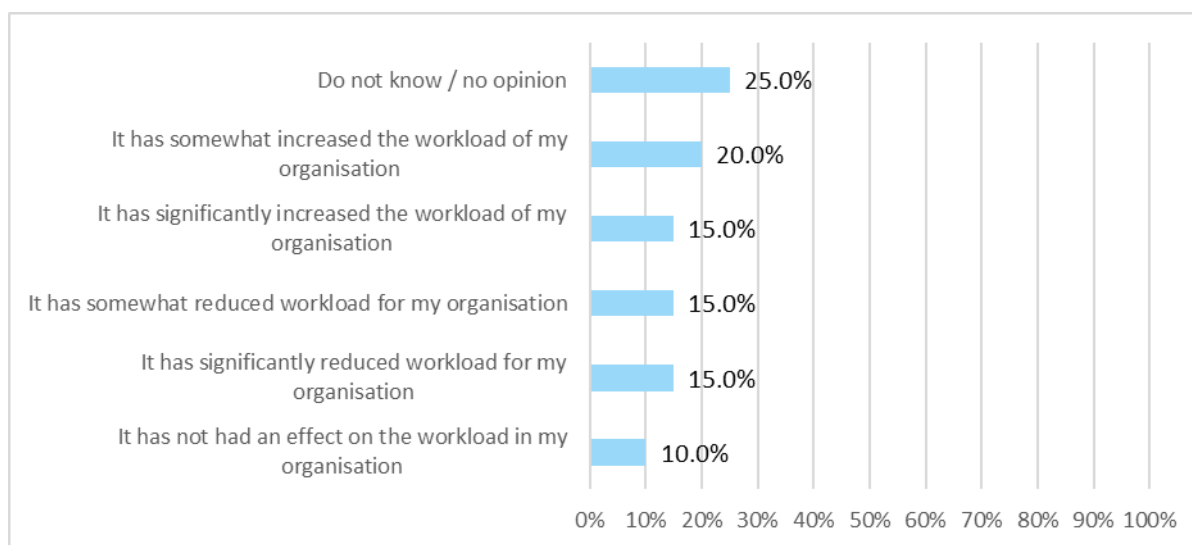
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Lastly, it is noted that while the survey respondents from EU+ countries active in the CG production process, such as Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and even Finland were confident in their Member State producing its own national guidance, survey respondents from some other EU+ countries, such as Czechia, Portugal or Bulgaria, did not know the answer (Figure 34). At the same time, since these results represent the views of only a few survey respondents (two in Bulgaria, four in Czechia, three in Portugal), these should not significantly affect the finding that most of the respondents were aware of and able to report on whether national guidance is being produced in their respective EU+ countries.

EQ 9: To what extent have COI and CG networks enabled to avoid duplication of work and to create synergies between Member States?

Against the backdrop that the CG production process overall seems not to have reduced the workload of national authorities, and rather added to it, participation in Country Guidance Network more specifically shows rather mixed experiences: with 20% of the 20 respondents reporting that their participation “somewhat increased” their workload but 15% reporting that it “somewhat reduced” their workload, while significant increase and decrease were reported equally at 15%.

Figure 14. To what extent do you think your participation in the EUAA Country Guidance Network has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own guidance)? (n=20)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Looking at the effect on the workload vis-à-vis specific production processes, it appears that participation in the CGNet entailed the highest increase in workload in relation to Syria and Iraq - with over 40% of eight respondents for Syria and ten for Iraq indicating that the workload has increased (Figure 112). However, it must be taken into account that this view is based on the responses of only a handful of respondents to the open-ended questions.

Regardless of the impact on workload, participation in the CGNet was described as useful by interviewees both during the fieldwork and the horizontal interviews. For instance, a respondent from Croatia stressed the usefulness of the exchange of experiences and the opportunity to understand the reasons why some decisions are taken and what is behind the decisions. An interviewee during the horizontal interviews viewed the participation of EU+ countries in the process as very important, in particular, for EU+ countries to hear from each other about where the differences in interpretation lie. This was confirmed by several interviewees, such as representatives from Portugal during the horizontal interviews, German policymakers during the fieldwork interviews, or a representative of Greek authorities during the exploratory interviews.

3.3 Relevance

The sub-sections below present the findings for the criterion of relevance in terms of relevance of COI and CG products to meet the needs of different target groups, relevance of COI products developed specifically for the purpose of CG, and relevance of COI query responses. The following EQs are concerned:

- EQ 10: To what extent have COI and CG products met the needs of the different target groups, especially case officers, policymakers, and judges (in terms of relevance, quality of content, usability, timeliness, etc.)?
- EQ 11: To what extent have COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG been used by other groups outside the CG framework?
- EQ 12: To what extent have responses to COI queries met the needs and expectations of the querying Member States?

In the box below we present key findings for the criterion of relevance, for both COI and CG products.

Box 3. Key findings for the criterion of relevance

Key findings for the relevance of COI products:

- The EUAA COI products are deemed relevant to meet the needs of target groups who perceived these products to be complete, reliable and of high quality regardless of their experience and capacity of their national administration to produce COI.
- The degree of relevance of the EUAA COI reports is mainly determined by the application profiles that the EU+ countries receive and the fact that some reports are outdated. While users are seemingly satisfied with the format and the content of the reports, there are divergent views concerning the appropriateness of the length of the reports.
- The evidence collected reveals that COI products are used by a variety of stakeholders (particularly, CSOs, legal practitioners and case officers) for a variety of purposes ranging from supporting decision-making, to responding to more operational needs of stakeholders such as producing and developing their own COI or supporting advocacy work.
- The majority of the consulted stakeholders were not aware of the possibility of submitting / have never submitted a EUAA COI query.

Key findings for the relevance of CG products:

- The majority of survey respondents (circa 75%) were satisfied with the usability, usefulness, quality, completeness and geographical coverage of the EU-level CG products as well as the timeliness of its updates.
- The scope of the EU-level CG is reportedly satisfactory and relevant – although the degree of this depends on the national caseload.
- There are significant variations in EU+ countries' needs for translation.
- There are mixed views on the length of the CG documents that are perceived as too long and as such less practical by several interviewees, while other fieldwork and horizontal interviewees stressed the need to maintain the current length to have sufficient details and to ensure the guidance nature of the products.
- The need for more timely production and updates is consistently reported.

3.3.1 Relevance of COI & CG products to meet the needs of different target groups (EQ 10)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 10: To what extent have COI and CG products met the needs of the different target groups, especially case officers, policymakers, and judges (in terms of relevance, quality of content, usability, timeliness, etc.)?

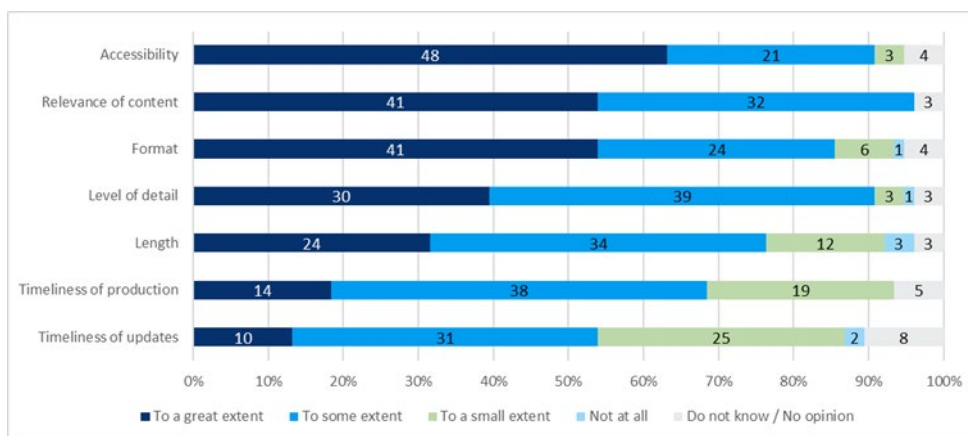
The EUAA COI products are deemed relevant to meet the needs of target groups who perceived these products to be complete, reliable and of high quality. The evidence collected suggests that end-users find EUAA COI reports relevant and adequate to their needs regardless of their experience

and the capacity of their national administration to produce COI. However, the degree of relevance is determined by several factors.

Thematic reports, particularly those on the security situation, are considered to be particularly relevant. This is usually related to the level of detail and the preference of stakeholders to zoom in on specific phenomena. The security situation in Afghanistan and the Russia reports on military service and political opposition were highlighted by users in Latvia, Sweden, Belgium and Bulgaria as highly relevant to their needs. While users positively viewed the comprehensiveness of EUAA COI Country focus reports, there is a general tendency towards having a preference to “break up” reports into themes (e.g., LGBTQ+ in Uganda), which in turn would result in the reduction of the length of the reports.

There are divergent views concerning the appropriateness of the length of the reports as displayed. While some stakeholders positively viewed the length and the comprehensiveness of the EUAA COI reports (e.g., UNHCR), there seems to be a slight preference towards short and thematic reports. Apart from the length, in terms of format and usability, consulted users are generally satisfied. The fact that reports are organised by themes/profiles is well received. Some specific areas for improvement include the need to make the access to the COI documents on the website clearer (Latvia and Belgium) or to have COI documents in the same electronic format as CG (i.e., HTML). Concerning whether printouts or digital copies respond better to the needs of end-users, there seems to be a general preference towards digital versions as it is easier to find information.

Figure 15. To what extent do you think the EUAA’s COI documents are adequate with regards to their...? (n=76)⁴⁴



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The relevance of the products is highly determined by the application profiles that the EU+ countries receive. Stakeholders recognise and appreciate the EUAA's efforts to strike a balance between responding to the needs of stakeholders at EU level (by developing products that target the top countries of origin within the EU) and at Member State level. Thus, stakeholders consulted were generally satisfied with the geographical coverage of the EUAA COI reports, however some users expressed a need for more information regarding the country of origin of their applicants. As explained by a COI expert in Belgium, while COI reports on Nigeria are not very relevant in the case of Belgium, they might be more relevant in Italy where they receive a higher influx of applicants from this country. In a similar vein, judges consulted in Germany dealing with Lebanon cases stated that they are not using EUAA COI as there was no information available on such cases. Users

⁴⁴ This question was only shown to COI Network members.

expressed the need for the EUAA to produce (and quickly update) reports on highly dynamic and changing countries. For instance, several stakeholders, mentioned the need to produce COI on Sudan where a civil war has recently started.

A pressing issue identified during fieldwork research, supported by the survey findings, revolves around the [need for timely and more frequent updates of the EUAA COI report](#). All consulted target users emphasised that the outdated nature of some reports directly affected the relevance of these products (e.g., Türkiye being one of the most repeated examples). Stakeholders explained that the outdated nature of the reports is closely intertwined with the protracted production process, characterised by a significant time gap between initiating the production process and the actual publication of the COI reports. In essence, by the time a report is made available, the situation in the respective country has often undergone substantial changes. Likewise, as indicated by feedback from stakeholders, the process of updating reports becomes more time-consuming due to the extensive length of the reports.

Stakeholders from Greece, Sweden and Germany proposed a [more focused approach involving selective updates to specific sections, while ensuring transparency in communicating these changes](#). This relates to the request for having COI reports available in HTML format as explained above. Two recommendations emerged from this discussion: firstly, to consider adopting a wiki-style format for updating specific parts (as suggested by Germany); and secondly, to incorporate a dedicated section in the report's introduction listing all modifications, including which sections have been updated and on which pages – essentially creating a user-friendly guide or an index for tracking updates. In the Bulgarian context, a proposal was made to include a confirmation in the report, affirming the ongoing validity and applicability of the most recent update.

Another factor affecting the relevance of COI products is the [translation](#) of the reports, which varies depending on national legal jurisdictions and the requirement to present sources in the local language to support and validate decision-making. For example, users in Bulgaria and Poland elaborated on the necessity for documents to be in the local language or provided as sworn translations to be deemed valid during court proceedings. The relevance of language is also contingent on the degree to which English is widely used, as observed in countries such as Finland, Sweden, and Germany, where there is a lesser need for translations.

Country guidance

EQ 10: To what extent have COI and CG products met the needs of the different target groups, especially case officers, policymakers, and judges (in terms of relevance, quality of content, usability, timeliness, etc.)?

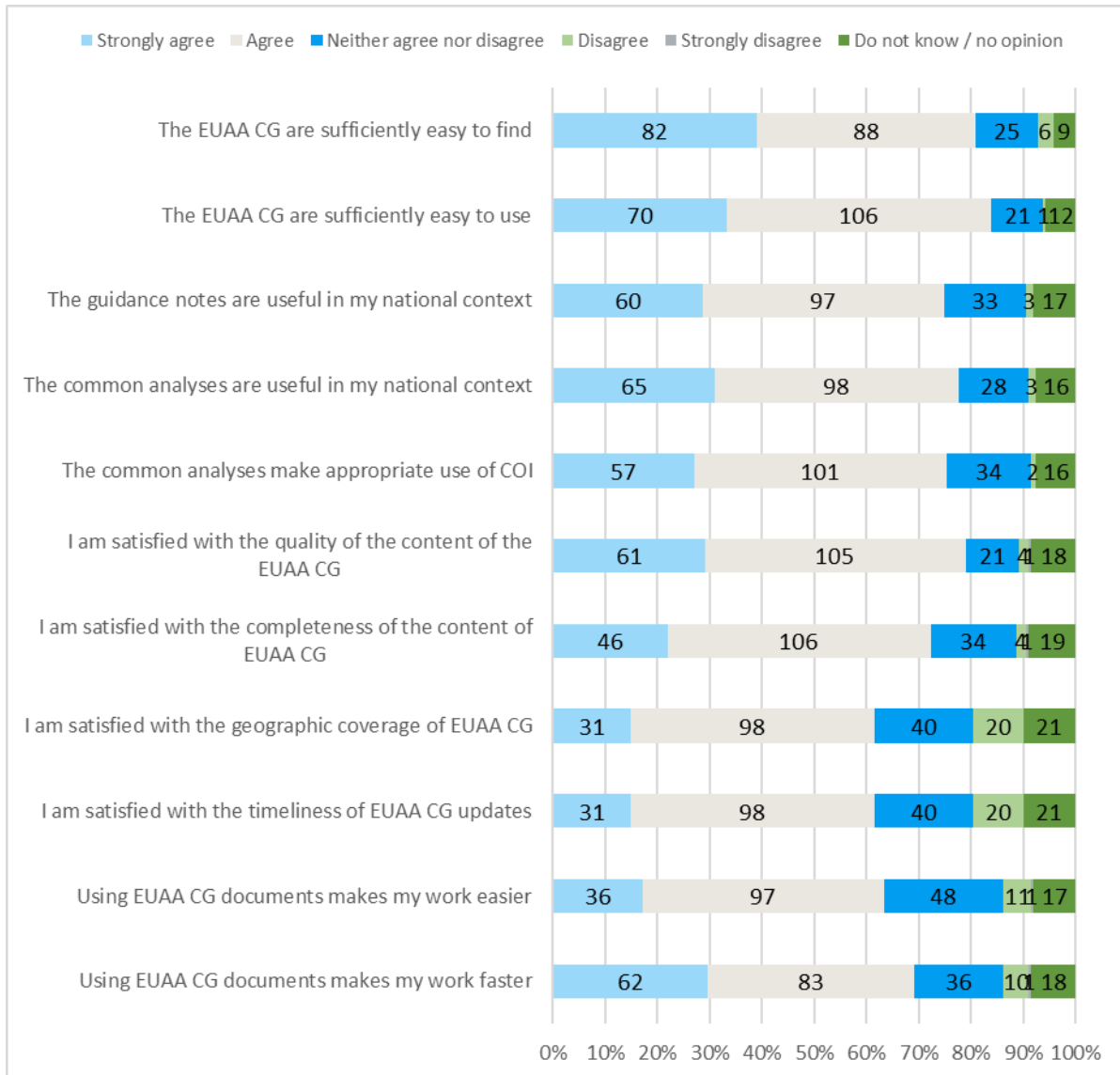
The vast majority of survey respondents, nearly 75% of 210 respondents, was satisfied with the usability, usefulness, quality, completeness and geographical coverage of the CG products as well as the timeliness of its updates and, overall, believed that the EU-level CG documents made their work faster and easier (respondents had the possibility to select multiple options). More specifically, this finding is based on the views of the following survey respondents:

- 116 case officers responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection,
- 86 case officers responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection,
- 52 COI or CG researchers,
- 26 judges,
- 23 legal advisors on related legal and policy issues,
- 21 policymakers and/or developers of guidance on specific countries of origin,
- 13 legal representation in individual cases,

- 6 heads of COI unit,
- 4 policy advocates related to specific countries of origin.

At the same time, answers to the open-ended questions linked to these survey questions reflect the view that EU-level CG documents should be easier to find, be updated more often, and cover more countries - although several respondents noted that they do not expect the EUAA to be able to cover all relevant countries.

Figure 16. To what extent do you agree with these statements? (n=210)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

In addition, 50% of the 213 respondents who answered this question explicitly agreed or strongly agreed that the CG documents meet the needs of first instance determining authorities, and 35% agreed or strongly agreed that they fit the needs of second instance authorities (Figure 110). Importantly, only 1-2% of the respondents disagreed with these statements and circa 20% marked the question as not applicable to them. Hence, the relatively lower rate of agreement can be attributed not to disagreement but rather to the respondents not finding the questions applicable

to them, presumably because they do not work in these roles, or that they neither agreed nor disagreed with them.

The vast majority of the interviewees during the fieldwork was satisfied with the useability of CG products and reported that they meet their needs. The following were the primary reasons cited during the fieldwork interviews and supported by the survey results (see Figure 102):

- the documents are reliable and objective,
- useful and necessary,
- well-made, and of high quality,
- satisfaction with the content: comprehensive, contain all the necessary information, detailed and thorough. Over 80% of 67 survey respondents reported that the relevance of the CG documents was adequate and nearly 75% found the same about their level of detail.
- satisfaction with the format: clear, accessible, user-friendly structure, praise for useful maps, graphs. 82% of 67 survey respondents also confirmed that the accessibility of the CG products was adequate, and 75% thought the same about their format.
- overall relevant.

The interviewees were divided on whether CG products should be translated or not. Countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands or Germany reported that the English version of the CG document meets their needs, hence, translation is unnecessary in their contexts, whereas in other countries, such as Slovakia, Bulgaria or Greece, the translation of CG documents is important as users do not always have the required language skills, therefore, using the documents in English slows their work down. One interviewee considered that if EU+ countries now have to take the EU-level country guidance into account (as per Art 11(3) Regulation 2021/2303), then the EUAA must provide a translation of the documents. Others mentioned that it would indeed be good to have them translated, but if they were to choose, they would rather have the documents more frequently updated than translated.

On the length of the documents, over 60% out of 67 of survey respondents reported that the length of the products was adequate either to a great extent (35%) or to some extent (26%) (Figure 102). 15% of the 67 respondents considered the length as adequate to a small extent, 19% did not know and a little over 1% considered the length as not adequate at all. The mixed views on the length of the CG documents were also reflected during the fieldwork interviews, where a slim majority considered that the documents are too long, that it takes too long to go through them and that it is not practical to use such voluminous documents. On the contrary, the other half of the interviewees considered that the length is not a problem, that it is better to have more detail, and reported that it is easy to find the right topic within the documents. On the length, a representative of an international organisation expressed concern during the horizontal interviews over the trend to push to shorten the documents, as they could become shorter to the point of becoming instructions, instead of guidance. The interviewee explained “[i]t is not possible to have instructions for individual cases, the only way the guidance is going to function as guidance is if the decision-maker understands that these are the broad frameworks but that the individual circumstances of the applicant are the most important, and the guidelines need to be applied to those circumstances.” In this context, the interviewee warned that if the EUAA were to publish the guidance notes separately from the common analysis, this would likely risk that no one reads the common analysis again: “If guidance notes are published separately, and only that gets translated, everybody will only use the guidance notes, and that would not be helpful. These documents belong together, they need to be in the same PDF documents, or printed together, and if they can only translate one, they should translate the longer common analysis.”

The timeliness of the updates seems to be a point of improvement. Around 65% of 67 survey respondents found the initial production to be timely, interestingly this proportion was slightly higher for the timeliness of the updates (68%, see Figure 102). This was confirmed during the

fieldwork interviews, where the main criticism concerned the timeliness of the CG documents and interviewees confirmed their need to see more regular updates. Some interviewees stressed that the documents become irrelevant in their work if they are not updated after some time. This was also mentioned by an EUAA official interviewed at the exploratory stage as a factor making the products somewhat less relevant for some countries that update their own COI and CG every six months. This level of frequency is not possible at EU level, as explained by an EUAA official during the exploratory interviews; however, the interviewee did not believe that this was as much of an issue as COI situations do not change that quickly. More specifically, in relation to the partial updates, it was flagged during a horizontal interview that it is not very clear that the partial updates are indeed 'partial' and raised that the partiality of the update should, ideally, be reflected in the title of the document. Reinforcing the relevance of timely updates, it was reported during the fieldwork interviews that in order to reach higher degree of use by the target groups, investments should be directed toward more regular updates – when conditions change in the given country.

The current scope of CG products was found to be largely adequate. While some interviewees mentioned during the fieldwork that they would like to see more countries covered, for instance, a case officer from Greece mentioned Iran and Türkiye, or a Belgium judge mentioned Gaza and Sahel countries and all countries in conflict situations, it was not a frequently raised concern.

Almost all interviewees prefer to use the digital copy of the documents. Over 40% of 214 respondents indicated that they found out about EU-level CG products through the EUAA website. Almost half of the respondents to the question on the degree of adequacy of the format of the documents replied that they considered the format of the documents to be "to a great extent" adequate and almost 30% replied "to some extent" (Figure 102). According to the 2021 EUAA Public Survey, the CG products are mainly used in the PDF format (as a downloaded copy or on the EUAA website, 56 and 54% respectively), followed by the e-book version on the EUAA website (21%), while 14% of the respondents said to have printed a copy. This was confirmed by the horizontal and fieldwork interviews, where most respondents indicated that they preferred to use the digital version, with some stating that this was because it allowed them to find information faster.

3.3.2 Relevance of COI products developed specifically for the purpose of CG (EQ 11)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 11: To what extent have COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG been used by other groups outside the CG framework?

COI products are used (to a greater or lesser extent) by a variety of stakeholders outside of the CG framework. The evidence collected reveals that COI products are used by a variety of stakeholders for a variety of purposes ranging from supporting decision-making to responding to the more operational needs of stakeholders, such as producing and developing their own COI or supporting advocacy work.

Civil society organisations employ EUAA COI products to bolster their advocacy efforts and identify opposing viewpoints to challenge the policy direction adopted by national administrations. For instance, a representative from a Finnish CSO clarified that they used the EUAA report on the security situation in Afghanistan to counter the national administration's assertion that the safety of Afghans improved after the Taliban came to power. Similarly, a representative from a Latvian CSO also explained that they typically present EUAA COI products to decision-makers when they believe that not all relevant information has been considered, such as in the case of Iraqi applicants, as the country does not experience a significant influx of applicants from this region. Legal practitioners consulted through the survey also reported using EUAA COI products to provide legal aid in the preparation of an application for international protection (15/28); to corroborate evidence

for appeal (18/28) and/or to corroborate evidence for the examination of the application by the determining authority (13/28).

EUAA COI products provides users with valuable contextual information about the conditions in the applicants' countries of origin and, in turn, helps assess the factual information provided by the applicant. Thus, over half of the case officers and judges consulted in the survey (135/186) reported using EUAA COI products to assess the credibility of an application. Similarly, half of the case officers, judges and legal practitioners consulted through the survey (150/204) reported using EUAA COI products to identify the material facts which need to be investigated and prepare relevant questions. Similarly, case officers and judges reported using EUAA COI products to assess risks and protection needs (162/186) as well as potential exclusion cases (115/186).

EUAA COI reports are also used by COI researchers to obtain information to draft their own national COI and/or to cross check COI found through other sources (Figure 51). As discussed in section 3.4.2, 40% of COI researchers consulted through the survey reported integrating EUAA COI documents into national COI documents, and another 40% use EUAA COI for reference purposes (Figure 57). This is particularly the case in Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Czechia, Italy, Greece and Sweden, as confirmed by the survey results (see Figure 56) and interviews⁴⁵.

3.3.3 Relevance of COI query responses (EQ 12)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 12: To what extent have responses to COI queries met the needs and expectations of the querying Member States?

The evidence collected suggests that the majority of the consulted stakeholders were not aware of the possibility of submitting or have never submitted an EUAA COI query. While the EUAA has met and exceeded targets concerning answered queries as per the EUAA Consolidated Annual Activity Reports for 2018-2022, survey results show that only 36% of consulted target users (121 out of 331) indicated having made use of EUAA COI queries. Amongst those who have used the query system, the survey results reveal that users are satisfied with the completeness, the quality and the timeliness of the query responses. Italian interviewees emphasised the valuable role played by EUAA experts in delivering meaningful and pertinent responses to their queries. Moreover, the fact that responses to queries are publicly available was very well received by end users in Finland and Greece.

The lack of awareness/use about the EUAA COI queries is corroborated by fieldwork research as case officers consulted were not aware of the possibility of submitting a EUAA COI query (in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Sweden) or had never done so (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece⁴⁶, Finland, France, Italy, Sweden). Similarly, consulted CSO representatives in the fieldwork countries flagged a significant lack of information concerning the possibility of submitting COI queries to the EUAA. Many of the target users consulted (i.e., case officers and judges and legal practitioners) explained that they rely on their national administration when they want to submit a query (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, France, Poland, Sweden). It was explained by case officers in Belgium and Sweden that it could be that national administration consult the EUAA in case of specific questions. When the COI research unit in Belgium (CEDOCA) was asked about whether they are knowledgeable about the system, they explained they use EUAA networks to ask queries informally but not always through the platform. Similarly, a Bulgarian and German COI expert mentioned that network meetings are a good opportunity to ask queries. The interviewees found network meetings

⁴⁵ In the case of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Greece and Sweden.

⁴⁶ Only medCOI.

a good opportunity to exchange information amongst peers and confirm that the information received is useful and relevant.

Findings thus suggest that while target users who engaged in the activities of the EUAA are aware of the possibility to submit EUAA COI queries, awareness amongst end-users far removed from EUAA activities is much less prominent. In fact, there seems to be a misunderstanding concerning the type of queries that can be asked and who is behind providing the response. Concerning the latter, a judge from Germany explained that queries about Russia were rejected as they were told that they can only submit general questions.

This seems to be explained by the fact that EUAA COI queries are mainly driven by operational needs through the Operational COI Helpdesk. As explained by EUAA staff, while in the past it was more common to provide permanent support to EU+ countries through COI networks, many queries are now triggered by operational needs. Consequently, once COI queries are identified at the case officer level, they are directed to the relevant COI contact point or team leader (depending on the local structure), who then collaborates with the COI helpdesk in the corresponding operation.

Under the permanent support approach, the relevance of the query responses was determined by who provides the response, according to some of the stakeholders consulted. Members of the EUAA network would provide responses based on their area of expertise. Thus, for instance a Polish COI researcher explained that they used to get asked about countries that they cover regularly (e.g., Russia, Chechnya, Ukraine). According to a German case officer very knowledgeable and involved in EUAA activities, under this system the relevance of the queries depended on who drafted the queries. In his view, differences in the know-how of the Member State are reflected in responses of the requests and drafting of COI.

3.4 Coherence

The sub-sections below present the findings to the evaluation questions pertaining to the criterion of coherence. The evaluation of coherence looks at coherence with other EUAA products and coherence with national level products. These correspond to the following EQs:

- EQ 13: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with other interventions aiming at harmonising examination of international protection claims across the EU (e.g., EUAA practical tools and guidance, the EUAA COI methodology)?
- EQ 14: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with, or otherwise contribute to the elaboration of, similar products existing at the national level?

In the box below we present key findings for the criterion of coherence, for both COI and CG products.

Box 4. Key findings for the criterion of coherence

Key findings for the coherence of COI products:

- There is a large degree of alignment between the EUAA COI products and other interventions aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection claims, such as EUAA practical guides and tools and the EUAA COI methodology.
- Most EU+ countries keep on producing their own COI products, but this does not entail a duplication of efforts. EUAA COI and national COI products are, in many respects, complementary.
- Countries highly engaged in the EUAA activities and with extensive COI traditions (e.g., Belgium, Germany, Denmark and France), reported relying on the EUAA COI

methodology as well as on the experience drawn from the production process of EUAA COI products.

- The extent to which EUAA COI products are used in the development of national COI products varies from country to country.
- In some countries, inconsistencies have emerged between EUAA COI products and similar national products.

Key findings for the coherence of CG products:

- CG documents sit within a framework of various EUAA products aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection claims across the EU, and are meant to be complementary. EU-level CG consistently refers the user to other EUAA products, primarily to the practical guides. No inconsistencies have been raised between these products in the course of the fieldwork or horizontal interviews.
- While the primary reason why EU+ countries continue to produce their own national guidance is to maintain national sovereignty over the guidance, according to the survey results, the data collection for this evaluation also shows that there are no major inconsistencies reported between EU-level and national guidance, but that they are rather complementary in nature – with the EU-level CG contributing to the development of national guidance.

3.4.1 Coherence with other EUAA products (EQ 13)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 13: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with other EUAA interventions aiming at harmonising examination of international protection claims across the EU (e.g., EUAA practical tools and guidance, the EUAA COI methodology)?

No major inconsistencies were identified between the EUAA COI products and other interventions aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection claims, such as EUAA practical guides and tools and the EUAA COI methodology.

Concerning coherence with the EUAA practical tools and guides,⁴⁷ no major inconsistencies were identified by the evaluation team. Amongst the EUAA practical guides and tools, the 'Practical guide on the use of country-of-origin information by case officers for the examination of asylum applications' is of particular relevance to assessing coherence. The aim of this practical guide is to support case officers with the use of COI products, from interview preparation to application assessment. The guide clearly states that it cannot replace the expertise of COI experts and efforts were made to ensure consistency and complementarity with other available EUAA tools during the entire production process.⁴⁸ No further evidence in this regard could be collected as close to the

⁴⁷ The practical guidance and tools aim at supporting EU+ countries in improving the quality of their asylum processes and achieving convergence in common quality standards in line with the CEAS, as per the Agency's mandate. Through its dedicated networks, the EUAA together with EU+ countries and EU and international stakeholders produce practical tools and guides in six areas of support.

⁴⁸ Publications Office of the European Union, 2020. "EASO Practical Guide on the Use of Country of Origin Information by Case Officers for the Examination of Asylum Applications."

majority of COI network members who provided responses to the survey were not aware of the EUAA's practical tools and guides.⁴⁹

The evidence gathered, which includes input from stakeholders and desk research, indicates that the [EUAA COI methodology is closely followed when elaborating the EUAA COI reports](#). Furthermore, during consultations with stakeholders, [no inconsistencies between the methodology and the resulting COI products were identified](#). In fact, authorities from the countries where fieldwork was conducted praised the EUAA COI Methodology, emphasising that it is integrated into the practices of national administrations in EU+ countries. In addition, the fact that both the [EUAA COI methodology](#) and the [Writing and Referencing guide](#) has been co-developed by the EUAA and COI experts from EU+ countries (namely, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Slovak Republic, Sweden) contributes not only to a large degree of alignment between national practices and EUAA practices but also strengthens the ownership of these documents amongst potential users in these countries. All of this contributes to the overall coherence between EUAA COI products and national COI products, as further discussed in section 3.4.2.

While references to the correct use of sources and references is specifically stated in both the COI Writing and Referencing guide and the COI Methodology, [critical views concerning the adequacy of the sources and references used in the EUAA COI reports](#) were expressed by a few of stakeholders, including the European Commission. An EU official emphasised the need to move away from media sources and rely on internal expertise and well-known organisations with presence on the ground such as UNHCR and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe when producing the EUAA COI reports. A COI expert from Austria, during the interview, recommended pairing an EUAA expert specialising in a particular country with an expert from an EU+ country administration who also specialises in the same country (e.g., an Afghanistan expert from the EUAA collaborating with an Afghanistan expert from Norway) as a source for COI.

Concerning alignment between the EUAA COI products and the [EUAA COI LGBTIQ Research Guide](#), no inconsistencies were identified by the evaluation team and/or reported by the stakeholders consulted. The EUAA COI products evaluated, in particular those where a particular focus on the LGBTIQ community is placed⁵⁰, seem to be consistent with the outline in the Research guideline, particularly concerning the terminology and the type of sources employed. Stakeholders were not explicitly queried regarding the guide, but it appeared that none of them felt the need to raise any concerns about discrepancies between the COI products and the guide.

Country guidance

[EQ 13: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with other interventions aiming at harmonising examination of international protection claims across the EU \(e.g., EUAA practical guides and guidance, the EUAA COI methodology\)?](#)

The CG documents are embedded within a framework of various EUAA products that are meant to be complementary and consistently refer the user to other EUAA products aiming at harmonising examination of international protection claims across the EU. The EUAA practical guides, in particular the ones listed below, are important complementary products to the CG:⁵¹

- Practical guide: Qualification for international protection,
- Practical Guide on Political Opinion,

⁴⁹ This is in line with the findings of the fieldwork conducted as part of the [Evaluation of the EUAA Practical tools and guides](#) which revealed large variation concerning the level of awareness of the EUAA's tools and guides amongst users.

⁵⁰ Country focus: Afghanistan, Cote Ivoire, Mali and Venezuela. Thematic reports Targeting of individuals / Targeted profiles: Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Syria.

⁵¹ [EUAA, Country Guidance Explained: January 2023, p 8](#)

- Guidance on membership of a particular social group,
- Practical guide on the internal protection alternative,
- Practical guide: Exclusion,
- Practical Guide on Exclusion for Serious (Non-Political) Crimes,
- Practical guide on the use of COI by case officers for the examination of asylum applications.

The CG documents are [designed to be fully consistent](#) with the general sequence of the examination of international protection needs in accordance with the EUAA Practical guide: Qualification for international protection.⁵² CG also directly and consistently refers the user to other practical guides developed by the EUAA, for instance, to 'Actors of persecution or serious harm', on 'Refugee status: well-founded fear of persecution' and to the 'Initial indications for considering or not considering international protection alternative'.⁵³

The vision of complementarity and synergy among EUAA products is also reflected in the 2022 proposal to create a new separate document on the horizontal framework of CG with a focus on the CG methodology and how the documents should be read and used in practice. It proposed to include only limited general guidance, which instead can be found in the EUAA practical tools and guidance and will be cross-referenced accordingly.⁵⁴

As part of the 2022 evaluation of practical tools and guidance, no overlaps or duplications between the practical tools and guidance and other sources of guidance were identified.⁵⁵ In the same line, no information was reported by stakeholders consulted during the fieldwork interviews about potential inconsistencies between the EUAA CG and practical tools and guidance. The information was not collected as part of the survey.

The [closest connection between EUAA interventions](#) aiming at harmonising examination of international protection claims across the EU remain to be between COI and CG documents, with the former providing the factual basis on which CG provides an assessment in the form of common analysis and guidance.

For complementarity between COI and CG, see section 3.1.1 on use.

3.4.2 Coherence with national level products (EQ 14)

Country of Origin Information

EQ 14: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with, or otherwise contribute to, the elaboration of similar products existing at the national level?

While the EUAA COI documents are [integrated partially in national COI products](#) (Figure 57 in Annex 1), the evidence collected reveals that the EUAA COI methodology and related practices are embedded in the national practices of EU+ countries administrations regardless of their level of engagement in EUAA activities and/or the degree of maturity of their asylum administration. This points to a relatively high degree of consistency between EUAA COI and national COI products.

Countries highly engaged in the EUAA activities and with extensive COI traditions (e.g., Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France), reported [relying on the EUAA COI methodology as well as on the experience drawn from the production process of EUAA COI products](#). For instance, a Belgian COI expert explained that by contributing to the drafting of EUAA COI reports, case officers gain in

⁵² [EUAA, Country Guidance Explained: January 2023, p 13](#)

⁵³ [EUAA, Country Guidance Explained: January 2023, p 16](#)

⁵⁴ [EUAA, Country Guidance Network Strategic Meeting 2022 \(31 August – 1 September 2022\), p 6](#)

⁵⁵ [EUAA, Evaluation of the EUAA Practical tools and guides, p.21.](#)

professionalism and learn methodological approaches by receiving comments and recurrent feedback on their work. Similarly, a French COI expert highlighted that the participation of case officers in the EUAA COI production process helps to enhance their knowledge when it comes to drafting reports and leads to convergence. Thus, the participation of EU+ countries with long-lasting COI traditions represents a win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved in the process.

However, [critical views concerning the approach to the EUAA COI methodology and production were reported by a few stakeholders with long-standing tradition in the production of COI](#). Certain COI experts in countries heavily involved in the COI production at EU level (Austria, Sweden, Finland and Germany) flagged the risk associated with the inclusion of many stakeholders in the production of the COI reports. While they acknowledged the positive aspects of the collaborative methodology of the EUAA, they flagged some risks and efficiency losses derived from involving experts with different levels of COI knowledge, writing styles and analytical approaches. [A considerable improvement in relation to previous years, highlighted by a German COI expert, is the fact that fewer EU+ countries draft COI reports, and a different group reviews them](#). Similar views were shared by an Austrian COI stakeholder. Moving towards a "Europeanisation approach",⁵⁶ thus, seems to be a preferable approach by some of the stakeholders interviewed.

[Countries with less of a tradition of COI production \(e.g., Bulgaria, Romania\) reported using the methodological principles of the EUAA](#). A Bulgarian expert reported that since they do not have national methodology or guidance for COI documents, they directly apply the EUAA methodology and instruments. Likewise, Romania confirmed that they have adapted their COI methodology, so it is aligned with the one at EU level. Similarly, interviewees in Poland revealed that while they have embedded the EUAA's Methodology into their national practices, some aspects (such as the length and level of detail of the reports) cannot be integrated fully into their national COI. Similarly, fieldwork countries receiving operational support (i.e., Greece and Italy) reported highly relying on EUAA methodological principles and adopting them as key guidelines when carrying out their own research as they are recurrently trained in EUAA COI methodology and research and drafting of COI. A Greek COI expert acknowledge that while they use EUAA methodology when drafting their own COI reports to a certain degree, their national reports are not as thorough as the EUAA COI reports.

In line with the findings in Section 3.4.1, stakeholders in Austria, Belgium, France and Greece [highlighted the alignment of the EUAA COI products with their national products](#). For instance, a judge in Austria noted that Austrian authorities promptly revise their own products following changes in the information provided by the EUAA. Similarly, interviewees working at the COI research unit in Belgium confirmed that EUAA COI products are the main source of information for the preparation of national products. In the same vein, end-users in France reported a high degree of consistency in relation to both the structure and the methodology between national products and EUAA COI products.

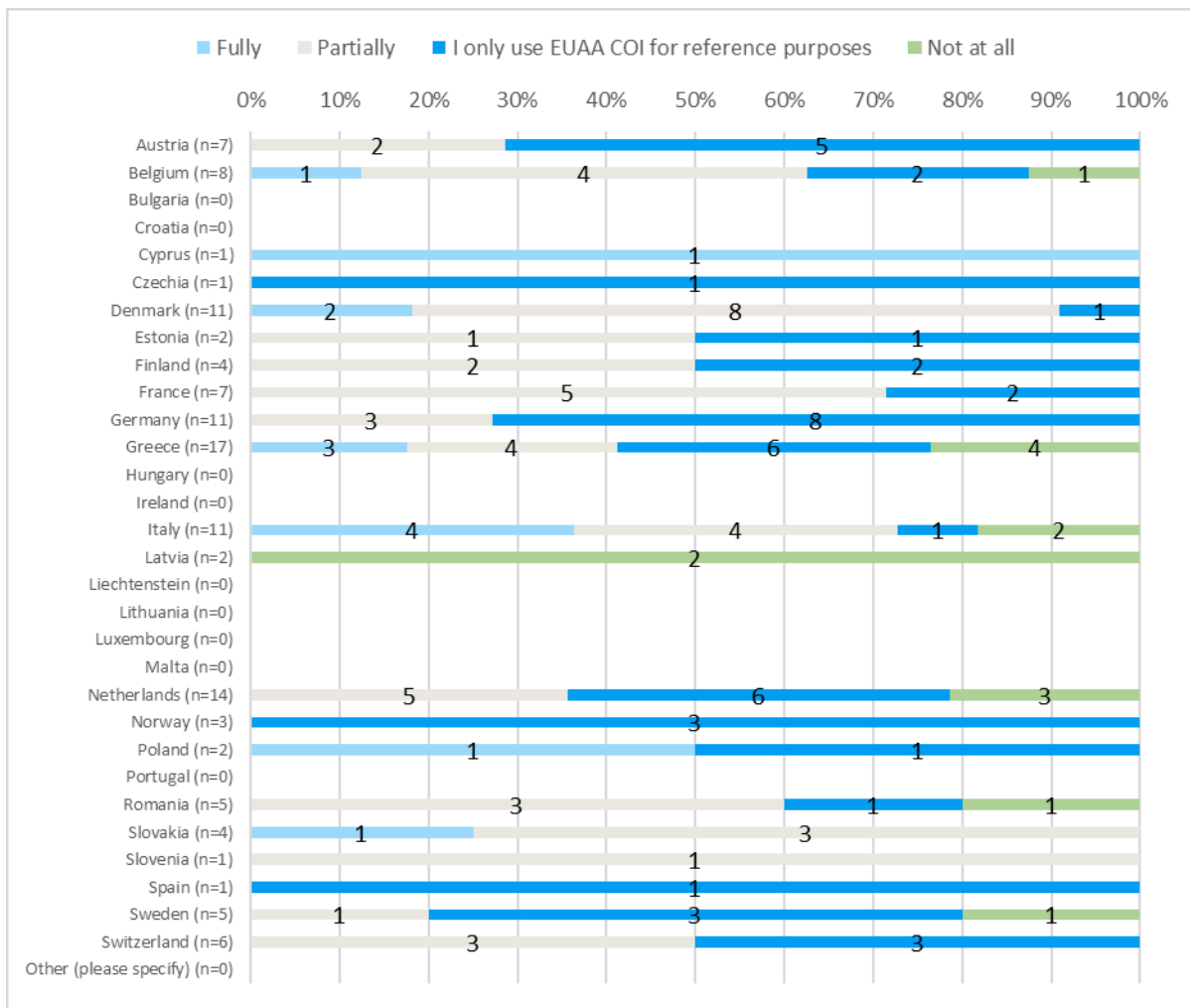
[Although no major inconsistencies between EUAA COI products and national COI were identified during the research, evidence shows that coherence between EUAA COI and national COI products is not always optimal](#). While a high degree of coherence was reported in certain countries, minor inconsistencies between EUAA COI products and national products were identified during the early stages of the study in the exploratory interviews which were later confirmed by fieldwork and horizontal interviews. Inconsistencies were reported in:

⁵⁶ This approach involves publishing a national COI report offered by an EU+ country as an EUAA product. If the national COI report requires updating or does not fully cover all identified information needs, the information in this report may be complemented by some additional research.

- France, where a COI researcher reported some differences on very specific points, such as the evaluation of the situation of Christians in Iraq or on the effective mobilisation of reserve soldiers in Russia. In addition, inconsistencies were reported in:
- Bulgaria, where products of the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) have been described by judges and legal practitioners as “very general, containing insufficient information and one-sided content” which are written to “support the position of the Agency”. In the views of others, however, SAR products are simply less detailed. This view is also shared by COI experts working for the SAR, who report basing their work on EUAA instruments.
- Germany, although no concrete examples could be recalled.
- Poland, where a civil society representative reported that national products often refer to EUAA COI products, but a COI researcher recounted that in 2014, important differences emerged with regards to Ukraine and Russia.
- Italy, where no major inconsistencies were reported by a COI researcher, a lawyer and three judges, but one judge and one lawyer flagged a few exceptions (e.g., on Nigeria, due to consulting other sources at national level).
- Denmark, where the head of the COI unit noted that EUAA products contain many references to their national reports, and that they use EUAA COI products at national level. However, minor inconsistencies arise from the EUAA’s different approach to the use of different sources.

This divergency can in part be explained by the fact that, overall, [EUAA COI documents are used for, and integrated in, national COI products partially](#): survey findings show that only around 40% of the 123 researchers that filled in the survey partially integrate EUAA COI documents into national COI documents, and another 40% only use EUAA COI for reference purposes (Figure 57). Although the number of respondents across countries is not significant enough to allow meaningful comparisons, Figure 58 provides insights on the differences between different countries. Looking at countries with more than ten respondents, it emerges that Denmark is the country with the highest number of respondents who either fully or partially integrate EUAA COI documents into national COI documents (over 90% of respondents do), whereas Germany is the country with the highest number of respondents who only use EUAA COI for reference purposes (over 70% of respondents do so).

Figure 17. To what extent do you integrate the EUAA COI documents into national COI documents? crossed with: Which country do you work in?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

In spite of the inconsistencies highlighted above, EUAA COI and national COI products are often used in tandem due to their perceived complementarity. Many COI network members that filled in the survey indicated that EUAA COI complement COI produced at national level. Complementarity works both ways and there is no duplication of work (Figure 59 in Annex 1). This is in line with preliminary findings from exploratory interviews. On the one hand, EUAA COI fill gaps at national level. This emerged from the survey, and was confirmed by fieldwork and horizontal interview findings, where judges and legal practitioners from Bulgaria reported that “EUAA instruments complement the missing parts in the national reports, providing the full picture”. Or were a case officer from Germany noted that, for Somalia, “the EUAA document was the most complete and the best”. On the other hand, exploratory interviews, survey findings (Figure 102 in Annex 1), fieldwork and horizontal interviews all show that national COI products complement EUAA COI products by:

- **Filling gaps in terms of country coverage.** Survey findings show this is the case for at least Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Poland and The Netherlands. A Polish head of COI unit confirmed during a fieldwork interview that “EUAA prepares reports on a small number of countries and the national unit produces shorter information [...] but concerning all countries of origin that appear among applicants in Poland”.

- **Providing COI products in the national language.** This was particularly highlighted by stakeholders in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Language barriers are discussed more in detail in section 3.3.1.
- **Integrating perspectives coming from other sources,** thereby improving the overall quality of the information contained. During fieldwork interviews, a German judge reported using national, EUAA and non-governmental organisation (NGO) products to get a better understanding of the bigger picture. Similarly, an Italian judge reported that it is a judge's work to "cross-check information from different sources".
- **Providing more in-depth information on certain themes and topics.** Survey findings and fieldwork and horizontal interviews show that this is the case for at least Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Poland, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Fieldwork and horizontal interviews show this is the case for "very specific topics that do not necessarily deserve an EUAA report", such as forced marriages or excisions (Belgium). Similarly, a COI researcher in France affirmed that "EUAA COI documents constitute the base and the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons fills any existing gaps or needs for clarifications with national documents [...]. For instance, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons is more precise on Western Africa (e.g., Nigeria), as it provides information by district and by population". On Nigeria, a Swiss COI researcher highlighted a similar issue: asylum seekers come from one region in Nigeria, and Switzerland barely has applicants from the rest of the country, but EUAA products introduce the whole country, and this becomes repetitive and provides information that is not useful at national level.
- **Catering to the needs of those who need a quick overview of the situation and, due to time constraints, do not have the time to read through lengthy EUAA products.** This point was raised by a case officer from Belgium: "everything produced by the EUAA is converted into our own material [...], we have a very good in-house service that filters out the most relevant information for us", and supported by a Bulgarian judge, who reported that national products are on average four to ten pages long, so shorter than EUAA reports.
- **At times, providing more up-to date information.** COI users look for the most up-to-date information, regardless of the source of the product. Survey findings show that whether national COI products are updated more frequently than EUAA COI products depends on the country of origin (Figure 104).

Country guidance

EQ 14: To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with, or otherwise contribute to, the elaboration of similar products existing at the national level?

Most EU+ countries that engage with the CGNet continue to develop their own national guidance. For instance, 10 out of 14 members attending the CGNet Strategic meeting of September 2022 (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden) reported that they **develop their own national guidance** (Luxembourg was developing its first national guidance).

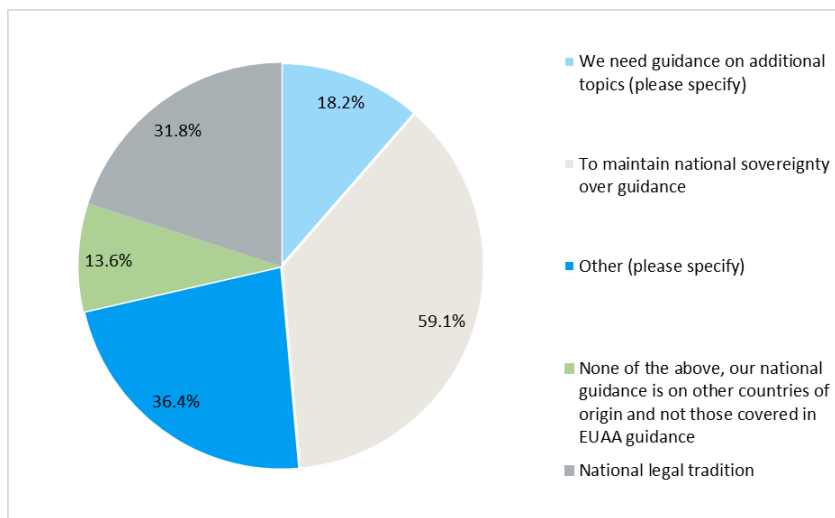
The national guidance varies in number and scope across the EU+ countries. While Austria has three national country-specific guidance documents, covering mostly the same topics as the EU-level CG, other countries have a significantly wider territorial scope. For instance, France has national guidance for over 20 countries, including all the countries covered by the EU-level CG. Germany reports having 43 national guidance documents as well as guidance on safe countries. The Netherlands report having national policies for around 35 countries of origin, and 20 safe countries of origin.

EUAA CG contributes to a large extent to the development of national guidance on the countries of origin covered by the EUAA. No respondent reported that they never followed EU-level country guidance. 58% of 19 survey respondents either fully or largely reflected the EUAA guidance in the national guidance (Figure 91). A remaining 26% reported that this varied according to the country of origin. This strong contribution of the EUAA guidance to national guidance is confirmed by the fieldwork and exploratory interviews.

Government stakeholders interviewed during the fieldwork mentioned that, in their view, there are no major inconsistencies between EUAA CG products and their national guidance documents. It should be noted that this view is mostly self-reported as many EU+ countries do not make their own guidance available outside of their administration. Most respondents consider them to be rather complementary. Survey findings and interviews conclude that the main differences lie in different national policies, geographical coverage or topics, though national guidance may also exist in official languages in the EU+ countries. However, as noted by one stakeholder, given the strong contribution of EUAA guidance to the development of national guidance: “the better the EUAA guidance, the better our material becomes as well”.

The targeted survey conducted for this study and exploratory interviews indicate that the primary reason why EU+ countries continue to produce their own national guidance is mainly rooted in a conviction to maintain national sovereignty over the guidance, as specified by 59% of 44 respondents from EU+ countries producing national guidance.

Figure 18. For what reason(s) do you produce national guidance on countries covered by EUAA CG? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=44)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The other main reasons for diverging from EUAA guidance include:

- **Differences in national legal traditions.** 32% of survey respondents indicated that they continue producing their own guidance documents for this reason. For instance, interpretations of national courts may be included in national guidance documents.
- **Specific national geographical or topical needs.** 13% of survey respondents reported that guidance is adopted to cover additional countries of origin. For instance, France and Germany cover a wide range of countries not covered by EUAA CGs, including safe countries, while Finland has adopted guidance on Lebanon and Cameroon to cover national needs. 18% of survey respondents noted that guidance is adopted to cover additional topics. Some countries adopt country-specific thematic guidance, such as Germany on westernisation in Afghanistan.

- **To provide further policy guidance in the decision-making process based on national policy.** Several Member State respondents highlighted that the national guidance may be more instructive for case officers (e.g., policy guidance on legal assessment) or follow a different approach on specific items (e.g., different gradation of levels of indiscriminate violence, variations in legal assessments of a same factual situation).

Overall, respondents to the fieldwork interviews highlight however that the EUAA and national guidance are complementary tools.

3.5 EU added value

The sub-sections below present the findings for the criterion of EU added value, which looks at the added value of COI and CG compared to national and international sources. Two EQs are covered:

- EQ 15: What is the additional value resulting from COI and CG products, compared to what could be achieved by Member States individually and collectively?
- EQ 16: What is the added value of the EUAA CG documents in relation to UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines?

In the box below we present key findings for the criterion of EU added value, for both COI and CG products.

Box 5. Key findings for the criterion of EU added value

Key findings for the EU added value of COI:

- The vast majority of COI users believe that the existence of COI products at EU level has brought significant value to their work.
- The main sources of added value derived from the production of COI products at EU level stem from their authoritativeness, their quality, the knowledge and resource sharing associated to their production, the new perspective they bring at national level, as well as the level of harmonisation that they can bring about.
- While there is a broad consensus concerning the EU added value of COI production at EU level, many COI users believe that convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among EU+ countries without the EUAA COI products.
- There are differences in the ways in which the EU added value of EUAA COI products compares across countries; countries with fewer resources to invest into and develop their own COI products report a greater degree of added value of the EUAA COI products.
- The main aspects which the EUAA could work on to increase the added value of its COI products are the timeliness of updates, translations, dissemination activities and trainings.

Key findings for the EU added value of CG:

- The vast majority of survey respondents reported that the EU-level CG has added value for their work and thought that the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents.
- While only a small proportion found the EU-level CG to be more complete, of higher quality, more relevant, more useful, or of better geographical coverage than their national guidance, this must be read together with the finding that, reportedly, the EUAA CG contribute to a large extent to the development of national guidance.

- The added value of the EU-level CG compared to national ones stems from its authoritativeness, methodology and collective production process – and the level of harmonisation they can bring about.
- Some interviewees considered that the added value of EU-level CG is even more important for EU+ countries that do not have sufficient capacity or methodology at national level and therefore rely heavily on the EUAA.
- About 60% of 217 survey respondents believe that the CG documents have contributed, to varying degrees, to convergence in the assessment of international protection needs in EU+ countries, while 1% of respondents consider that CG documents have had no impact at all on convergence.
- CG users were largely undecided during this evaluation about the added value of the EU-level CG as compared to UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines, nevertheless, believed that the comparative added value of the EU-level CG lies in it being more detailed, informative, up-to-date as well as more concrete and comprehensive than UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines. In addition, they considered the EU-level CG to be broader and more adapted to the needs of case officers and policy makers – and hence is, overall, more practical.

3.5.1 Added value compared to national sources (EQ 15)

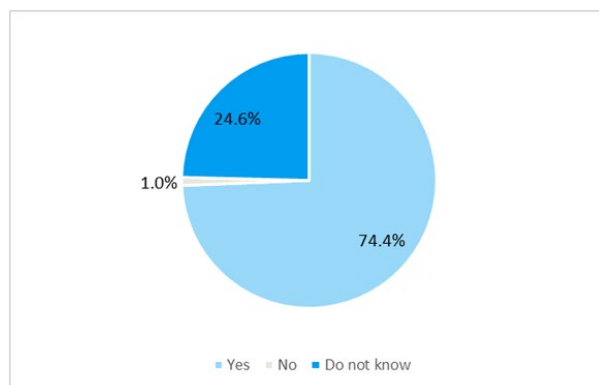
Country of Origin Information

EQ 15: What is the additional value resulting from COI and CG products, compared to what could be achieved by Member States individually and collectively?

The vast majority of COI users believe that the existence of COI products at EU level has brought significant value to their work. This emerged early during the study, via the exploratory interviews,⁵⁷ and was later confirmed by the fieldwork and horizontal interviews,⁵⁸ as well as the results of the survey, where over 74% of COI users indicated that having EU-level COI has added value for their work (see figure below). The survey analysis further showed that this is the case for virtually all target groups: the only exception is constituted by legal representatives, as those who believe so constitute a minority within their group, but the relative sample is rather small, so it could be not very representative of the population (Figure 66).

⁵⁷ Exploratory interviews were conducted with authorities in Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Sweden.

⁵⁸ Fieldwork interviews covered the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Sweden. Horizontal interviews covered the following countries: Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Croatia, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Türkiye as well as the European Commission and the UNHCR.

Figure 19. "Do you believe that having EU-level COI has added value for your work?" (n=195)

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The added value of EUAA COI products mainly stems from:

- **Their authoritativeness:** partly because of the high-quality methodology employed and the common framework that drafters need to adhere to, EUAA COI documents are perceived to be objective and built on solid foundations, and conclusions drawn from them are rarely questioned. Authoritativeness, which already emerged during the exploratory interviews, features heavily in notes from both fieldwork and horizontal interviews, where it appears to be the main source of added value.⁵⁹ In those notes, a Belgian case officer aptly explained that "with the EUAA documents, you trust that what is in there, is independent, is verified. If we had to be looking all this information up on the internet, we would always need to be checking who the sources are...".
- **Their quality:** because of scale effects, the EUAA is able to capitalise on the local knowledge of different countries to produce comprehensive products. Detail does not come at the expense of usability, as the clear structure of the products makes the users easily find the piece of information they are looking for. As a Bulgarian lawyer reported, contrary to EUAA COI products, "other sources are more fragmented, general, not so well systematized and accurate". Quality as a source of added value was mentioned in more than ten interviews from the countries selected for fieldwork and horizontal interviews.
- **Knowledge and resource sharing associated to their production.** This element was defined as important in around ten interviews from the countries selected for fieldwork and horizontal interviews. In Switzerland, for instance, it is reported that synergies are created with European colleagues. Such synergies are particularly valuable where there are no country of origin overlaps within a national COI unit, and knowledge exchanges with experts on the same country of origin who work in a different country can thus be extremely useful. On top of this, as explained by a Polish case officer, "countries that have more experience in dealing with applicants from certain countries of origin may share their knowledge with others".
- **The new perspective they bring at national level.** This is the case for at least Belgium and Poland. In these countries, interviewees report that EUAA COI products suggest other interpretations and/or offer inspiration regarding topics that should be investigated in a more in-depth manner.
- **The level of harmonisation that they can bring about.** Fieldwork and horizontal interviews suggest that by acting as a single source of evaluation, EUAA COI products can foster a common

⁵⁹ Exploratory interviews were conducted with authorities in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden. Fieldwork interviews covered the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Sweden. Horizontal interviews covered the following countries: Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Croatia, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Türkiye as well as the European Commission and the UNHCR.

understanding in the assessment of international protection claims filed in different EU+ countries. Convergence is more likely among smaller countries which, as desk research and survey evidence shows, do not often have enough resources to cover all the themes and countries relevant to their national context.

In relation to the last point, two considerations are important. First, **many COI users believe that convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among EU+ countries without the EUAA COI products**. In the survey, over 40% of 74 COI network members declared holding this view. **If EUAA COI products did not exist, interviewees believe that the gap would be filled at national level**, either by hiring more staff or by relying on COI products produced by other countries (e.g., a case officer from Germany maintained that Scandinavian countries and the UK produce documents comparable to EUAA COI products). A considerable minority – around 20% of survey respondents believe, on the contrary, that convergence could not be achieved in the absence of EUAA COI products (Figure 78 in Annex 1). Fieldwork and horizontal interview notes revealed that some countries (such as Greece) would face increased costs and that access to COI documents would be limited, with a detrimental effect on convergence.

Second, **there are differences in the way in which the EU added value of such products compares across countries**. Desk research evidence suggested that countries with fewer resources to invest into and develop their own COI products report a greater degree of added value of the EUAA COI products. This is in line with the findings from the analysis of fieldwork and interview notes, which show that countries that have not prioritised resources for COI production (e.g., Bulgaria, which does not have its own methodology to produce national COI products, and Greece, as they have small COI units, and Portugal as it does not have a COI unit) heavily rely on EUAA COI products. On the contrary, countries like Austria and Norway have resource-rich units and don't necessarily see the full benefits of the role of the EUAA.

Finally, yet importantly, there are three **aspects which the EUAA could work on to increase the added value of its COI products**:

- **Timeliness of updates**: the EUAA should make sure information is updated regularly, if necessary, by reducing the time spent producing COI products. This recommendation, which emerged during the survey, was also a recurrent element in fieldwork and horizontal interview notes. A few interviewees suggested periodic updates to introduce more predictability.
- **Translations**: this need emerged from the survey analysis and was confirmed by the analysis of fieldwork and horizontal interviews. Even though English is a widely spoken language, not everyone working in international protection is in a position to fully understand the subtleties of a text written in English.
- **Dissemination and trainings**: awareness-raising campaigns and videoconferences could be organised to facilitate the uptake of such products.

Other points for improvement raised by a smaller number of stakeholders include:

- **Larger involvement in the production process**, as benefits could be derived from involving more countries in the drafting process.
- **Staff exchanges**, as setting up temporary transfers of agents and analysts would facilitate collaboration and the exchange of good practices.
- **Reliance on fact-finding missions**, as they would improve the quality and accuracy of the information contained.
- **Relevance**: exploratory interviews suggested that there is room for improvement when it comes to meeting common needs across EU+ countries at a specific moment in time and in response to a specific situation (e.g., COI covering Russia after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine).

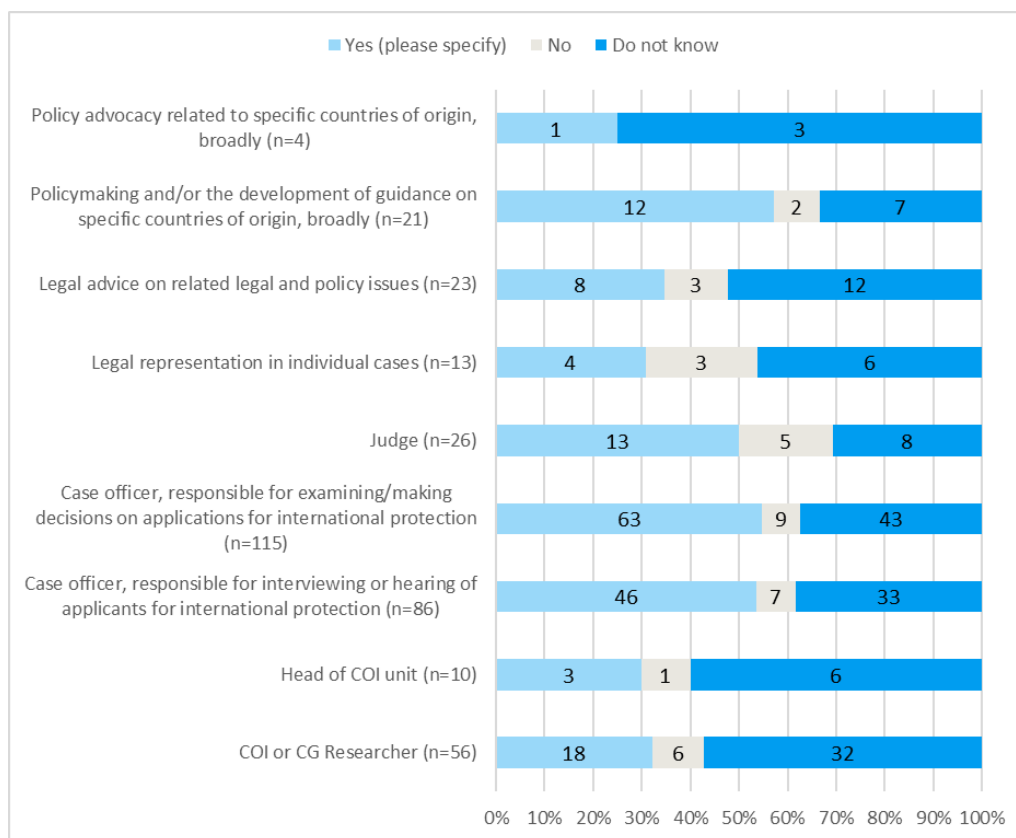
Country guidance

EQ 15: What is the additional value resulting from COI and CG products, compared to what could be achieved by Member States individually and collectively?

The majority of survey respondents believe that the existence of CG at EU level has brought added value to their work. This is particularly so for respondents involved in policymaking and/or the development of guidance on countries of origin, judges, case officers responsible for examining and making decisions on applications for international protection, and those responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection, as shown in the figure below (more than 50% of the 217 respondents). The exploratory interviews as well as the horizontal interview with a key international stakeholder also strongly attested to the added value of the EU-level CG products.

Additionally, the survey highlighted that over 60% of 217 respondents believe that the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents, and less than 5% believe the opposite.

Figure 20. Do you believe that having EU-level country guidance has added value for your work?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Only circa 10-15% of 213 respondents agreed strongly with the EU-level CG products being more complete, of higher quality, more relevant, more useful, or of better geographical coverage than their national guidance. However, this finding should be read together with the finding that EU-level CG contributes to a large extent to the development of national guidance on the countries of origin covered by the EUAA. No survey respondents indicated that they have never followed EU-level country guidance and 58% of 19 survey respondents either fully or largely reflect the EUAA guidance in the national guidance (Figure 91). While national guidance contains additional information of

relevance at national level, they integrate to a large extent the existing EU-level CG on a country of origin.

The added value of EU-level CG documents results mostly from:

- **Their authoritativeness:** similarly to EUAA COI, CG are considered to bring significant added value due to the high-quality methodology used in the production process. During the exploratory, fieldwork and horizontal interviews, authoritativeness emerged as the main reason for the EU-level CG's added value. The added value was illustrated by a stakeholder interviewed who noted that no EU+ country has managed to implement this type of methodology on its own and that even EU+ countries with different approaches agreed on it. The interviewee gave an example of the significant added value of the development of the CG methodology by mentioning the way in which the EUAA and EU+ countries were able to work together during the development of the first CG on Afghanistan: "brokering agreement on the choice of indicators and having a holistic assessment on the categorisation of different types of violence was a good example of the added value of the process." Fieldwork respondents noted that EU-level CG on a particular situation will have as a result that a position will be discussed less extensively between parties or a decision made more easily when EUAA guidance is available in a CG.
- In terms of **methodology**, but also **capacity**, several interviewees noted that the added value is even more important for EU+ countries that do not have sufficient capacity or a methodology at national level and therefore rely heavily on the EUAA. Such comments were made, for example, in the case of Bulgaria, where one stakeholder considered that they did not have their own methodology and that Bulgaria's national capacity was very limited, and therefore saw the added value of EU-level CG documents as considerable. Interviewees from Greece expressed similar experiences, highlighting the lack of funding and human resources, and the reassuring aspect that having the EUAA documents have for them.
- **The collective production process**, according to many of the stakeholders interviewed. The collective process through which the documents are produced brings together the knowledge of a wide range of experts from different countries and thus helps to produce a document that is more likely to be independent, objective, accurate, sufficiently cross-checked and therefore of higher quality, according to several stakeholders interviewed. An EUAA official interviewed highlighted the added value of having the possibility to fill in the gaps together with EU+ countries, while another interviewee considered that "the impact of an agency producing these reports is much greater than that of a desk officer in one country".
- **The level of harmonisation that they can bring about.** Similarly to the situation for EUAA COI, fieldwork interviews concluded that EU-level CG products can foster a common understanding in the assessment of international protection claims filed in different EU+ countries. This was for example illustrated by the updated CG on Afghanistan following the changes in the political situation in the country. As noted by case officers and national policy officers in one EU+ country, the risk profiles identified in the EUAA CG were followed closely by case officers across different countries.

In relation to the last point, about 60% of 217 respondents believe that CG documents have, to different degrees, contributed to **convergence** in the assessment of international protection needs across EU+ countries. Only 1% of respondents believe that CG documents had no impact at all on convergence. In this respect, some respondents point to the persisting difference in recognition rates by country of origin to show that national guidance still prevails (e.g., for Syria and Afghanistan). "In 2021, the recognition quota of people from Afghanistan fluctuated between 9% in Bulgaria and 100% in Spain and Portugal". A judge in Belgium noted that "guidance cannot harmonise the examination of credibility, specific to each judge, and there are procedural differences which hinder completely convergence, but for the appreciation of risk profiles or security

conditions in countries of origin, I think that this unifies the substantive analysis of the files.” A judge from Germany thinks that convergence can only be achieved with a higher European court. Finally, it emerged that practice and habits, which are difficult to change, might further hinder convergence.⁶⁰

As to whether convergence could be achieved at all without the use of EUAA’s CG products, 30% of respondents believe that, to a small extent, convergence would indeed be possible. There are no important differences in the way stakeholders from different groups think about this possibility.

Finally, in this context, the EUAA’s outreach activities are considered to bring significant added value. Interviewees noted that trainings and outreach activities on CG documents for first instance decision-makers and judges could further contribute to achieving greater convergence.

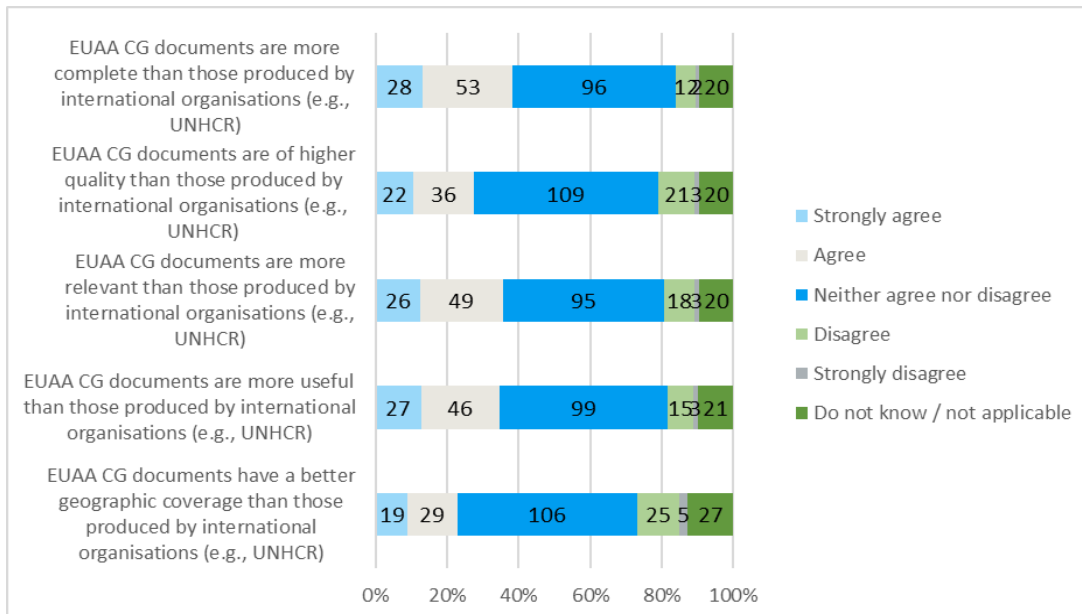
3.5.2 Added value compared to international sources (EQ 16)

Country guidance

EQ 16: What is the added value of the EUAA CG documents in relation to UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines?

Nearly half of the 211 survey respondents to this question neither agreed nor disagreed with statements related to the added value of the EU-level CG vis-à-vis the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines, considering that the EUAA CG documents are neither more complete, of greater quality, more relevant or more useful than those produced by international organisations such as the UNHCR. Of the other half, 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the EU-level CG being more complete (as opposed to the circa 20% that disagreed). Similarly, nearly 40% reported that the EU-level CG was more relevant and more useful, as opposed to the 20% that disagreed. Only 22% of survey respondents agree that EUAA CG documents have better geographic coverage than those produced by international organisations, such as the UNHCR.

Figure 21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=211)



⁶⁰ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please explain your answer.”

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

In contrast, the fieldwork and horizontal interviews show strong support for the EU-level CG being of larger added value to their work than the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines. The main differences between CG and the UNHCR Guidelines, according to interviewees, lies in the amount of detail provided in EU-level CG, the frequency of their updates, their scope and purpose. Respondents highlighted the following added value of CG compared to the UNHCR Guidelines for their work:

- **EU-level CG are considered more detailed and informative**, more concrete and comprehensive than UNHCR Guidelines. Nearly 40% of survey respondents highlighted that EUAA CG are more complete than UNHCR Guidelines. Stakeholders noted that UNHCR Guidelines are more generally worded and leave more room for interpretation.
- **UNHCR Guidelines are not updated as frequently as EU-level CG**, which makes the information often outdated for use in decision-making on international protection.
- **EU-level CG are broader in scope** containing also background information and specific information needed on a country of origin while UNHCR Guidelines remain more general.
- More precisely, **EU-level CG are more adapted to the needs** of case officers and policy makers. They are considered more practical in nature and provide policy guidance. EU-level CG are also considered more balanced than UNHCR Guidelines.
- The methodology for developing and adopting EU-level CG, in particular **the transparency and corroborated nature of the CG process, contribute to the authority of the EU-level CG**. An EUAA official noted that, while UNHCR documents are easily readable, they do not have this level of transparency.

These differences are reflected in the **differences in use** of EU-level CG and UNHCR Guidelines. Stakeholders interviewed overall noted they used the UNHCR Guidelines less frequently than the EU-level CG. Both types of documents are moreover used for different purposes. UNHCR Guidelines are, due to their more general nature, rather used to get acquainted with the situation in a country of origin. EU-level CG are a practical tool providing important added value for the work of case officers and policy makers in the EU+ countries.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations for improvement for COI and CG based on the data collected and findings presented in the previous chapter. These conclusions and recommendations are related to the five evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and EU added value.

4.1 Effectiveness



EUAA COI products are well used and are primarily used by case officers. EUAA COI is often used in conjunction with other sources such as national COI and information from international organisations / civil society organisations. Similarly, CG documents are widely used, primarily by policymakers, especially those involved in the development of national guidance, as well as in second instance decision-making. Use by case officers is mixed, but this can in part be attributed to the integration of EU-level guidance into their national guidance.

EUAA COI products are an important source of information that is consistently consulted and used by the intended target users across EU+ countries. This is particularly reported to be the case for case officers. These users frequently employ EUAA's COI products in conjunction with other sources, such as COI produced at the national level or information from international organisations and non-governmental entities. The choice between these sources depends on factors such as the applicant's country of origin and the timeliness of the information required. EUAA's COI target users emphasise the importance of having access to translated products which impacts the use of these products.

EUAA CG documents are well used, particularly by policy makers, and are the second most referenced EUAA product in national jurisprudence. The latter evidences their prominent use by judges, but also by legal practitioners. The majority of stakeholders involved in policy making and/or the development of national guidance references the EU-level CG documents, either referring directly to the EU-level documents in their national decisions or integrating them into their national guidance. The latter also greatly influences whether direct use by case officers can be detected. CG documents are primarily used for obtaining up-to-date analysis and guidance on specific topics. Target users highlight that the structure of the documents, easy access, their authoritativeness as a source as well-researched and complete documents, and the possibility to search for specific questions contribute to their use by stakeholders.

The evaluation showed that the use of COI and CG products is being monitored to different extents by the EUAA and not in a systematic or regular way, leading to gaps in the EUAA's knowledge of the extent of use of given products.

Recommendation(s):

- Seek feedback on the quality/use of COI products in a more systematised and regular way, using the COI/CG monitoring and evaluation framework as a basis for doing so.
- A more extensive and recurring monitoring and evaluation of the use of COI and CG should go beyond monitoring download statistics from the COI/CG Portals. Increasing and systematising collaborative efforts with national authorities and with designated contact points could provide valuable insights into the use of EUAA COI/CG products across countries. In this context, it is recommended to capitalise on the COI and CG networks by increasing the NCPs involvement in reporting on the use of the products in their respective countries. For instance, annual reporting may be introduced by the NCPs during the last

network meeting of the year on the degree of use in their country, challenges to use/data collection and steps to address them for the next annual reporting cycle.

- To increase the possibility of accurately mapping the use of CG and COI products:
 - Request EU+ countries to systematically provide the EUAA with their national guidance, including updates of such guidance.
 - Ask EU+ countries to instruct/encourage references to the EU-level products. Present in the Management Committee (and any other fora where high-level buy-in can be secured) that under the EUAA Regulation Member States are now obliged to 'take into account' the EUAA CG and therefore to consult the products, even if they will eventually follow their national guidance. Underline that for compliance with the binding EU Regulation, Member States will need to verify that they in fact 'took into account' the EU-level country guidance. In this context, also expressly ask for the specific mention of the products via the Courts and Tribunal Network.
 - Request that NCPs and other counterparts make explicit mention of these documents in national decision-making and any processes where they are used.
 - Consider putting this request even on the products themselves: "Please expressly reference the use of this publication in the following manner: ...".



The dissemination activities that the EUAA is carrying out to promote and distribute EUAA produced COI and CG products are regarded as effective by COI and CG network members. At the same time, national administrations are disseminating these products to their user base to varying degrees.

COI network members find the most employed methods by the EUAA to disseminate its COI products (i.e., email communication and presentations in network meetings) to be highly effective in achieving their intended purposes. National administrations mainly use email communication for distributing and promoting EUAA COI, though sometimes no dissemination activities are carried out. However, the EUAA produced COI are not always well known by users in their country and a digital communication strategy specific to COI products is lacking.

Users learn about CG documents primarily through the EUAA website and via word of mouth (colleague/peer and via a manager/supervisor). At the same time, outreach activities are increasingly organised and diversified both in their form (with the launch events having increasing prominence) and target audiences (with judges reporting the usefulness of activities increasingly). The feedback about the workshops is overwhelmingly positive and additional workshops/trainings/info sessions are requested. The CG production process itself also has an impact on national guidance, as it leads to changes in national guidance, sometimes even before the EU-level CG is published – overall contributing to convergence. Lastly, points of improvement are that a digital communication strategy specific to CG products is lacking, and that the Agency's external communication strategy is not tailored to the main target groups of the EUAA products.

Recommendation(s):

- Mainstream the promotion of COI and CG products through EUAA activities, including through preparing brief promotion materials, such as a few slides that can be inserted at the end of each thematically relevant presentation that would direct the audience to the products.

- Create more opportunities for webinars/workshops and informative sessions to understand how EUAA COI and CG products can be used in the work of different target users. Specifically, increase the number of workshops on the COI/CG products including for the judiciary, and foreseeing trainings and information sessions in the official languages of the Member State.
- Consider providing specific 'how to use' information sessions, explaining the use of the products in a simple and practical way. Consider developing 3-5 minutes 'how-to-use' videos, as those are more user-friendly and better suited for dissemination, especially digital communication, than the text-based presentation of the products.
- Put in place a dedicated digital communication strategy for the COI/CG products that could also increase the effectiveness of the dissemination efforts already in place. For instance, set-up social media marketing campaigns on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter that are specific to the products and target users that are likely to use these products. To that end, a staff knowledgeable about the products can make a list of relevant organisations, stakeholders, key interest areas and work together with communications staff (or an external consultant) who can then set up, monitor, and tailor these campaigns for their traction. Even with low financial investment in the campaigns, the reach of the current dissemination activities could be significantly increased this way. In addition, capitalising on the more significant following of counterparts could also be taken advantage of by requesting them to share these posts and making this standard whenever working together on an event or a product. Having tailored newsletters for the different target end users with more content-related information on COI and CG could also be considered.
- Consider making product launch events public to increase their reach. Consider preparing and displaying the video recording of the events on the Agency's website, which could make them more accessible and user-friendly.

4.2 Efficiency



There are great fluctuations in the drafting, reviewing and translation costs of EUAA COI products. The two most widely used and effective dissemination methods for COI products (i.e., email communication and presentations in network meetings) might be less costly than other means, but more data is needed to make a robust assessment. For CG, investments in CG production significantly increased, leading to expanded and divergent outreach activities that received positive feedback and are in high demand. Participating in EU-level CG incurs significant human costs, especially for those countries that maintain their national guidance documents, but is considered valuable.

The production of COI by the EUAA is subject to notable fluctuations in costs, particularly in the areas of drafting, reviewing, and translation. These variations can be attributed to many factors, which need to be further assessed to understand the relation they have with the annual use of EUAA COI. When it comes to disseminating COI products, email communication and presentations in network meetings are widely recognised as effective methods. These approaches can efficiently reach target audiences, while minimising expenses compared to activities like trainings and workshops. Collecting data on the resources invested in disseminating EUAA COI would be useful to understand the relation it has to its outreach to target users.

For CG, throughout the evaluation period, the EUAA greatly increased its human and financial resources invested in the production of the CG documents, with a tenfold increase in the budget and its dedicated staff going from one to eight. At the same time, CG budget was also used for

purposes that went beyond the production of CG documents and related activities, and benefitted the unit as a whole. CG dissemination activities have increased sharply, and the target group of these activities diversified greatly - no longer focusing only on case officers but increasingly on the judiciary, NCPs, policy makers, academics, mixed groups and the general public. The outreach activities are well received, and more trainings are requested, while production related activities also play an important role in dissemination. For EU+ countries that have their own national guidance, the EU-level CG does not save costs in terms of time and human resources. On the contrary, it generates additional time and labour costs to ensure synergies between the national and EUAA approaches, which nevertheless is consistently reported to be worthwhile. For EU+ countries that do not produce their national guidance, even though the costs of participation in the EUAA production process are significant, the efficiency gains are high, especially since the most common reason for not producing national guidance is the existence of the EU-level CG.

Recommendation(s):

- To improve efficiency in the production and dissemination of COI/CG products:
 - Leverage technology to reduce dissemination costs through webinars, online training modules, and virtual conferences which could be cost-effective methods.
 - Consider using machine translation for the products and reducing translation costs by employing human resources only to double-check their accuracy.
- For both COI and CG, create platforms/events for “peer-learning/exchange of experiences” where EU+ countries that directly use EUAA COI and CG or have aligned national guidance could share specific efficiency gains with those who continue using their national products.
- Track the financial costs of the main COI and CG production and dissemination activities in a more systematic way and gather data on their correlation with use (e.g., costs of dissemination activities with more significant financial commitments *vis-à-vis* increased self-reported use based on 3-6 months follow up survey among participants). Gathering a more detailed account of the type of costs involved (e.g., in-house versus outsourced production) and the systematic use of these products would help find the right balance between in-house production, outsourcing and translations and thus maximise both effectiveness and efficiency.
- Consider including in the Consolidated Annual Activity Reports an overview of the major actual spendings *vis-à-vis* the planned allocations to more adequately reflect the scale of resources spent on implementation.

4.3 Relevance



EUAA COI products are generally perceived as relevant, complete, and of high quality by a diverse range of users, regardless of their national COI production experience. Ensuring the products are up to date is of high importance for meeting the needs of asylum and migration processes in EU+ countries. COI products are used for a variety of purposes beyond the CG framework, ranging from supporting decision-making, advocacy to responding to the more operational needs of stakeholders. For EU-level CG products, most users were satisfied with their usability, usefulness, quality, completeness and geographical coverage. The scope of the EU-level CG is satisfactory and relevant, though the degree to which this is the case depends on the national caseload.

The content and geographical coverage of the COI/CG products is relevant to meet the needs of stakeholders at EU level. Thus, while some stakeholders expressed their preference for national-

level reports which were seen as more adapted to the national context, there is common acknowledgment that the geographical coverage of the EUAA COI and CG products meets the needs at EU level. While there is a slight preference towards having shorter thematic COI reports, other stakeholders appreciate the length and comprehensiveness of the reports. Translation is relevant for some EU+ countries (Slovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Greece) while, reportedly, unnecessary in others (the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany). There are mixed views on the length of the CG documents.

The main critical aspect pertaining to the relevance of the COI and CG products concerns the need for up-to-date information which, in the view of stakeholders, is compromised by the long production/update process and the length of the reports. Ensuring COI is updated in tandem with evolving situations and developments, especially in countries of origin where the political situation is more dynamic, is essential to ensure that the information remains relevant and reliable, meeting the needs of asylum and migration processes in EU+ countries. There appears to be limited awareness among stakeholders of the possibility to submit COI queries to the EUAA, suggesting a need to build awareness of this possibility.

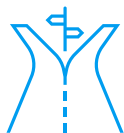
Recommendation(s):

- To increase timeliness of COI/CG products:
 - Release updates with a narrower scope that would enable higher frequency: e.g., consider releasing 'section updates' that can be released promptly, and then a combined update (which would probably still be partial) that would consolidate the 'section updates' of the previous six months or so.
 - Consider more structured collaboration with some national COI/CG units that produce high-quality work that could be expanded on/amended for use across the EU. To that end, map interest/capacity for collaboration at national level (e.g., through requesting the NCPs to provide this information in relation to their national COI/CG units, where applicable).
- If partial updates are introduced in the report or if the situation in the country remains unchanged (and hence the COI report is still valid), add clear notes confirming the ongoing validity of the report.
- Ahead of the launch of a COI/CG product, conduct a brief needs mapping (request email confirmation or via a mini survey) to confirm the need for translation in a specific country and do not prepare translations for EU+ countries that confirm that they do not need it - thereby also freeing up financial resources for more timely production and update processes. Assume that there is no need for translation in EU+ countries where English is an official language, such as Malta or Ireland, and ask for the specification of translation needs in such countries before commissioning translation. Conversely, assume that there is a need for translation in EU+ countries where there is a legal requirement to use national language in decisions.
- Explore the option of incorporating a feature on the website that allows users to provide feedback⁶¹ or request translations. This will not only enhance the ability to gather input from end-users who may feel far removed from EUAA activities but also provides them with a means to connect with EUAA, ultimately contributing to increased awareness of EUAA products.
- If shortening the EUAA COI reports proves challenging, it is advisable to extensively promote the option of submitting COI queries to EU+ countries, including national

⁶¹ As done for the EUAA practical guides and tools.

administrations (particularly, those potential users far removed from EUAA activities) and CSOs. This way, users seeking specific information can use the EUAA COI queries system to address their particular needs, thereby aiming to address the issue raised by those seeking more concise reports.

4.4 Coherence



There is a large degree of alignment between the EUAA COI products and other interventions aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection claims, most notably the EUAA COI methodology. Evidence suggests that EU+ countries' administrations rely on the EUAA guidelines and methodology when drafting their own products. Limited data could be gathered concerning the coherence between the EUAA COI and CG products and the EUAA Practical tools and guides as the majority of stakeholders consulted were not aware of the latter. Despite minor inconsistencies identified between the EUAA COI products and certain national products, the two types of documents are often used in tandem due to their (perceived) complementarity.

Evidence collected reveals that the EUAA COI methodology and related practices are embedded in the national practices of EU+ countries' administrations regardless of their level of engagement in EUAA activities and/or degree of maturity of their asylum administration. EUAA COI documents are used for, and integrated in, national COI products only to a limited extent, and coherence between the two sources is not always optimal. While few stakeholders could provide concrete examples of such inconsistencies, two stakeholders mentioned the nature of the sources consulted, i.e., excessive reliance on media sources. The fact that many countries have continued to produce their own COI products has in large part not translated into a duplication of efforts: EUAA COI and national COI products are, in many respects, complementary, and are often used in tandem. In fact, some countries such as Belgium and Sweden reported stopping national COI production and diverted these resources to the EUAA COI production process. Complementarity arises with respect to countries covered, themes covered, depth of information provided, language needs, variety of perspectives, as well as timeliness of information.

Similarly, CG documents sit within a framework of various EUAA products aiming at harmonising the examination of international protection claims across the EU and are meant to be complementary. EU-level CG consistently refers the user to other EUAA products, primarily to the practical guides, and stakeholders did not mention any inconsistencies between EU-level CG documents and other EUAA interventions. In relation to coherence between EU-level CG and national guidance, while the primary reason why EU+ countries continue to produce their own national guidance is to maintain national sovereignty over the guidance, evidence gathered as part of this evaluation shows that there are in fact no major inconsistencies between EU-level and national guidance, but they are rather complementary in nature – with the EU-level CG contributing to the development of national guidance. It should be noted that this view is mostly self-reported in the evaluation as many EU+ countries do not make their own guidance available outside of their administration.

Recommendation(s):

- As previously mentioned in relation to relevance, a feature for providing feedback on COI products could be incorporated into the website. This feedback mechanism might include a set of questions aimed at engaging stakeholders in discussions regarding inconsistencies between EUAA COI products and national products, facilitating a more comprehensive grasp of the matter.

- The EUAA could request that EU+ countries share their national guidance documents and their updates, on the basis of which the degree and type of actual inconsistencies could be pinpointed.
- To increase engagement in the CG processes by EU+ countries that are (more) reluctant to participate (despite participation being open to all), directly ask for their engagement in relation to specific 'low hanging fruit' issues where their national practices might be more closely aligned with the EU-level position, with a view to gradually building up cooperation (and eventually increasing political buy-in).

4.5 EU added value



The added value of EUAA COI products compared to national sources is well-substantiated and originates from a variety of reasons ranging from its authoritativeness to the knowledge sharing associated with it, though the degree of added value brought about varies depending on the EU+ country concerned. The EU-level CG's added value *vis-à-vis* national guidance documents is well corroborated and stems from its authoritativeness, methodology and collective production process – and the level of harmonisation it can bring about.

The vast majority of COI users believe that the existence of COI products at EU level has brought significant value to their work. The added value of EUAA COI products is well-recognised and understood to originate from a variety of different sources – their authoritativeness, their quality, the knowledge and resource sharing associated to their production, the new perspective they bring at national level and the level of harmonisation they can bring at national level. The added value is greater for countries with fewer resources to invest into and develop their own COI products, and mainly stems from the products' authoritativeness, quality, the knowledge and resource sharing associated with their production, the new perspective they bring at national level, as well as the level of harmonisation that they can bring about. In relation to the last point, however, it must be noted that a few COI users believe that convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the existence of EU-level COI products; if EU-level COI products did not exist, the gap could be filled at national level, be it by the country in question or another country.

The vast majority of stakeholders reported that the EU-level CG has added value for their work and thought that the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents. The added value of the EU-level CG compared to national ones stems from its authoritativeness, methodology and collective production process – and the level of harmonisation it can bring about. CG users were largely undecided during this evaluation about the added value of the EU-level CG as compared to the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines. Nevertheless, CG users believed that the comparative added value of the EU-level CG lies in it being more detailed, informative, up-to-date as well as more concrete and comprehensive than UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines. In addition, they considered the EU-level CG to be broader and more adapted to the needs of case officers and policy makers – and hence, overall, more practical.

Recommendation(s):

- To increase the EU added value of the COI/CG products, strike a balance between producing more frequent updates of existing products (which the evaluation suggests is the most pressing need of stakeholders) and ensuring new products are developed for those countries for which there is a clear added value at EU level of doing so, based on an assessment of stakeholder needs.

- Develop incentives for more countries to participate in the production of COI and CG products to further strengthen its authoritativeness, as well as develop synergies arising from knowledge and resource sharing. To ensure its effectiveness, the system of incentives should be developed in close collaboration with countries not participating in the COI StratNet, while keeping already active countries informed.⁶²
- To increase engagement of more EU+ countries, consider hosting events and meetings in locations other than Malta to involve those for whom Malta is less accessible/attractive.
- Encourage EU+ countries with positive experience to share their 'good practices' either in large-scale events (such as 'lessons learned/good practices in X region') or on a bi-lateral or sub-regional basis, especially *vis-à-vis* EU+ countries that might be less open to guidance from the EU level but may cooperate with neighbouring or otherwise similar countries more constructively.
- Prepare an advocacy strategy for a structured approach to increasing high-level buy-in on the use of the EU-level CG products.

⁶² Countries already participating in the COI StratNet include Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden.

Annex 1 Targeted survey analysis

The purpose of the survey was to collect stakeholder views to help answer questions related to all five evaluation criteria. Before presenting the findings, this section outlines the methods and the tools used to design, distribute, and analyse the survey.

Target population

The survey targeted different types of stakeholders, notably:

- COI or CG Researchers/experts⁶³
- Heads of COI units
- Case officers, responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection
- Case officers, responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection
- Judges
- Legal representatives in individual cases
- Legal advisers on related legal and policy issues
- Policymakers and/or the developers of guidance on specific countries of origin, broadly
- Policy advocates related to specific countries of origin, broadly

Since it was possible for there to be some overlap in the groups (e.g., decisionmakers in some countries may also be COI researchers), only one survey was set up for the different types of stakeholders.

Sampling method and survey distribution

Respondents were recruited using the snowball sampling technique: 1165 stakeholders contacted by the EUAA received a direct link to complete the survey and were then invited to share the link to the survey within their network. This method allowed the study team to reach stakeholders for which no contact information was available to the EUAA and the study team. However, because it is a non-probability sampling method, it may have generated a sample that is not representative of the target population.

Design

The survey included both close-ended (dichotomous, multiple-choice, rating scale and checklist-style) and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions have the advantage of saving respondents time and reducing measurement error as respondents are able to select answers from pre-established lists, while open-ended questions allow for new insights and more detail. Through a complex set of activations, respondents were only shown questions that were relevant to them. Finally, to increase the number of complete questionnaires, respondents were given the option to save their responses and go back to the survey to complete it later.

Translation

The survey was translated into 22 languages (all official EU languages except for Irish and Maltese because the use of English is widespread in Ireland and Malta). Translations were carried out by a professional translation agency with solid experience in the field of migration and asylum, as well as familiarity with EU jargon (Espresso Translations s.r.l.).

⁶³ CG products: 'CG experts' is a more accurate term for this category, which will be used for analysis purposes.

Tools

Once approved by the EUAA, the survey questionnaire was uploaded to Ramboll's proprietary survey software SurveyXact.



SurveyXact is an online survey tool that was developed by Ramboll in 1999 as a web-based system to assist collection, analysis, presentation and distribution of survey data. The system contains advanced features for data collection regardless of whether the data are retrieved online, through telephone interviewing or with paper questionnaires. Furthermore, the system handles the same questionnaire without difficulty in almost any language. It also allows for full (visual) customisation and complex activation/visibility settings, thus making it possible to fully tailor the questions asked of each respondent based on their profile and/or their answers to preceding questions. The system has a built-in data analysis toolkit that allows for easy cross-tabulation of results, allowing for filtering based on stakeholder types and/or their responses, thus facilitating descriptive statistical analysis of the results that can be supplemented with a more robust statistical analysis in external programmes. SurveyXact is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and has been used in countless evaluation projects, including the evaluation of 11 practical guides and tools of the EUAA. Visit <http://www.surveyxact.com> for more information.

Survey administration

The survey remained open for responses for a total of 26 days between 9 June and 5 July 2023. During this period, a functional mailbox was set up and regularly monitored to answer and/or address any questions and/or issues identified by the respondents.

Survey analysis

SurveyXact and Microsoft Excel were used to clean, analyse, and visualise the data. For the purpose of this analysis, both complete and partially complete questionnaires were considered, providing respondents answered questions beyond the profiling section.

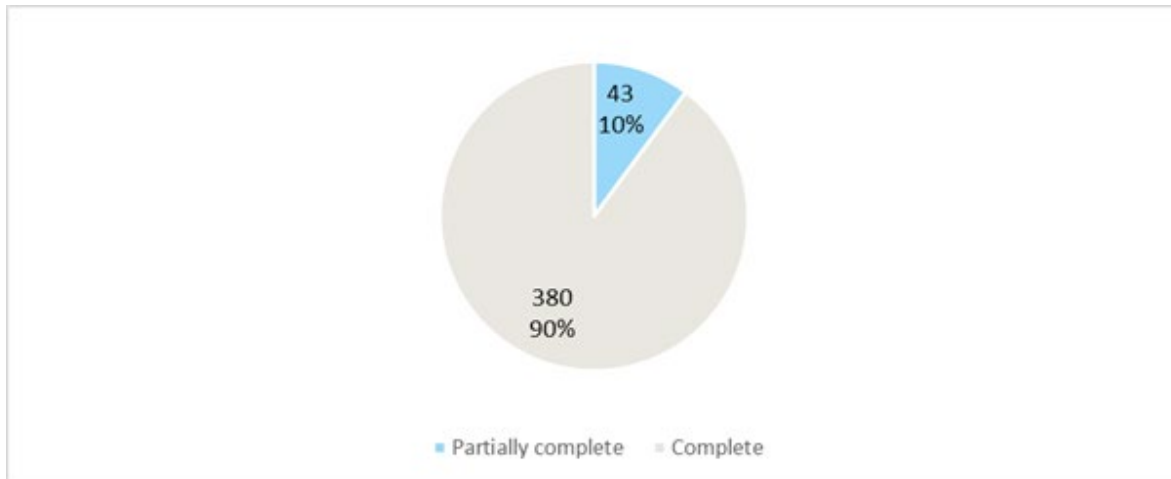
In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox, the survey data was assessed for any entries that may contain duplicates or errors. As such, each graph provides the number of responses per question. No campaigns were detected.

Profiling questions

Because of the use of the snowballing technique, the exact number of stakeholders to which the survey was disseminated is unknown.

A total of 423 respondents completed or partially completed the survey. As previously mentioned, both complete and partially complete questionnaires were considered, provided that respondents answered questions beyond the profiling section. Incomplete questionnaires make up 10% of the total number of questionnaires analysed (Figure 22).

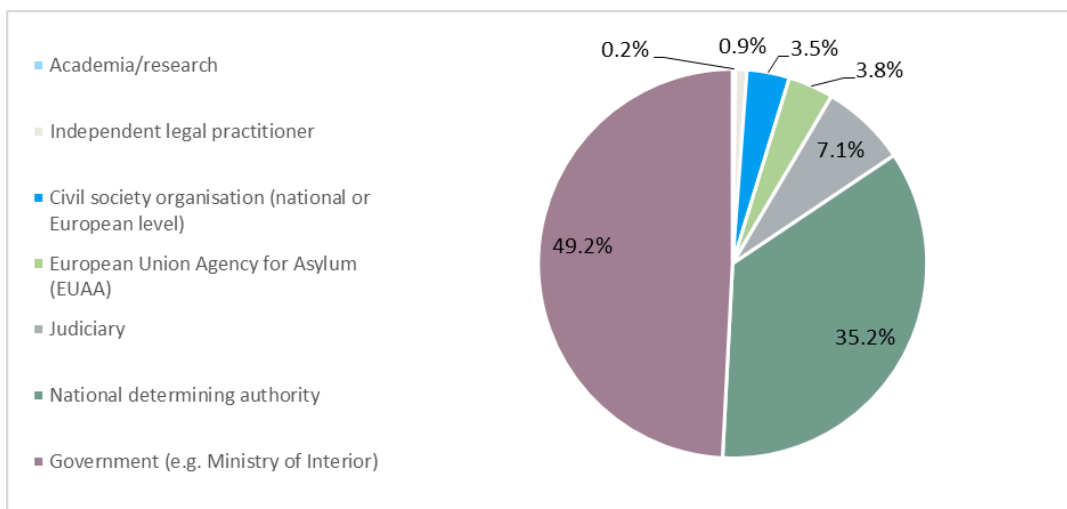
Figure 22. Overview of respondents (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Nearly half of the respondents work for governments (e.g., Ministry of Interior). These, together with respondents working for National determining authorities (which are normally part of Ministries of Interior), make up over 84% of the total number of respondents.

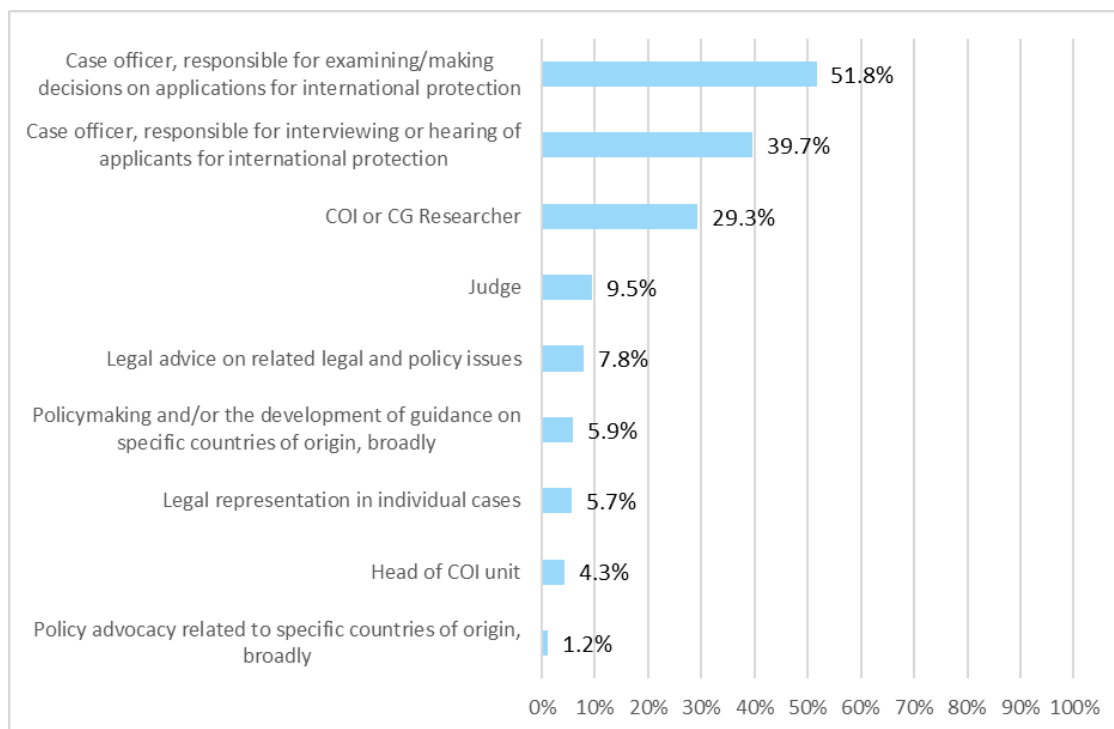
Figure 23. What type of body do you work at? (n = 423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Over 90% of respondents indicated performing functions similar to that of case officers. COI or CG researchers/experts represent nearly 30% of respondents.

Figure 24. What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

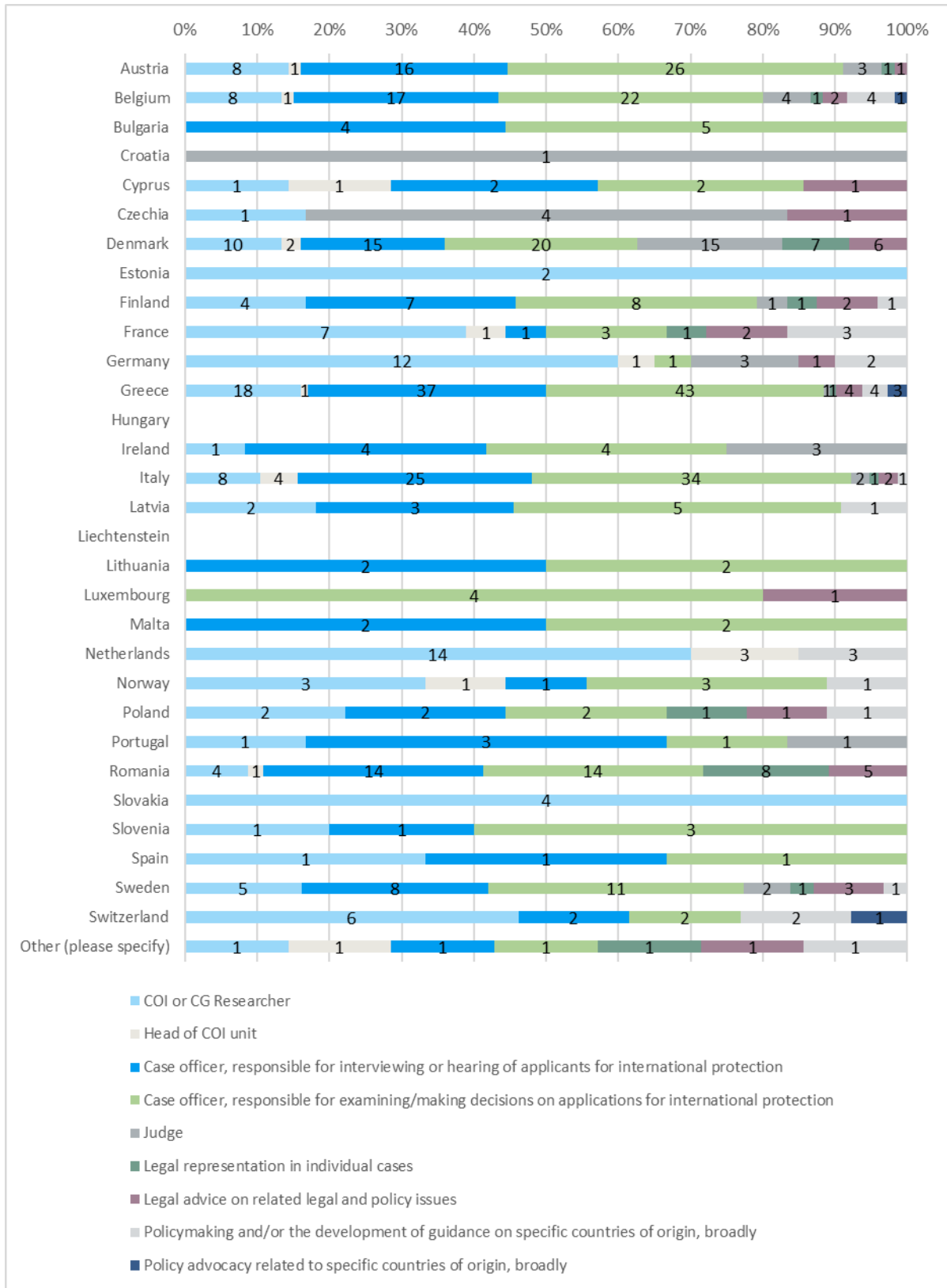
As anticipated, several respondents simultaneously perform different functions related to international protection (see Table 7 below). Out of the 188 respondents who perform more than one function, over 150 of them indicated working as case officers responsible for both interviewing/hearing of applicants for international protection and examining/making decisions on applications for international protection.

Table 7. Survey respondents performing more than one function

	Number of respondents
One function	235
More than one function	188
Total	423

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

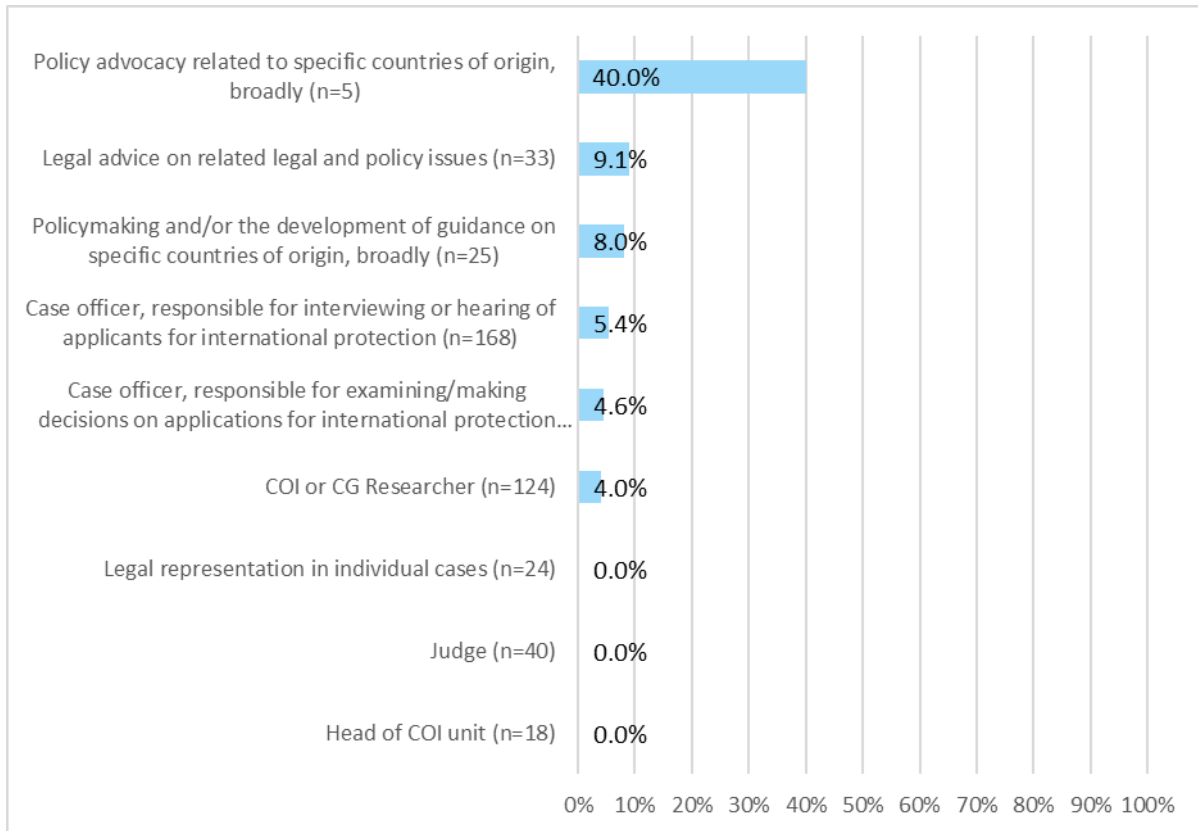
Figure 25. What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

4% of survey respondents declared working for the EUAA. As shown in Figure 26, they represent 4% of respondents among COI or CG researchers/experts, about 5% of respondents among case officers, 9% of respondents among legal advisers, 8% of respondents among policy makers/ developers of guidance on specific countries of origin and 40% of respondents among policy advocates.

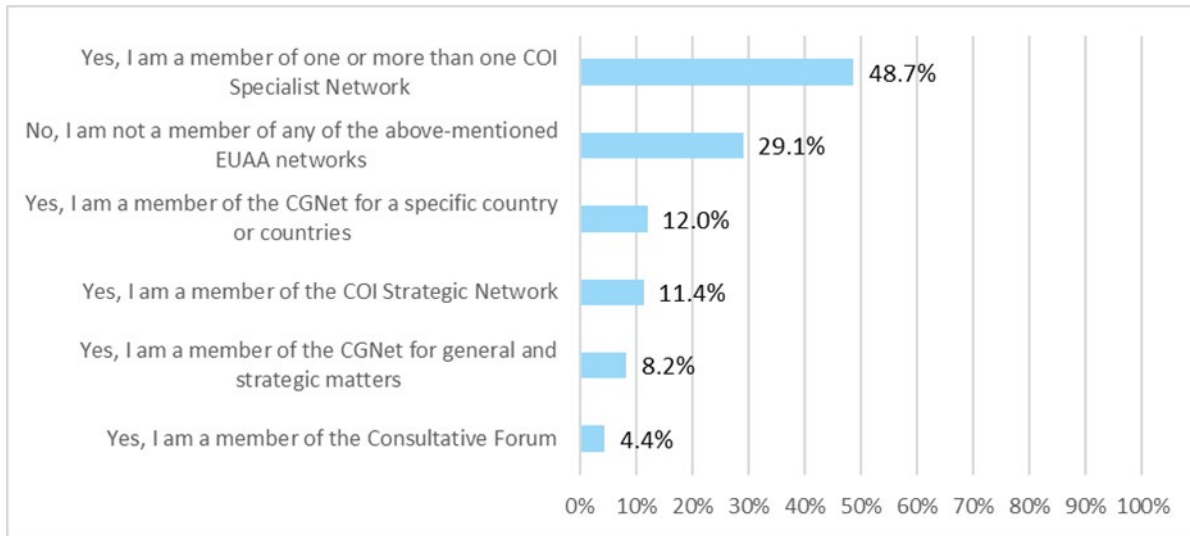
Figure 26. Respondents working for the EUAA across different profiles (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Nearly half of respondents (where applicable) reported being a member of one or more COI specialist networks. 12% of respondents declared being members of CGNet for a specific country or countries. COI StratNet members, CGNet for general and strategic matters members and members of the Consultative Forum account for 11, 8% and 4% respectively. 29% of respondents declared not being a member of any of those networks.

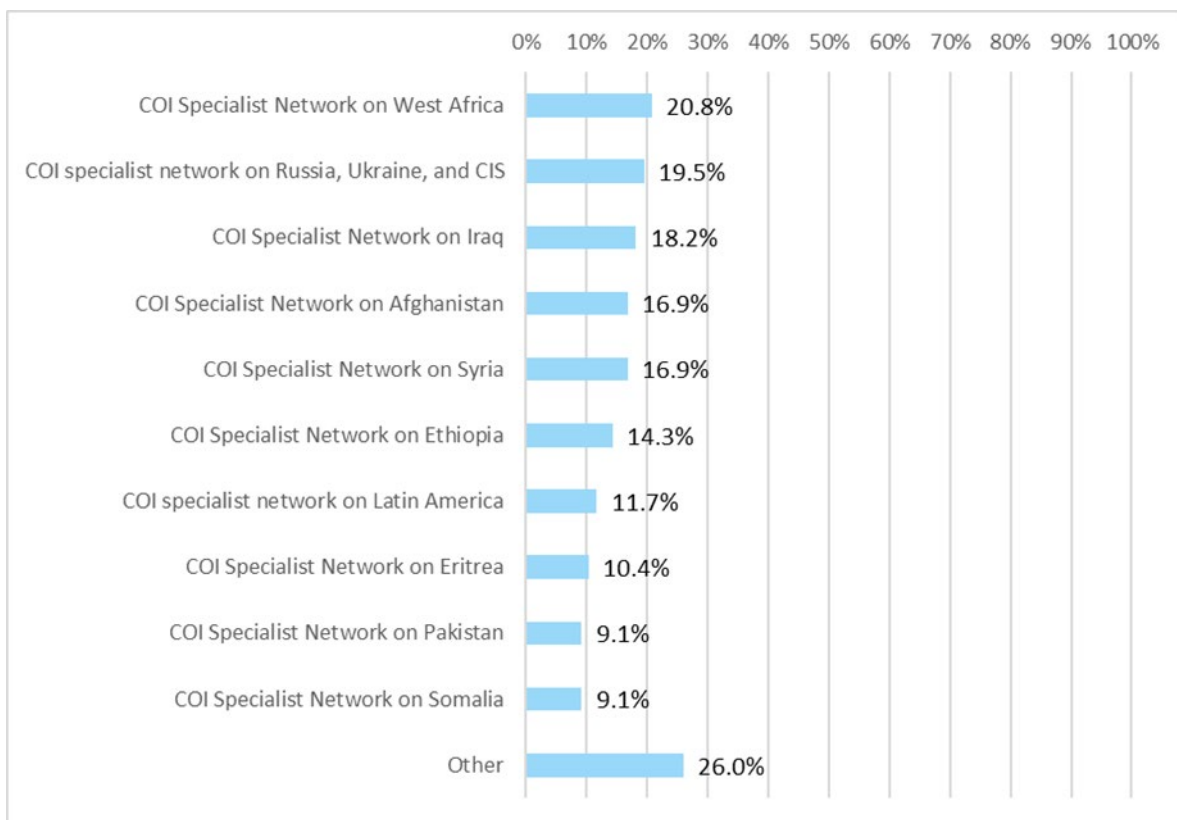
Figure 27. Are you a member of an EUAA network? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=158)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

As the figure below shows, the distribution of respondents over the different COI specialist networks is more or less balanced, although 26% of respondents reported being members of networks other than those listed in the figure.

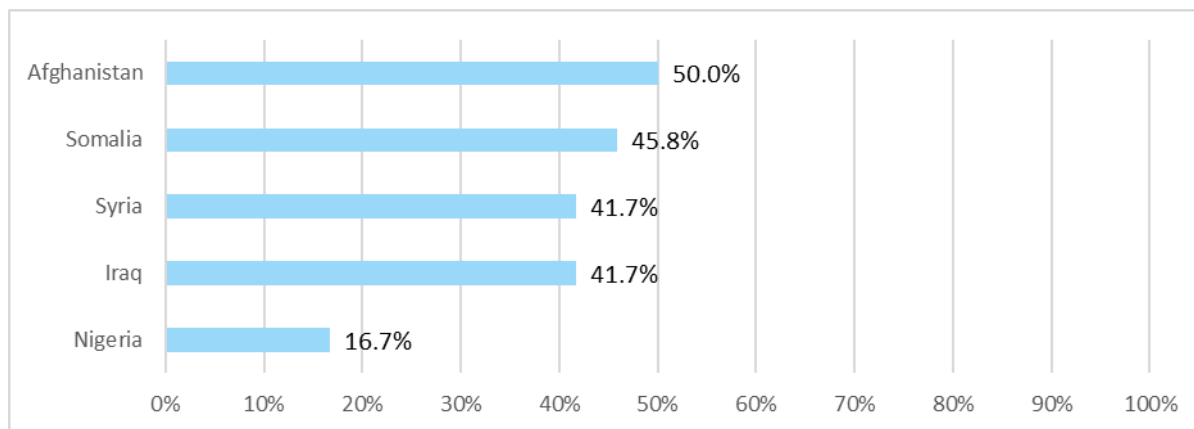
Figure 28. Please specify which COI specialist network(s) you are a member of (n=77)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When it comes to the countries respondents engage on in the CGNet, half or nearly half of respondents listed Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria and Iraq.

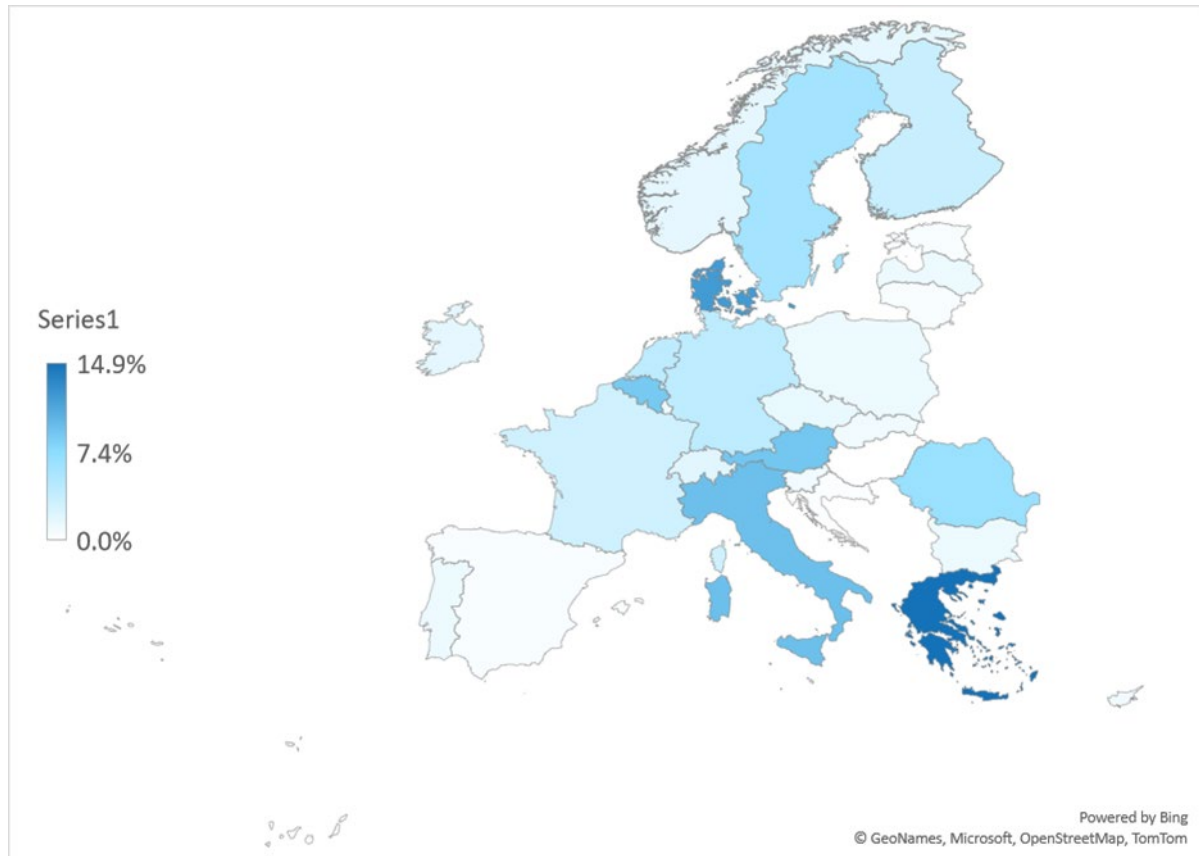
Figure 29. Please specify which countries you engage on in the CGNet (n=24)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Regarding geographical representation, Greece is the most represented country (15%), followed by Denmark (12%), Italy, Austria, and Belgium (each around 9%). Apart from Hungary and Liechtenstein, which had no respondents representing them, the least represented countries include Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, and Spain – not more than two respondents declared working in each of them. Finally, three respondents (1%) declared working in a country other than those illustrated below.

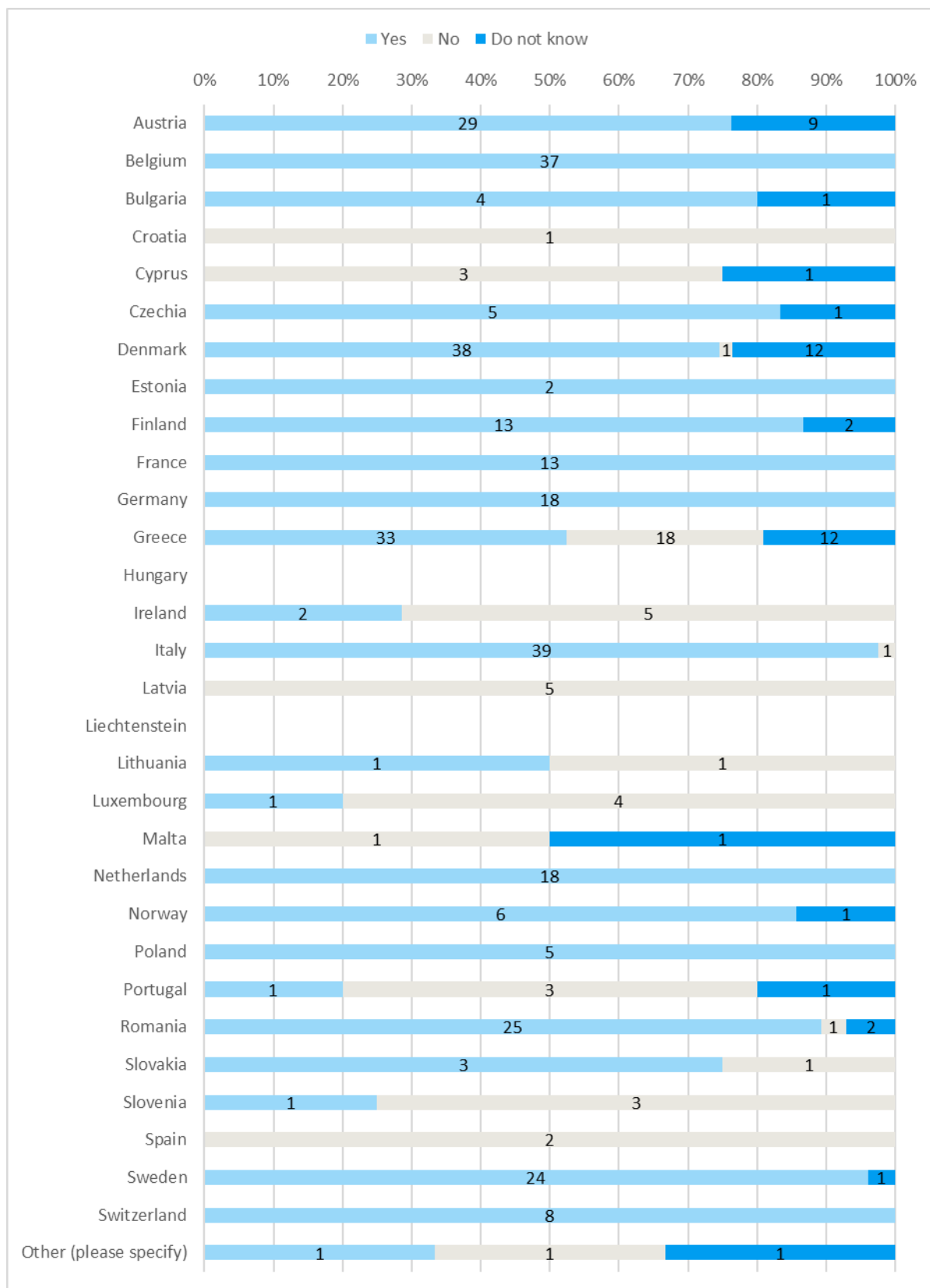
Figure 30. Which country do you work in? (n=423)



Source: *Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey*

Countries that produce their own COI documents include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland. Countries that do not appear to produce their own COI documents include Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, and Spain. The situation is less clear-cut for Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, as respondents' replies within each of these countries seem to contradict each other. No data were collected for Hungary and Liechtenstein.

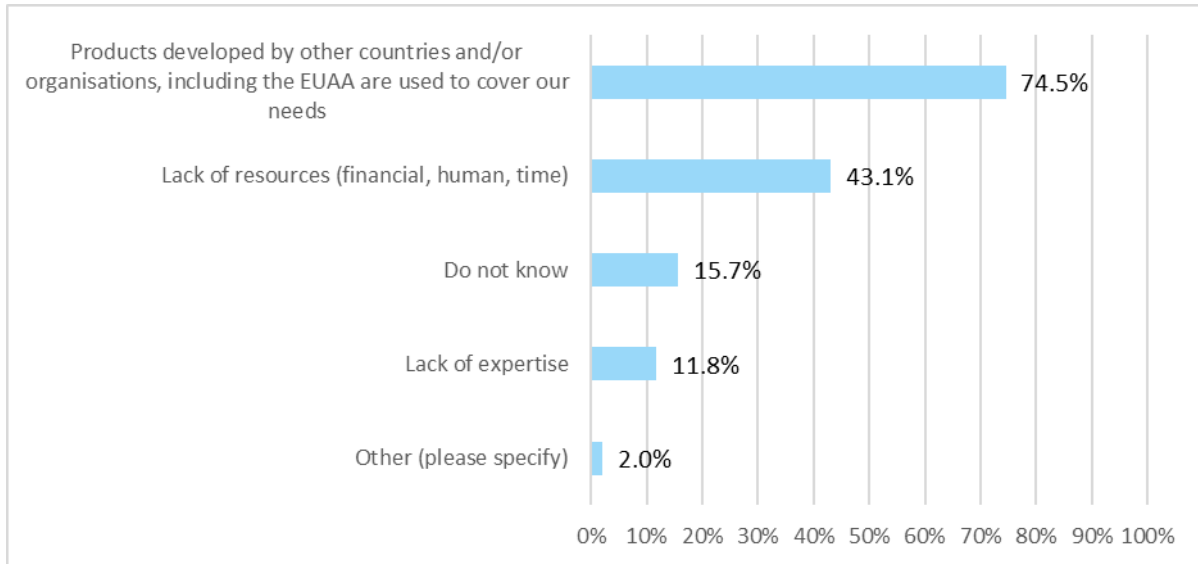
Figure 31. Does your country produce its own COI documents? (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Within countries not producing COI products at the national level, nearly 75% of respondents indicated that the main reason for this is the fact that products developed by other countries and/or organisations, including the EUAA, are good enough. The second most important reason is the lack of resources.

Figure 32. What are the reasons for not producing own COI documents? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=51)

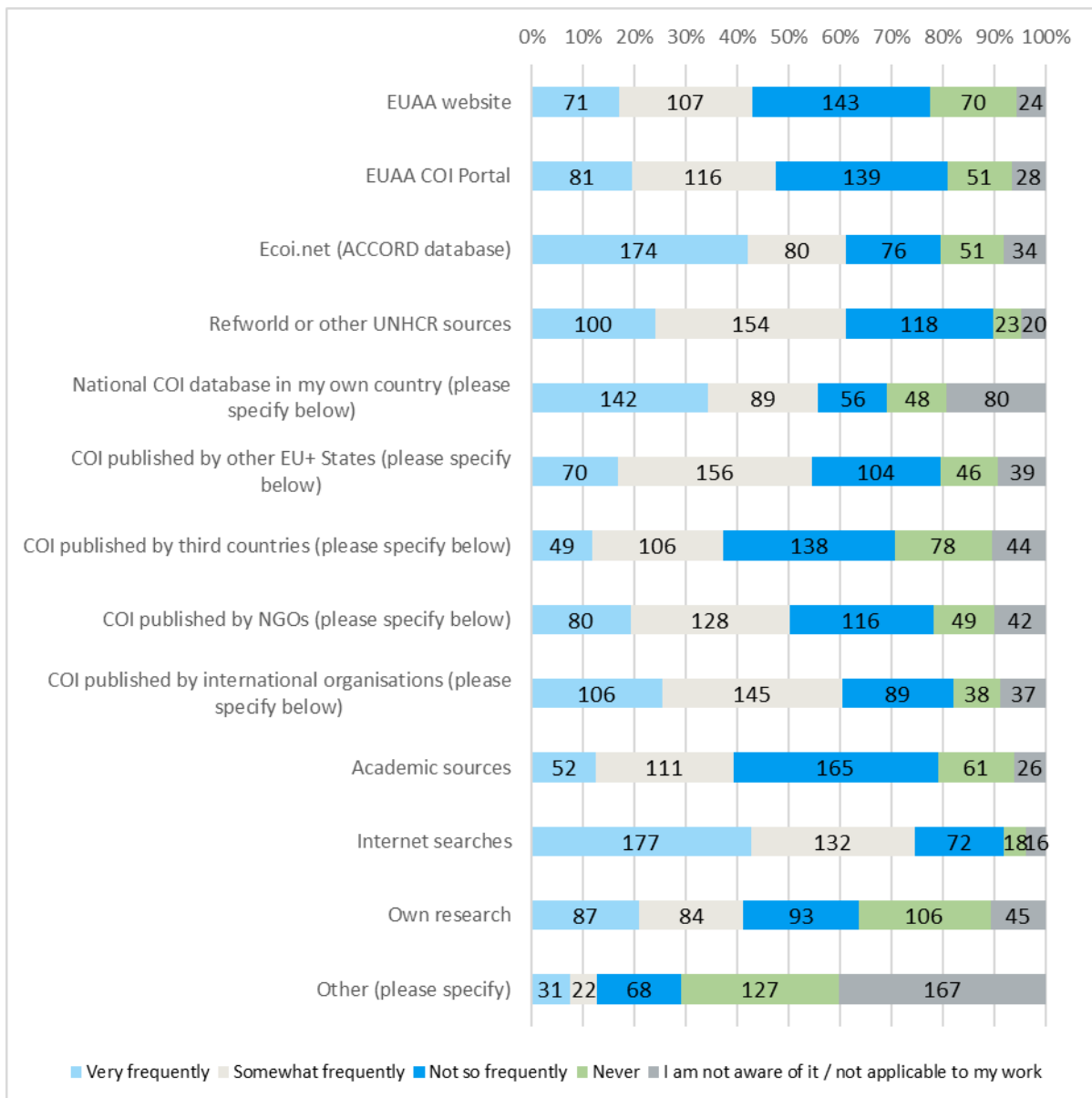


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When it comes to the sources consulted to find COI,⁶⁴ the most frequently used sources are the ACCORD database Ecol.net and internet searches (40% of respondents declare using them very frequently). The third most used source is constituted by national databases (over 30% of respondents declare using them very frequently). The EUAA website and COI Portal are used very frequently by less than 20% of survey respondents, while over 10% say they never use them.

⁶⁴ Among respondents who are not members of COI networks.

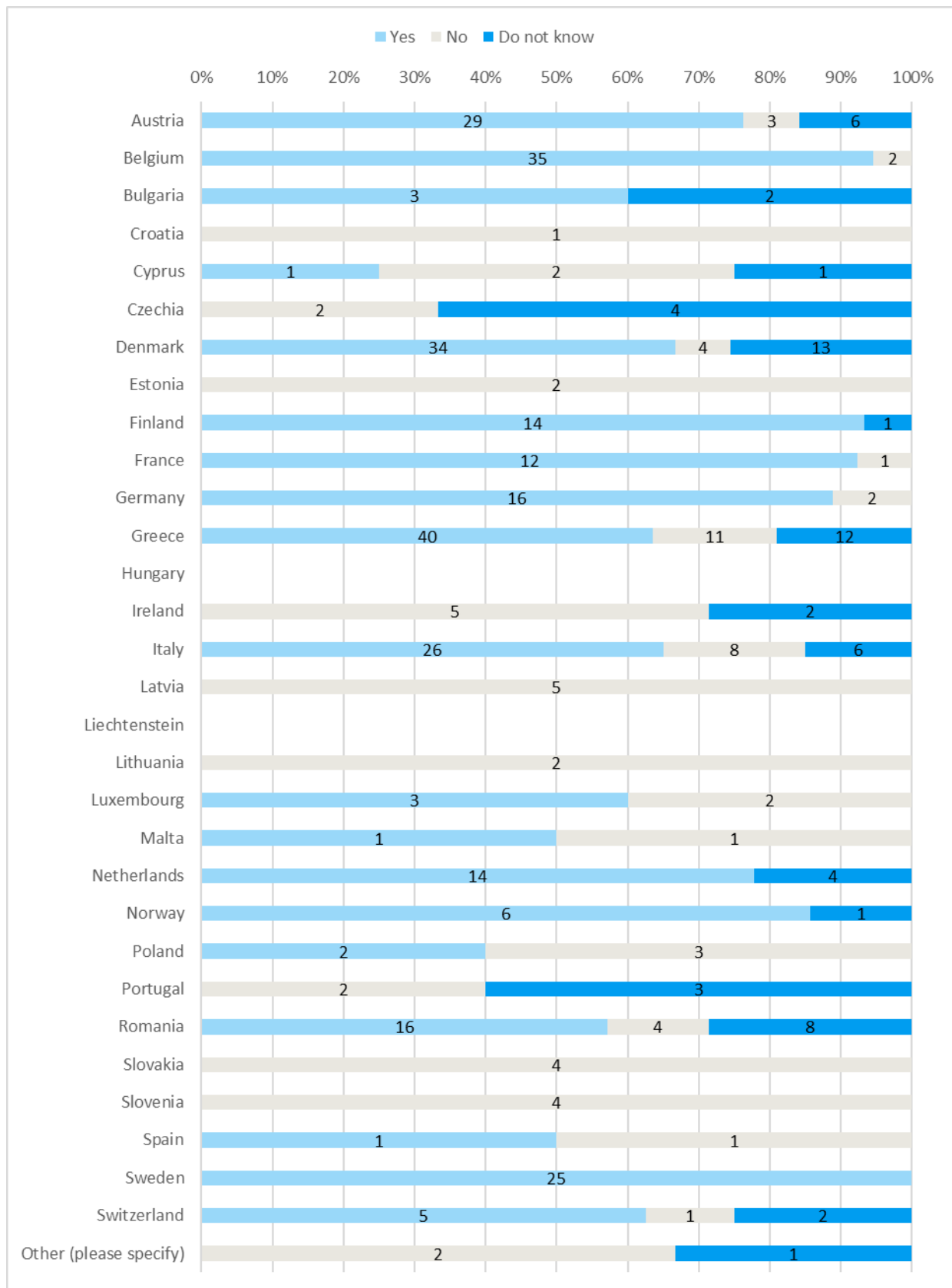
Figure 33. Please indicate whether and how often you consult the following sources to find COI. (n=415)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Countries where respondents report national production of country-specific guidance documents include Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Countries that do not appear to produce their own national country-specific guidance documents include Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The situation is less clear for Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland, as respondents’ replies within each of these countries do not match. No data were collected for Hungary and Liechtenstein.

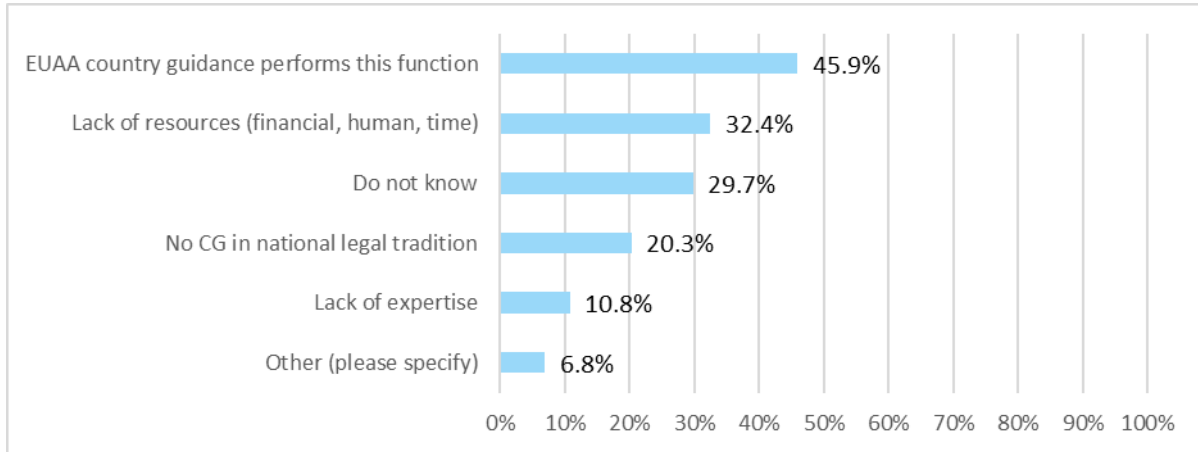
Figure 34. Does your country produce its own national country-specific guidance documents? (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Within countries not producing national guidance, the most common reason for not doing so is the existence of EUAA country guidance (over 45% of respondents listed it as a reason). Similar to COI documents, the second main reason is the lack of resources.

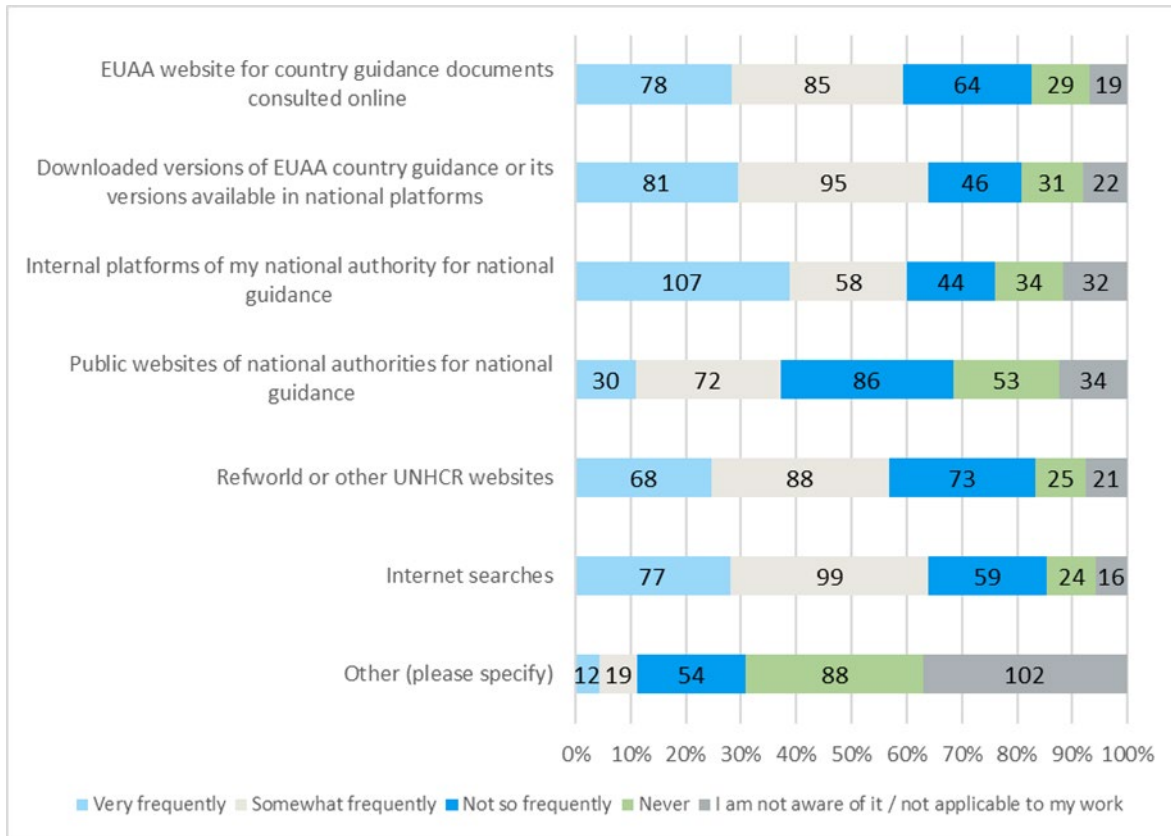
Figure 35. What are the reasons for not producing national guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=74)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When it comes to the sources consulted to find guidance on the assessment of the situation in the main countries of origin and on the qualification of related applications for international protection, the most frequently used type of source are internal platforms of national authorities for national guidance (nearly 40% of respondents declare using them very often).

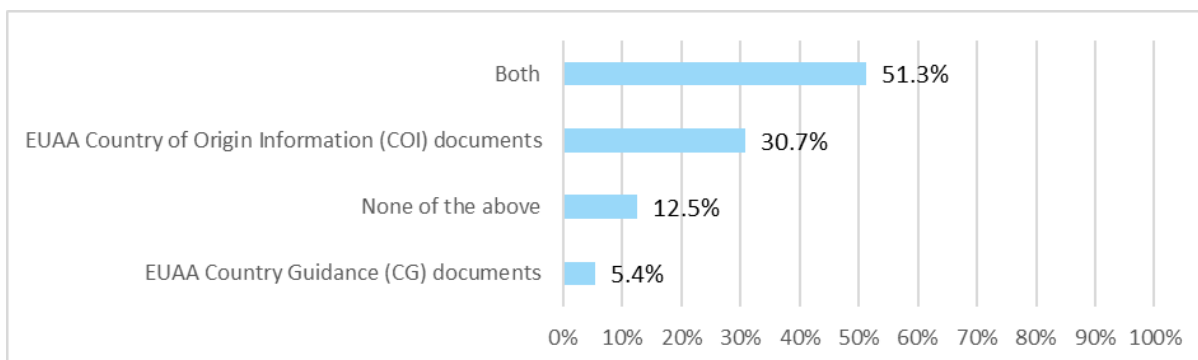
Figure 36. Which sources do you consult the most to find guidance on the assessment of the situation in the main countries of origin and on the qualification of related applications for international protection? (n=275)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Finally, over half of the respondents indicated being aware of and willing to answer questions about both EUAA COI and CG documents.

Figure 37. Which of these EUAA products are you aware of and would like to answer questions about? (n=423)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

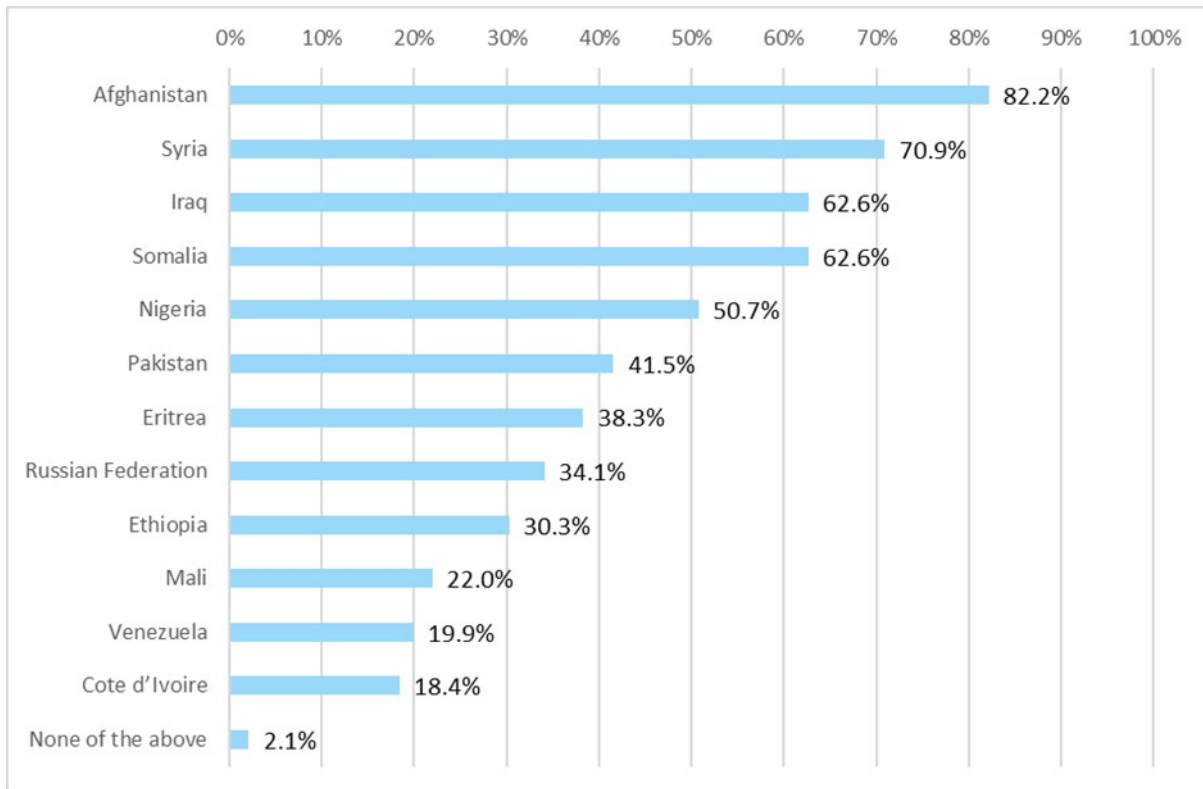
Questions for those aware about EUAA COI products

This section shows the answers to questions that were only shown to respondents who indicated being aware of and willing to answer questions on EUAA COI products. As explained in above,

through a complex set of activations, respondents were only shown questions that were relevant to them.

Among respondents aware of EUAA COI documents and who are not members of COI networks, EUAA COI products on Afghanistan and Syria are the most widely known (around 80% of respondents declare being aware of them). The least known EUAA COI products are those on Cote d'Ivoire, Venezuela, and Mali (around 20% of respondents declare being aware of them). More details can be found in the figure below.

Figure 38. Are you aware of the existence of EUAA COI products about the following countries? Please select the ones you are aware of. (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=337)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

A more detailed analysis shows that there are differences in the level of awareness about specific products among different stakeholder profiles. For example, EUAA COI products on Eritrea are well known among legal representatives and legal advisers, but much less known among COI or CG researchers/experts (around 70% of legal representatives and advisers indicated being aware of such products, while only 32% of COI or CG researchers/experts did). More details can be found in the Table below.

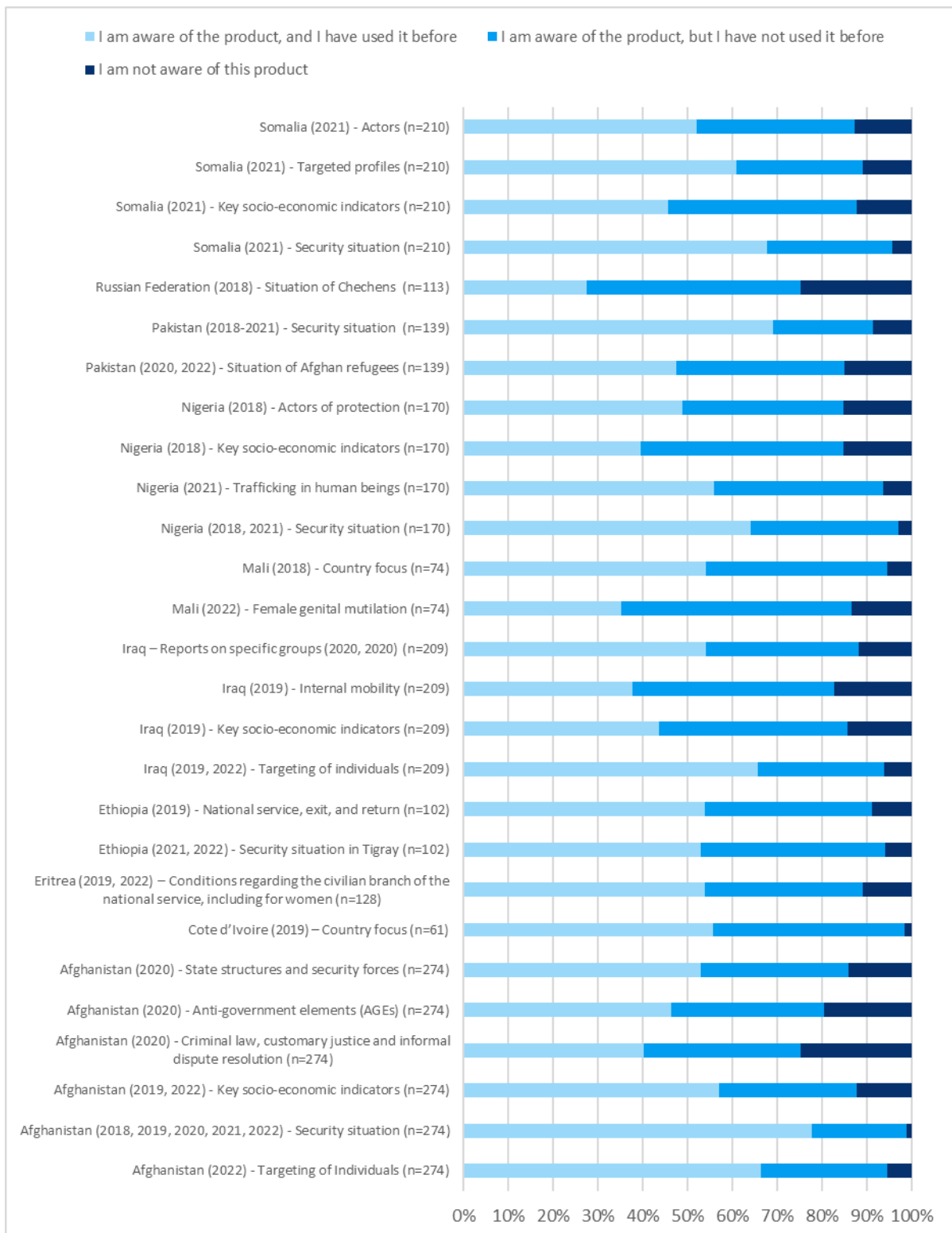
Table 8. Are you aware of the existence of EUAA COI products about the following countries? Please select the ones you are aware of. (You may select multiple options, if applicable) Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)

	Afghanistan	Cote d' Ivoire	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Iraq	Mali	Nigeria	Pakistan	Russian Federation	Somalia	Syria	Venezuela	None of the above
COI or CG Researcher (n=110)	72%	15%	32%	28%	57%	22%	45%	37%	35%	53%	60%	20%	4%
Head of COI unit (n=16)	94%	25%	38%	31%	69%	38%	50%	63%	50%	75%	69%	19%	6%
Case officer, responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection (n=130)	81%	18%	41%	25%	58%	23%	55%	37%	28%	65%	72%	19%	2%
Case officer, responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection (n=167)	84%	20%	40%	26%	60%	25%	56%	42%	33%	66%	71%	21%	2%
Judge (n=34)	94%	15%	32%	35%	68%	12%	41%	32%	15%	65%	82%	15%	0%
Legal representation in individual cases (n=21)	100%	14%	67%	57%	90%	19%	48%	48%	57%	90%	95%	19%	0%
Legal advice on related legal and policy issues (n=26)	100%	23%	73%	58%	92%	27%	77%	50%	54%	85%	100%	27%	0%
Polymaking and/or the development of guidance on specific countries of origin, broadly (n=17)	82%	24%	59%	41%	94%	24%	82%	41%	65%	82%	88%	35%	0%
Policy advocacy related to specific countries of origin, broadly (n=4)	75%	50%	100%	50%	75%	50%	100%	50%	25%	100%	75%	25%	0%

Source: Ramboll elaboration (2023) based on results from the targeted survey to COI&CG user

The figure below shows the level of awareness and use for a detailed list of EUAA COI documents.

Figure 39. Please indicate which of the following EUAA COI documents you are aware of / have used before

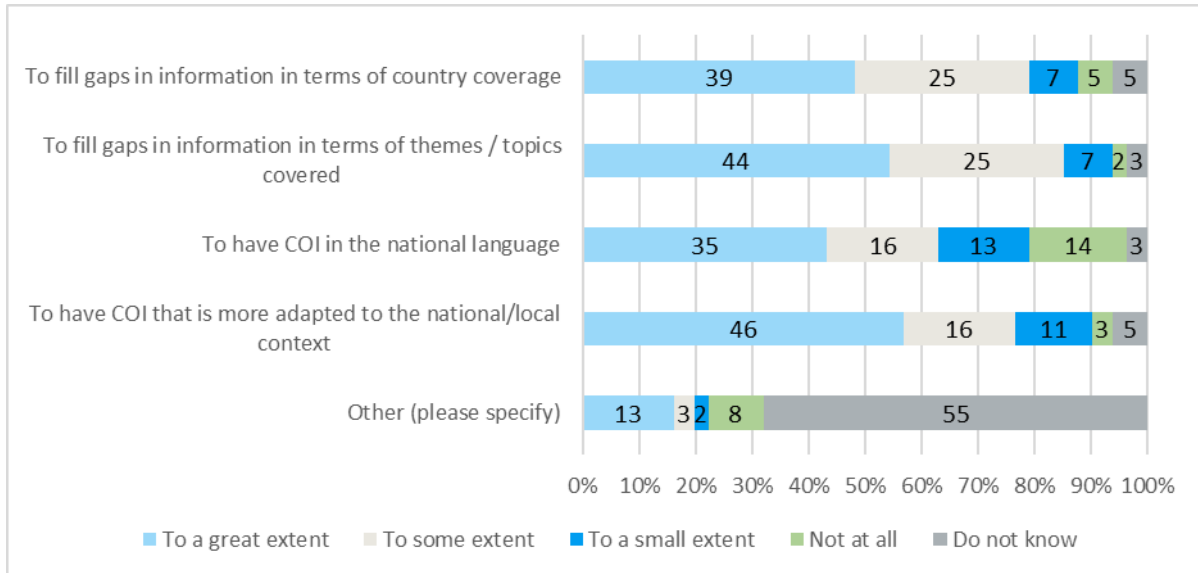


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Countries appear to produce national COI for two main reasons: to fill information gaps in terms of themes/topics covered and to respond to specific national needs (over 50% of respondents indicated

these reasons as being of great importance). The need to fill information gaps in terms of country coverage and the need to have COI in the national language are also important reasons, albeit to a smaller extent. (Figure 40). The limited number of respondents does not allow for meaningful comparisons across countries.

Figure 40. To what extent do the following reasons influence your country’s choice of producing national level COI compared to using EUAA COI? (n=81)

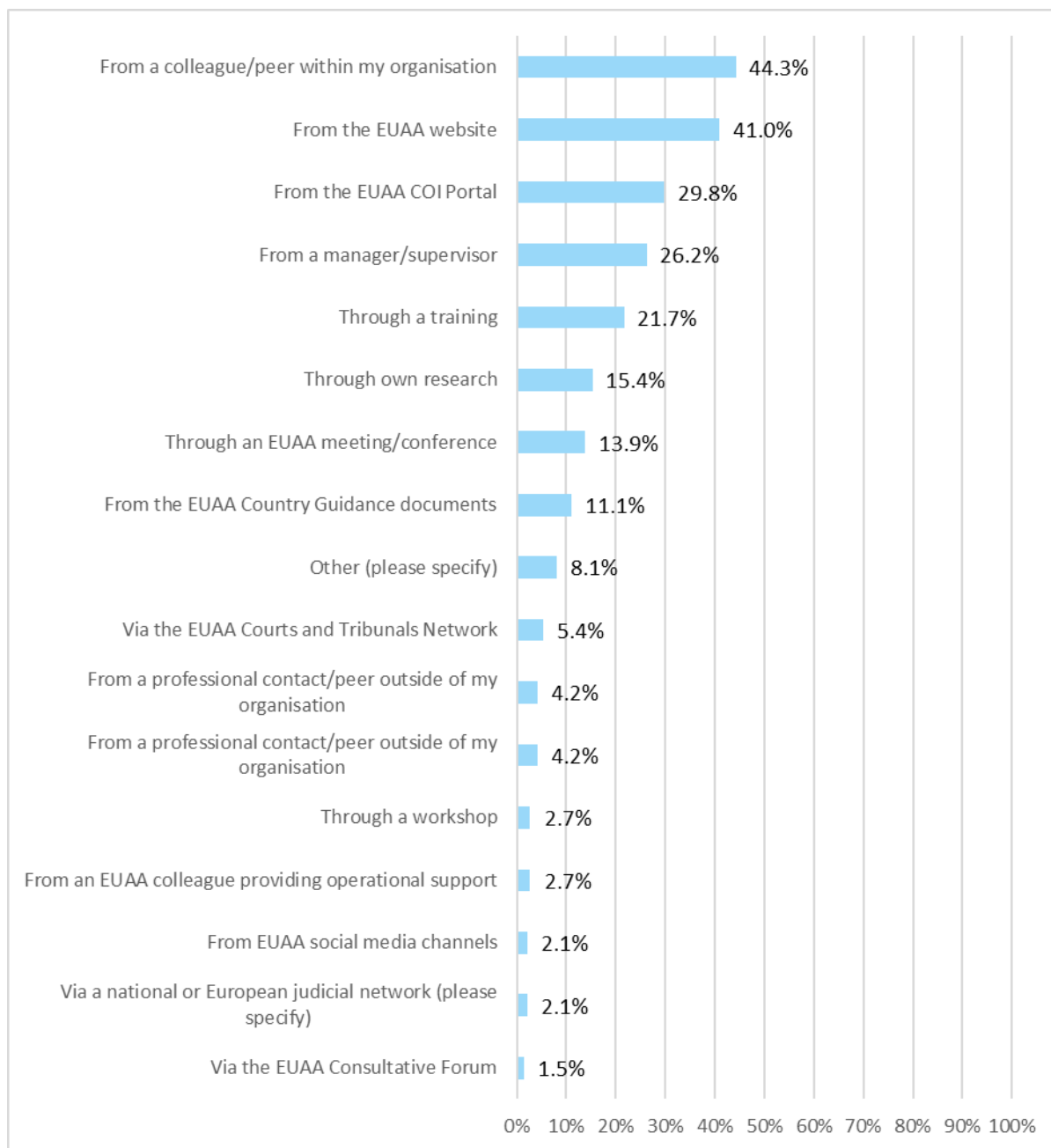


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Respondents who provided further comments mentioned that COI produced at national level usually provides a more detailed and accurate response to national needs. Along the same lines, it was also mentioned that producing national COI allows for independent setting of priorities and planning compared to relying on EU-level COI. A respondent (COI or CG researcher/expert) from NL mentioned that court in the country requires that COI is produced by an independent party (e.g., MFA in the Netherlands). effectiveness of the specific activities carried out by the EUAA to distribute and promote COI.

When asked about how they found out about EUAA’s COI products, 44% of respondents who are members of COI networks indicated the role colleagues and/or peers played in their organisation. The second most important source was the EUAA website, followed by the EUAA COI Portal (Figure 41).

Figure 41. How did you find out about the EUAA’s COI products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) (n=332)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

A more detailed analysis shows that there are some differences in the ways in which different stakeholder groups find out about EUAA’s COI products. For example, 65% of legal advisers in the sample learnt about such products through the EUAA website, but only 29% of judges did (Table 9).

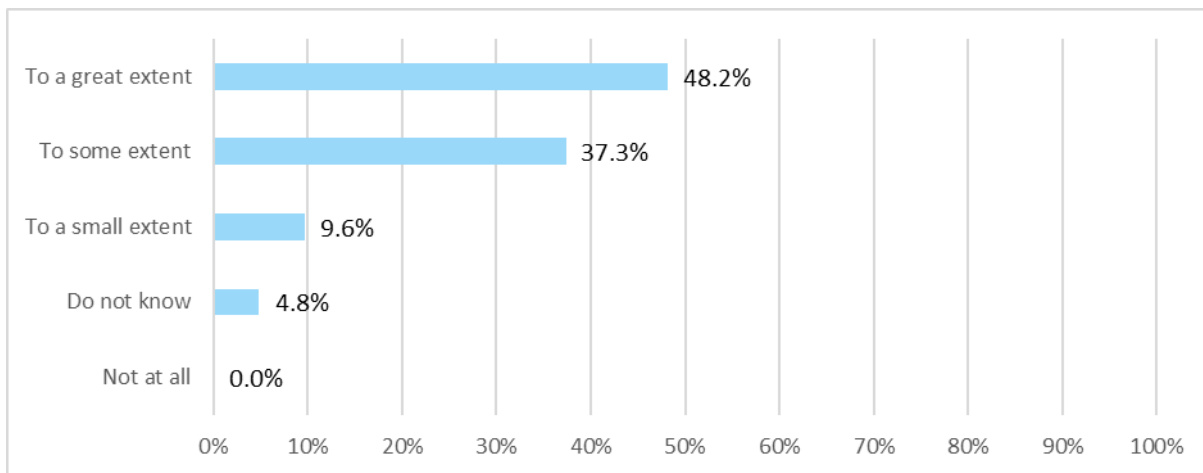
Table 9. How did you find out about the EUAA’s COI products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)

	From a manager/supervisor	From a colleague/peer within my organisation	From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation	From the EUAA website	From the EUAA Country Reports documents	Via the EUAA Courts and Tribunals Network	Via a national or European judicial network	Via the EUAA Consultative Forum	From the EUAA COI Portal	From EUAA social media channels	From an EUAA colleague providing operational support	From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation	Through an EUAA meeting/conference	Through a training	Through a workshop	Through own research	Other (please specify)
COI or CG Researcher (n=110)	23%	44%	3%	38%	5%	1%	0%	2%	37%	2%	4%	0%	22%	14%	2%	22%	13%
Head of COI unit (n=16)	6%	38%	13%	38%	13%	6%	6%	13%	19%	0%	0%	0%	25%	13%	0%	6%	6%
Case officer, responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection (n=126)	35%	47%	4%	44%	15%	1%	1%	0%	31%	2%	2%	0%	8%	34%	3%	12%	6%
Case officer, responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection (n=163)	32%	46%	3%	44%	15%	2%	1%	0%	29%	2%	2%	1%	9%	33%	3%	13%	6%
Judge (n=34)	6%	32%	3%	29%	6%	29%	12%	0%	26%	3%	0%	6%	9%	15%	3%	12%	12%
Legal representation in individual cases (n=21)	33%	57%	19%	43%	14%	10%	0%	5%	14%	0%	5%	5%	14%	19%	0%	10%	10%
Legal advice on related legal and policy issues (n=26)	23%	50%	19%	65%	23%	15%	4%	4%	8%	0%	0%	4%	19%	19%	0%	8%	8%
Policymaking and/or the development of guidance on specific countries of origin, broadly (n=17)	18%	47%	0%	53%	35%	0%	0%	6%	29%	0%	0%	0%	29%	6%	0%	18%	0%
Policy advocacy related to specific countries of origin, broadly (n=4)	0%	50%	0%	50%	25%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%	50%	0%

Source: Ramboll elaboration (2023) based on results from the targeted survey to COI&CG users

Nearly 50% of COI network members that participated in the survey believe that the EUAA’s COI products are, to a great extent, known by relevant practitioners in your country. No respondent believes that such products are completely unknown to them. The limited number of respondents does not allow for meaningful comparisons across countries (Figure 42).

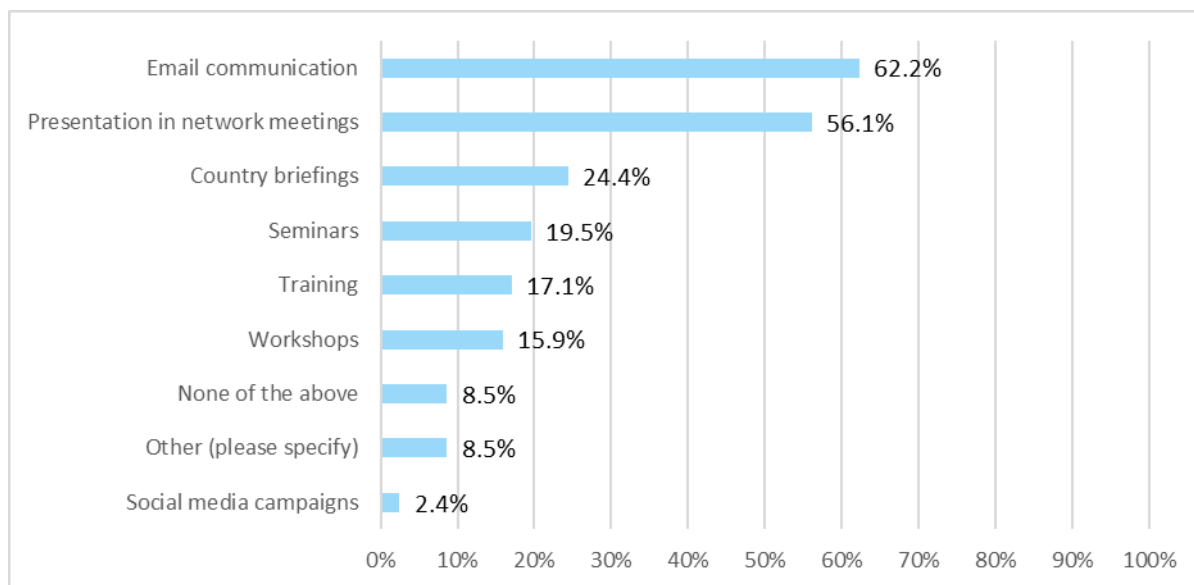
Figure 42. To what extent do you think the EUAA’s COI products are known by relevant practitioners in your country? (n=83)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

As for type of efforts made by the EUAA to distribute and promote EUAA COI products among COI network members, email communication and presentations in network meetings appear to be the most widely used. At least 56% of respondents selected them (Figure 43).

Figure 43. What type of efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI products to your national administrations and staff? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=82)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Table 10 shows that there are differences among EU+ countries, with email communication being widely used in countries such as Austria (where all respondents indicated being aware of such efforts), and less used in countries such as Italy (where only one in three respondents indicated being aware of efforts made via email). The number of respondents from each country is, however, very limited, so these numbers are unlikely to be a good representation of the situation on the ground.

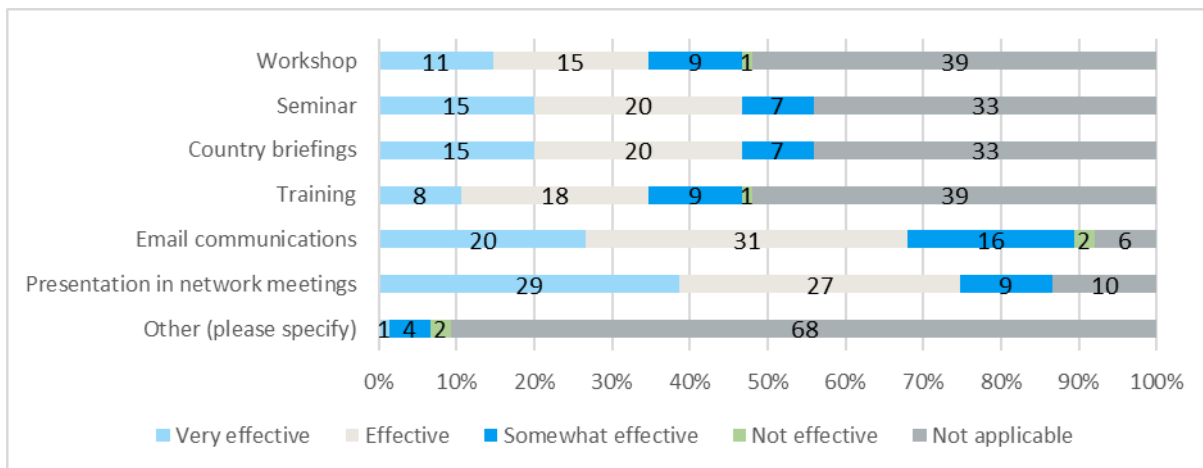
Table 10. What type of efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI products to your national administrations and staff? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) Crossed with: Which country do you work in?

	Workshops	Seminars	Country briefings	Training	Email communication	Presentation in network meetings	Social media campaigns	Other (please specify)	None of the above
Austria (n=6)	17%	33%	17%	17%	100%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Belgium (n=7)	29%	29%	0%	29%	86%	57%	0%	0%	0%
Czechia (n=1)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Denmark (n=8)	25%	38%	50%	25%	50%	38%	0%	0%	13%
Estonia (n=2)	0%	0%	50%	50%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Finland (n=4)	25%	25%	0%	0%	100%	75%	0%	0%	0%
France (n=8)	38%	13%	50%	25%	38%	63%	13%	13%	0%
Germany (n=9)	11%	0%	11%	0%	56%	56%	0%	22%	11%
Greece (n=10)	0%	100%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Italy (n=3)	67%	33%	100%	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Netherlands (n=11)	0%	9%	9%	0%	64%	45%	0%	0%	18%
Norway (n=4)	0%	25%	25%	25%	50%	75%	0%	0%	25%
Poland (n=1)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Romania (n=3)	33%	33%	33%	67%	100%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Slovakia (n=3)	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Slovenia (n=1)	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Sweden (n=4)	0%	25%	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%	50%	25%
Switzerland (n=5)	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	20%	0%	40%	20%

Source: Ramboll elaboration (2023) based on results from the targeted survey to COI&CG users

According to the COI network members that filled in the survey, presentations in network meetings are the most effective activity to distribute and promote COI products (about 75% of respondents identified them as very effective or effective). Email communications are also very effective, as nearly 70% of respondents identified them as very effective or effective. Training is perceived as the least effective method (only 10% of respondents indicated it is a very effective method) (Figure 44).

Figure 44. Please rate the effectiveness of the specific activities carried out by the EUAA to distribute and promote COI products. (n=75)

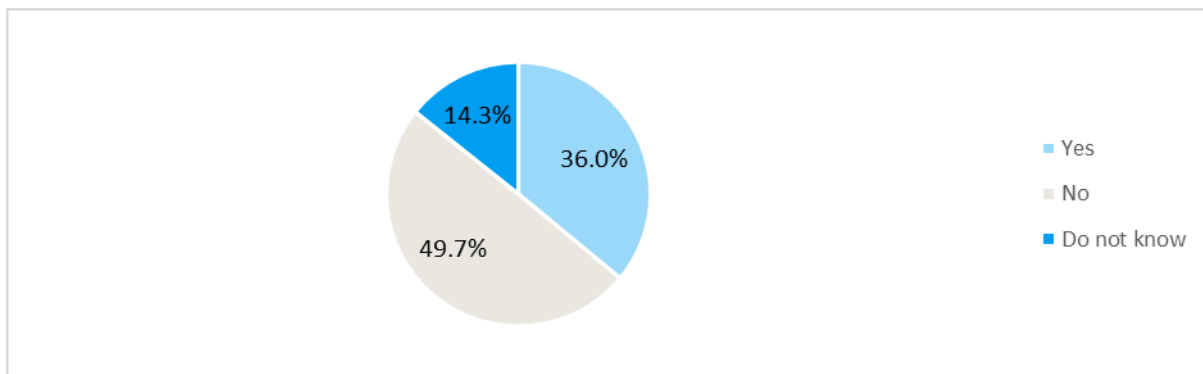


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Respondents did not provide additional insights on the extent to which EUAA activities to promote the use of COI have been effective. A respondent (COI or CG researcher/expert) from Finland mentioned that they have only received information via email.

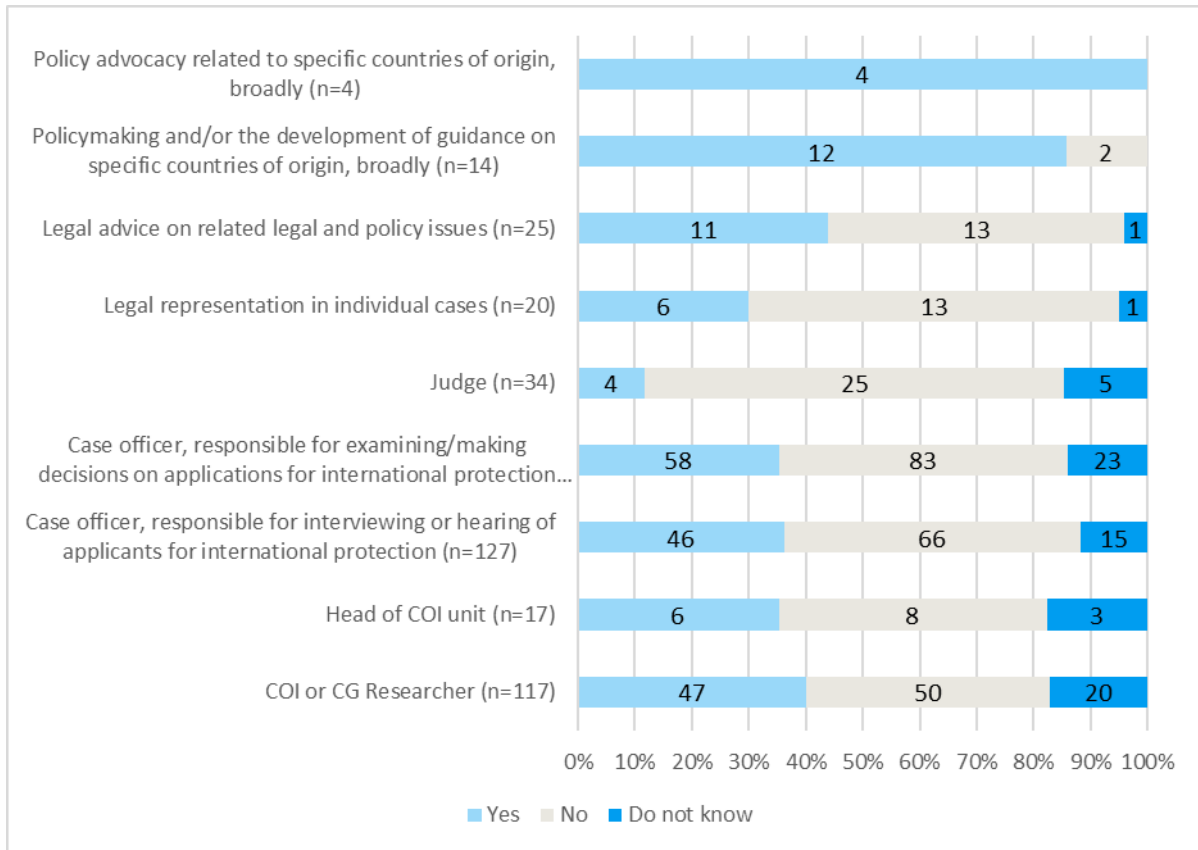
Only 36% of respondents indicated having made use of EUAA COI queries (Figure 45). In this regard, there appear to be significant differences among each stakeholder group. Judges are the stakeholder group who appears to make use of them the least, while all policy advocates taking part in the survey made use of COI queries (Figure 46).

Figure 45. Have you ever made use of EUAA COI queries? (n=336)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

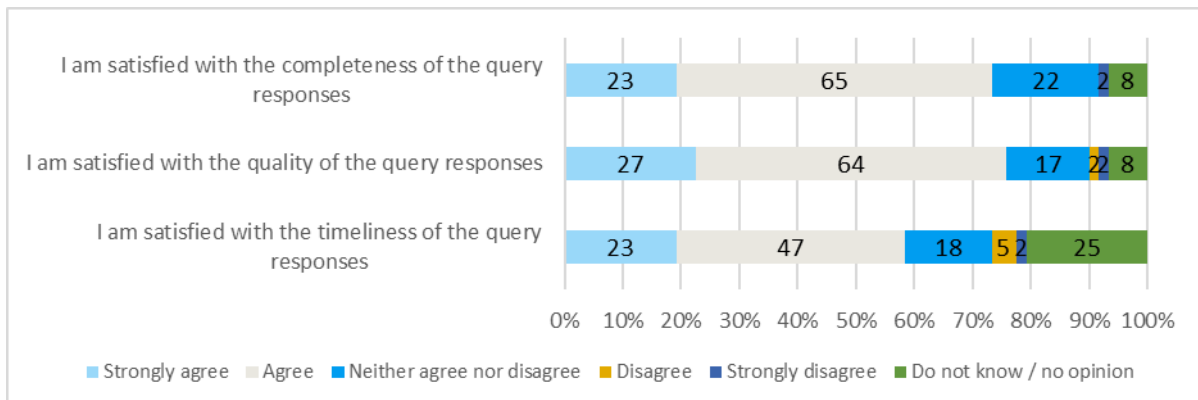
Figure 46. Have you ever made use of EUAA COI queries? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=336)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

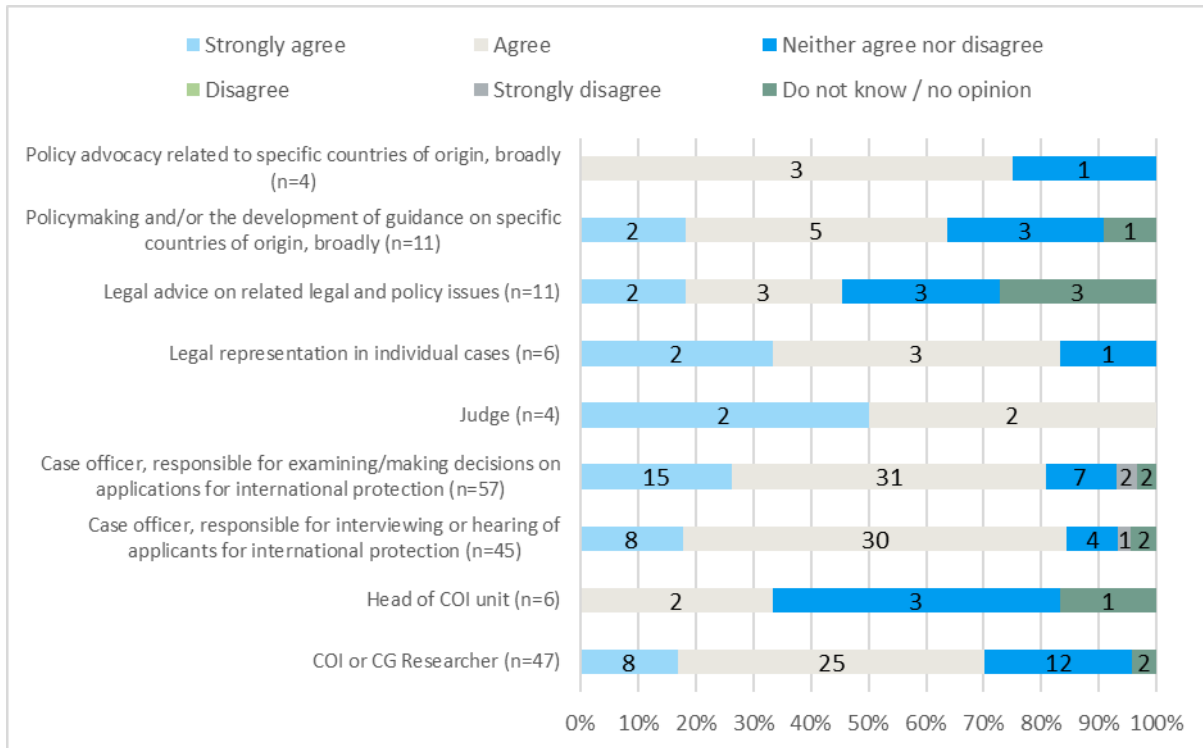
Among respondents who have made use of COI queries, over 70% are satisfied with the completeness and the quality of query responses, and nearly 60% are satisfied with their timeliness (Figure 47). When looking at disaggregated data for different stakeholder profiles, heads of COI Units appear to be the least satisfied with the completeness of query responses (only one out of three indicated being satisfied) (Figure 48).

Figure 47. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding COI queries? (n=120)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

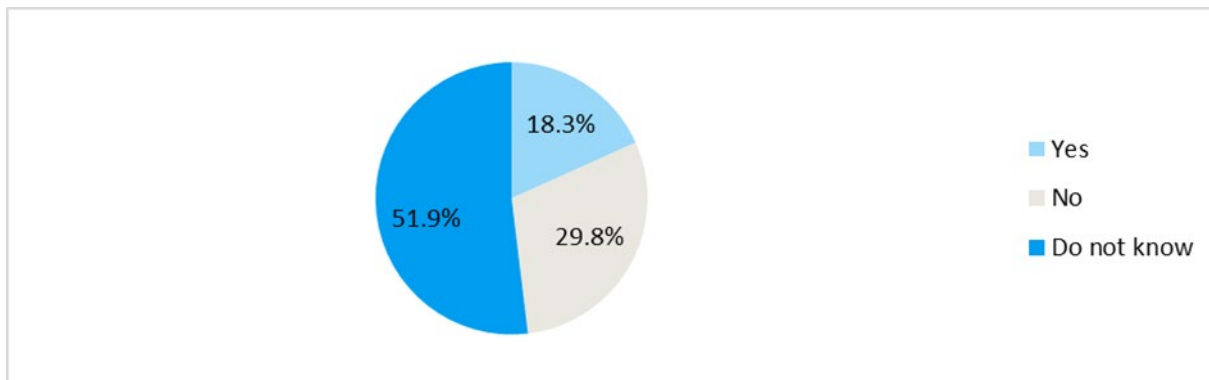
Figure 48. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding COI queries? - I am satisfied with the completeness of the query responses Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Most respondents do not have an opinion on whether the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents, and only 18% of the respondents believe that that should have been the case (Figure 49).

Figure 49. Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents? (n=339)

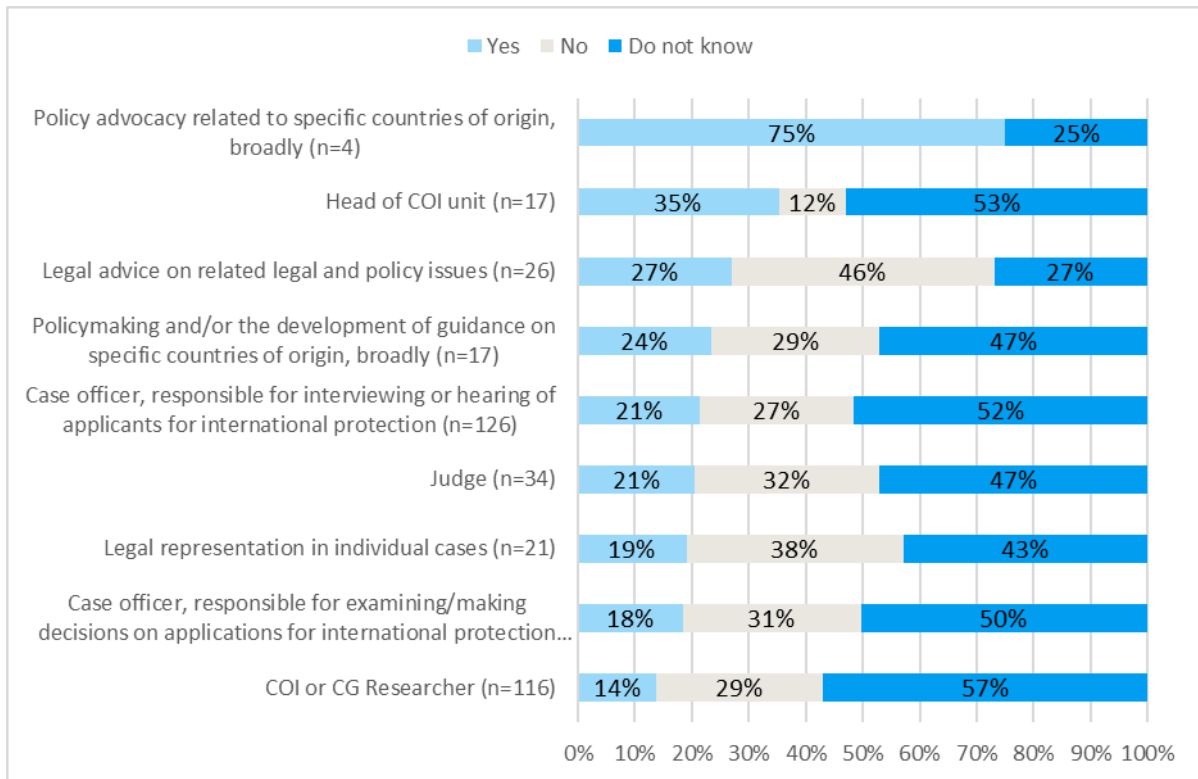


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Comparing the answers given by different stakeholder profiles, the most significant difference is found between policy advocates and COI or CG researchers/experts: 75% of the former believe

that the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents,⁶⁵ whereas only 14% of the latter think the same (Figure 50).

Figure 50. Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures?



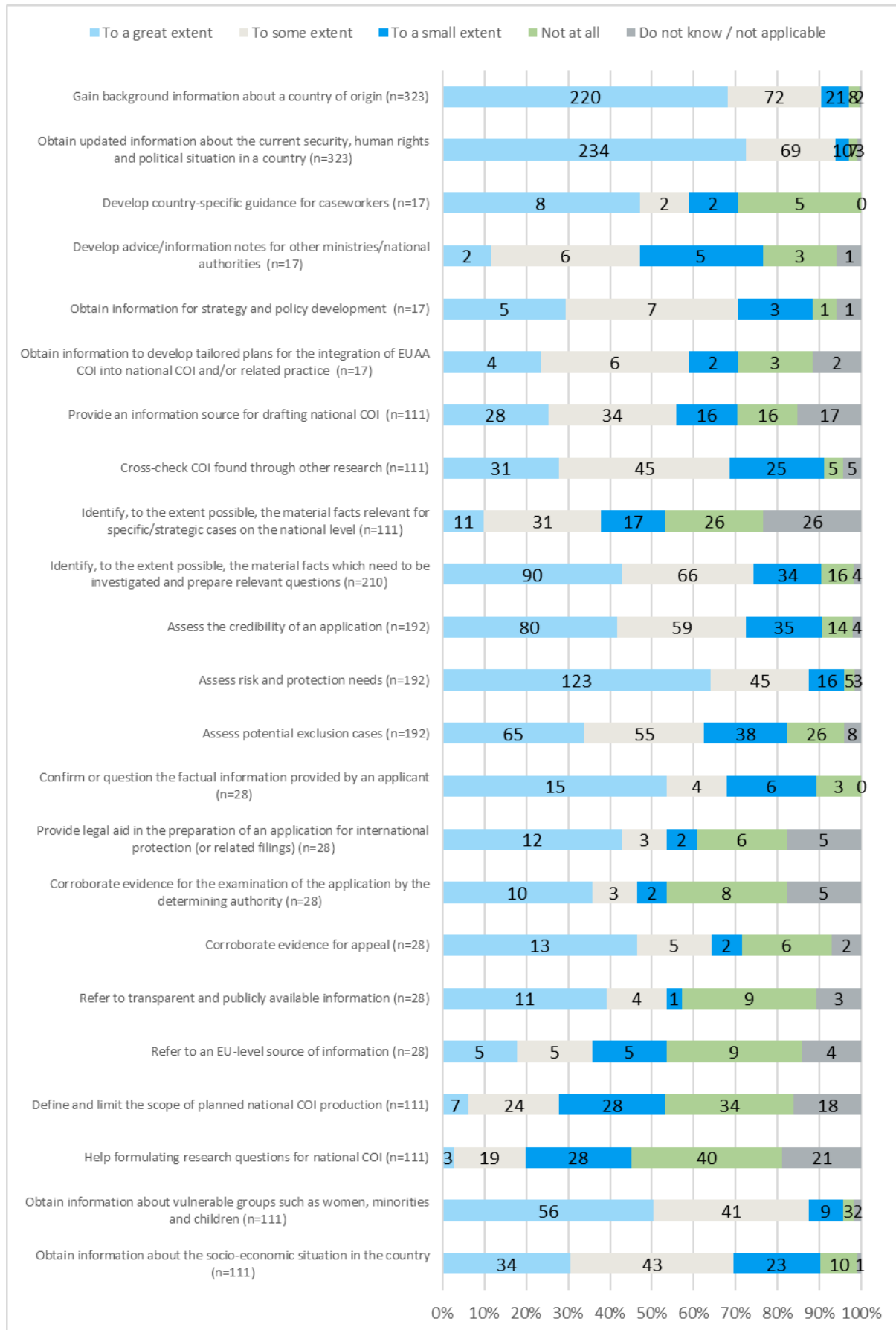
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Concerning whether the EUAA should do more to disseminate the COI products, respondents who provided written responses were satisfied with the efforts made by the EUAA to disseminate their products. Three respondents (head of COI unit from France and case officer from Greece) mentioned that newsletters could be useful tools to increase the outreach of the products. Another respondent (case officer, Denmark) mentioned the need to rely on ECOI.net when disseminating the EUAA products and another respondent mentioned the need to making the EUAA website clearer. References to the need of translating the products were mentioned by a COI or CG researcher/expert from Romania and a case officer from Ireland (referring to the need of translating documents other than in English). Among policymakers, one respondent recommended the use of newsletter to brief potential users about specific things. The same respondent also mentioned the organisation of webinars and workshops. In his/her view, this could lead to more convergence as human interactivity is needed in this regard.

As the figure below shows, over 60% of respondents who are not members of any COI network use EUAA’s COI documents mostly to gain background information about a country of origin and to obtain updated information about the current security, human rights and political situation in a country. Over 50% of them mostly use them to assess risk and protection needs. Finally, less than 10% use them to a great extent to define and limit the scope of planned national COI production or to help formulating research questions for national COI.

⁶⁵ The small number of respondents in this category, however, calls for caution when drawing conclusions.

Figure 51. To what extent have you used the EUAA's COI documents for the following?

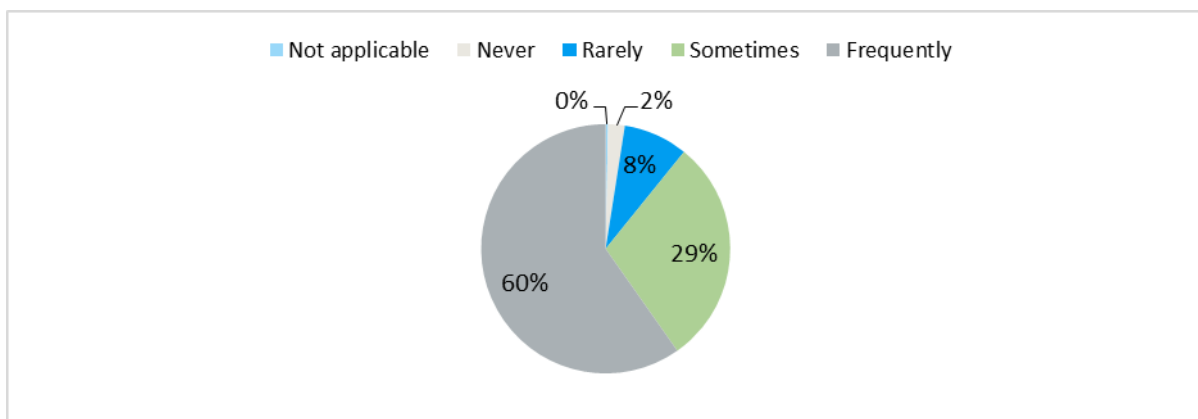


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When asked about other reasons to use COI documents apart from the ones mentioned in the previous question, a respondent (case officer, Ireland) mentioned the need to meet legal obligations. Two other respondents (COI or CG researchers/experts from Greece and Switzerland) mentioned that they often use COI to get other sources of (COI-related) information. A respondent (COI or CG researcher/expert, Finland) mentioned that he uses COI documents to know about the humanitarian situation as well and climate change and associated migration related challenges. One respondent (case officer from Belgium) answered that they use COI products to check for additional sources of information (in reports). Another respondent mentioned the reason being 'to find and study the original sources used by EUAA' (policy maker, Poland), to assess the risks and protection needs linked to the current situation (case officer, Belgium), situation on specific topics (COI or CG researcher/expert, Sweden), in-depth examination (case officer, Sweden).

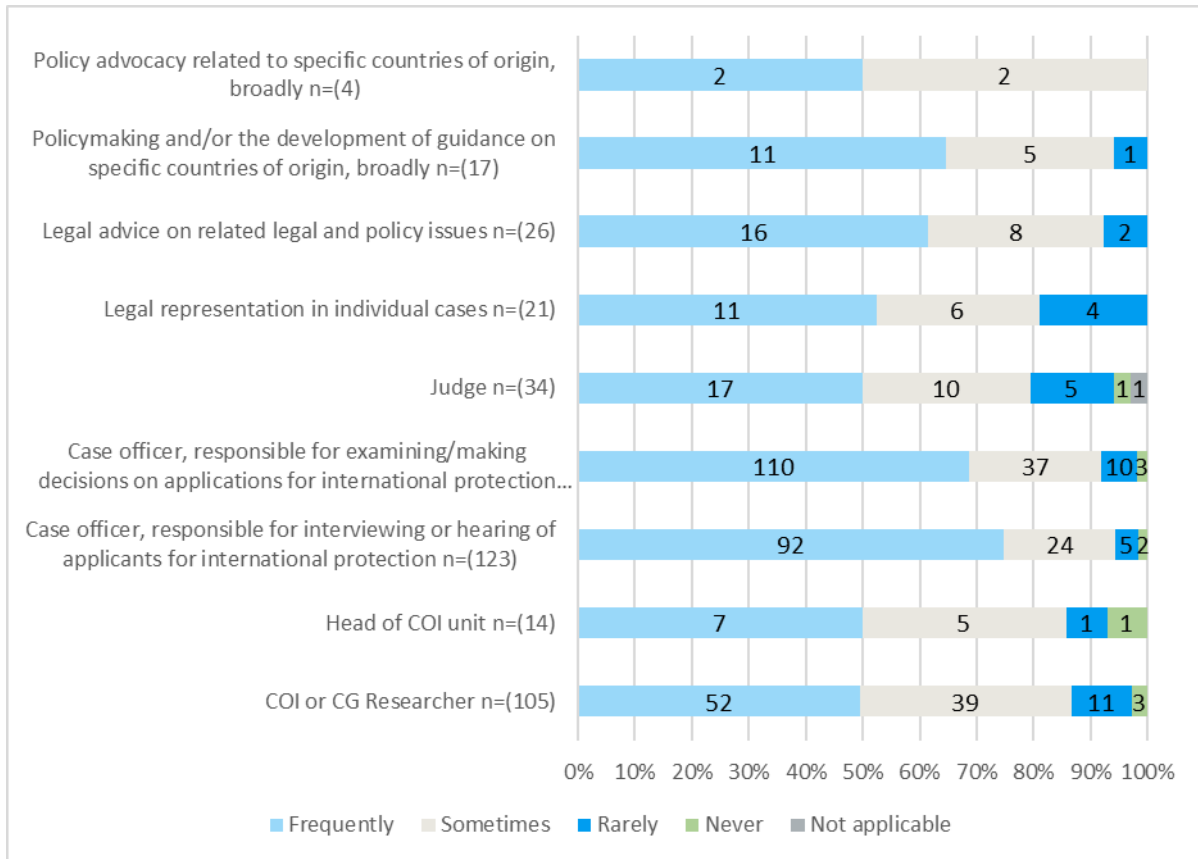
As the figure below shows, 60% of respondents who are not members of any of COI network frequently refer to EUAA's COI documents in their work. The groups that refer to them the most are case officers and policy makers (over 60% of respondents in each category refer to them frequently). More details can be found in Figure 53.

Figure 52. How frequently do you refer to the EUAA's COI documents in your work? (n=323)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

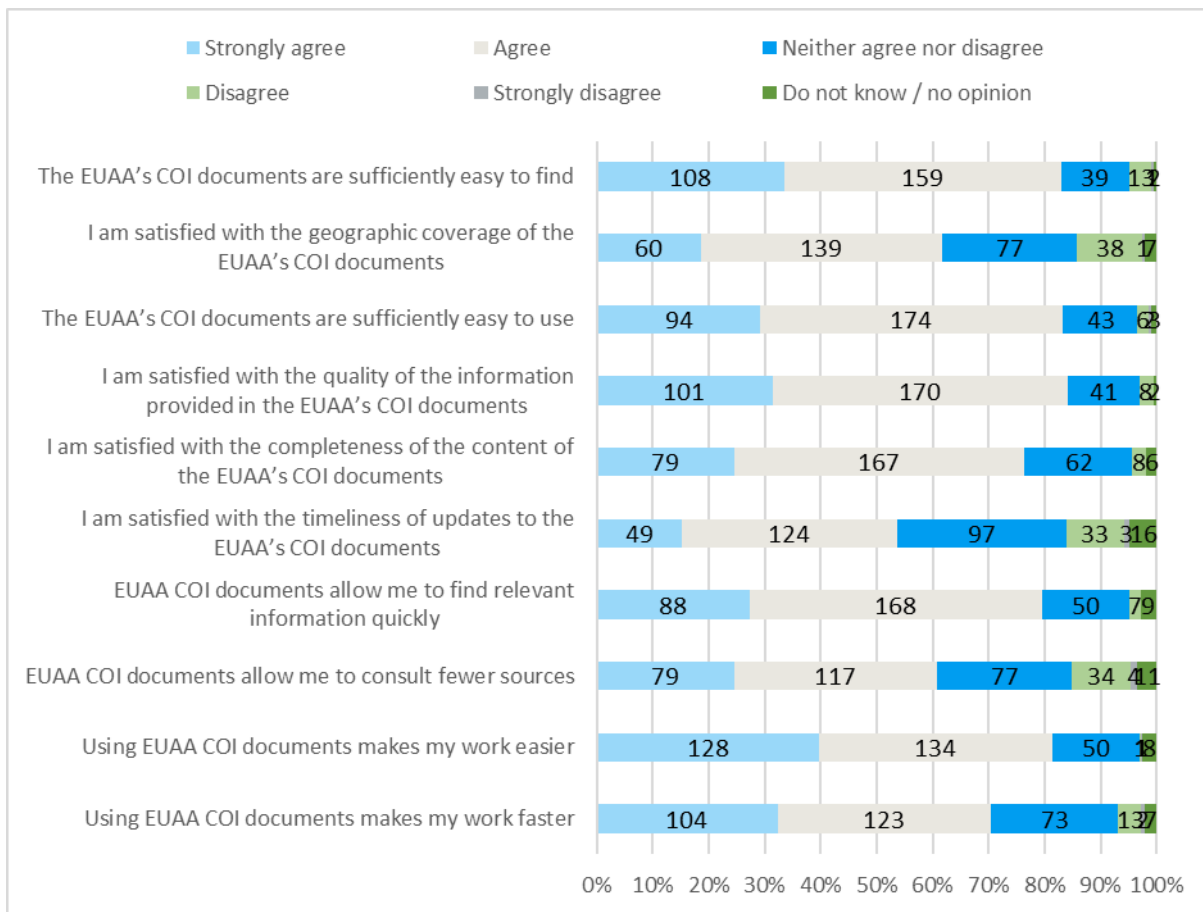
Figure 53. How frequently do you refer to the EUAA’s COI documents in your work? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

On a general level, over 80% of respondents who are not members of any of COI network agree or strongly agree with the fact that the EUAA’s COI documents are sufficiently easy to find, use, that the information they contain is of sufficient quality, and that using them facilitates their work (Figure 54).

Figure 54. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding EUAA COI documents? (n=322)



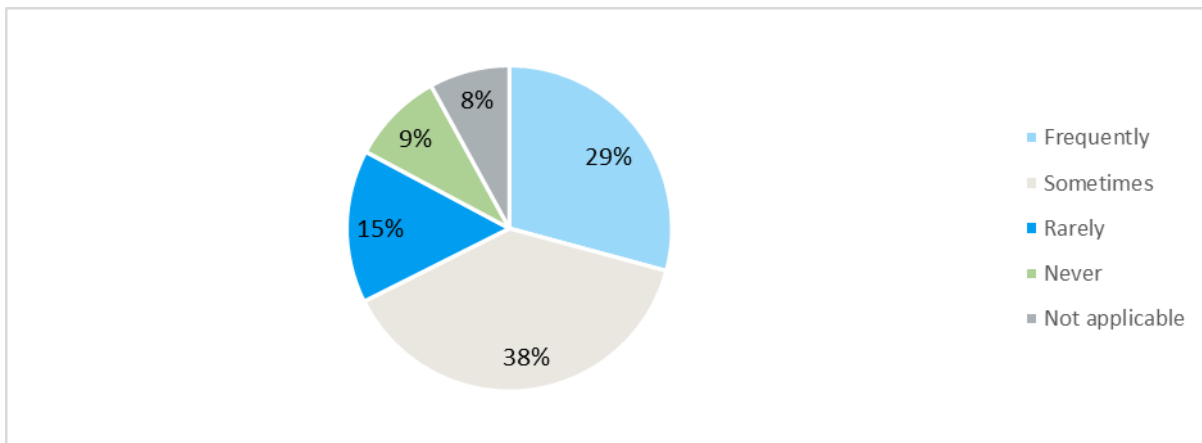
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When asked about suggestions for improvement (e.g. concerning quality, scope, usability of the EUAA COI products), three major topics came up:

- **Geographical coverage:** Some respondents (1 COI or CG researcher/expert, 4 case officers, 2 judges) mentioned the need to expand the geographical scope of countries. Countries / regions mentioned include Lebanon, Guinea, Azerbaijan, Albania, Sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt, Bangladesh and Gambia. This is usually linked to the country of origin of the applicants in the country of the respondent. However, a respondent from Switzerland mentioned that it would be interesting to get responses from countries that he/she is not familiar with.
- **Update and length of the reports:** Respondents (5 COI or CG researchers/experts from Denmark, Finland, Sweden and 1 respondent giving legal advice from Belgium) who referred to the need for a timely update of the EUAA COI products mentioned that reports are very complete, long and comprehensive. While this is perceived to be a positive thing, sometimes impacts the timely update of the reports. Link to this, long production processes may lead to outdated COI reports were mentioned by some stakeholders. A recommendation provided by a stakeholder includes making shorter, more concise and specific reports so the update can be done more regularly. Concerning the length of the reports, a respondent recommended drafting a summary after each section.
- **Language:** Three respondents (1 COI or CG research from Germany, 1 case officer from Greece, and 1 person giving legal advice from Czechia) mentioned the need to translate the reports because knowledge of English is not necessarily a given for many target users.

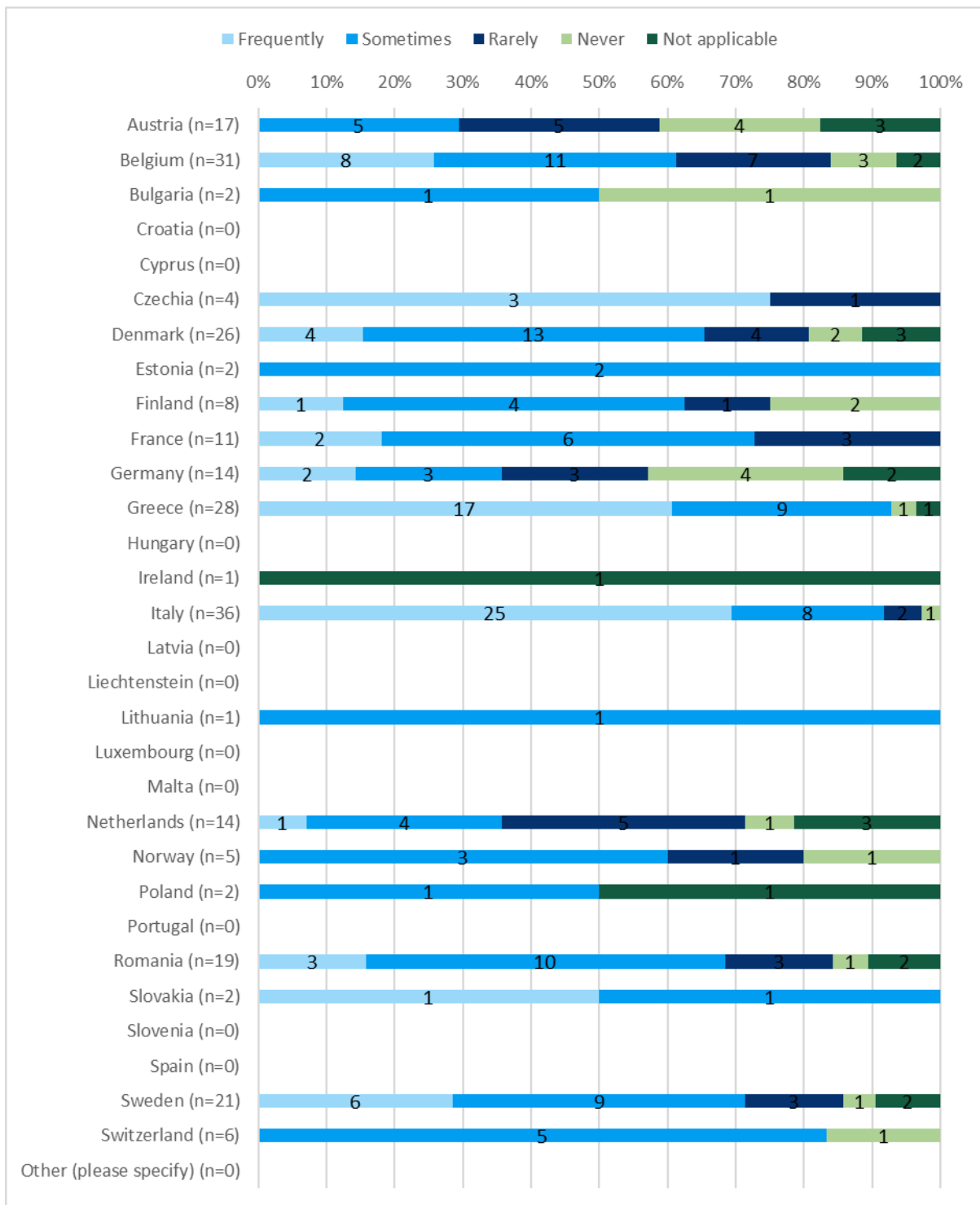
Nearly 30% of respondents who are not members of any COI network indicated frequently using EUAA’s COI documents instead of national COI documents. These, together with respondents who indicated only doing it sometimes (38%), make up 67% of the total number of respondents to this question (Figure 55). Although the number of respondents across countries is not significant enough to allow meaningful comparisons, Figure 56 provides insights on the differences among countries in relation to this question. More than 90% of respondents from Greece and Italy indicated using EUAA’s COI documents instead of national COI documents either frequently or sometimes. Only 30% of respondents from Austria do it, and only sometimes.

Figure 55. Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents instead of your own country’s COI documents? (n=250)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 56. Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents instead of your own country’s COI documents? Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Four main points arise concerning the use of EUAA COI products vis a vis national COI products:

- Lack of COI products at national level: 28 respondents from a variety of countries and across functions explained that EU-level COI is used when their own administration either does not

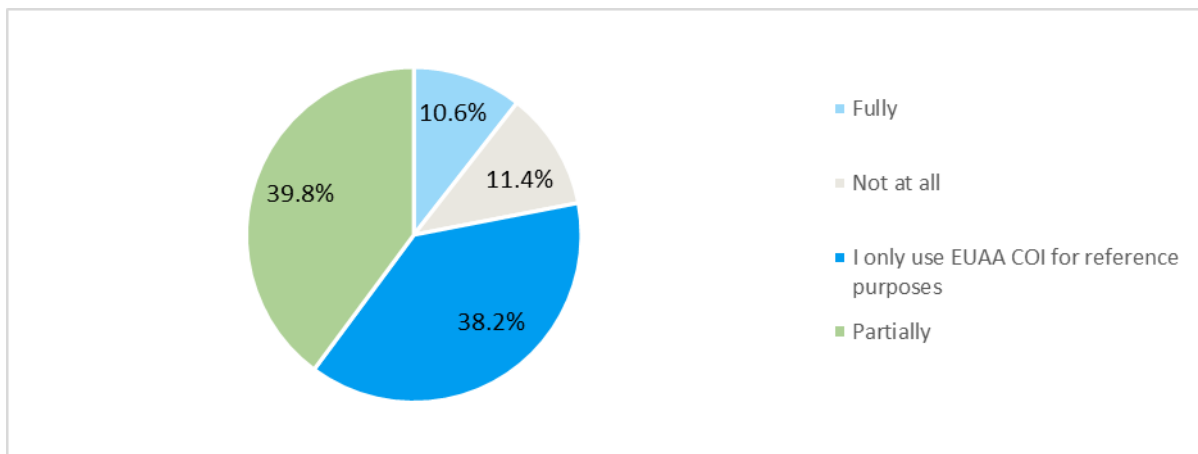
produce COI at all or when it does not produce it on specific countries/areas. For instance, a respondent from Belgium explained that for Nigeria the Belgian COI unit does not produce reports because this is already done at EU level.

- Respondents also commented on the complementarity of both sources of information and mentioned that they use EUAA COI products either to produce their own and/or to complement other sources of information, including their own.
- A better quality / greater coverage of EUAA COI products compared to national ones was also mentioned by respondents in Italy, Belgium, Czechia.
- Respondents in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands referred to the need of having updated information. Thus, they mentioned that they use the latest updated version of a COI report either if it is national or EUAA.

Furthermore, a respondent working in legal advice (Finland) as well as a case officer (Norway) mentioned that they use EUAA’s COI products to verify information or to get more information about topics where national information is lacking / not updated. One case officer (Belgium) mentioned using EUAA COI for general safety situation and national COI for more specific purposes.

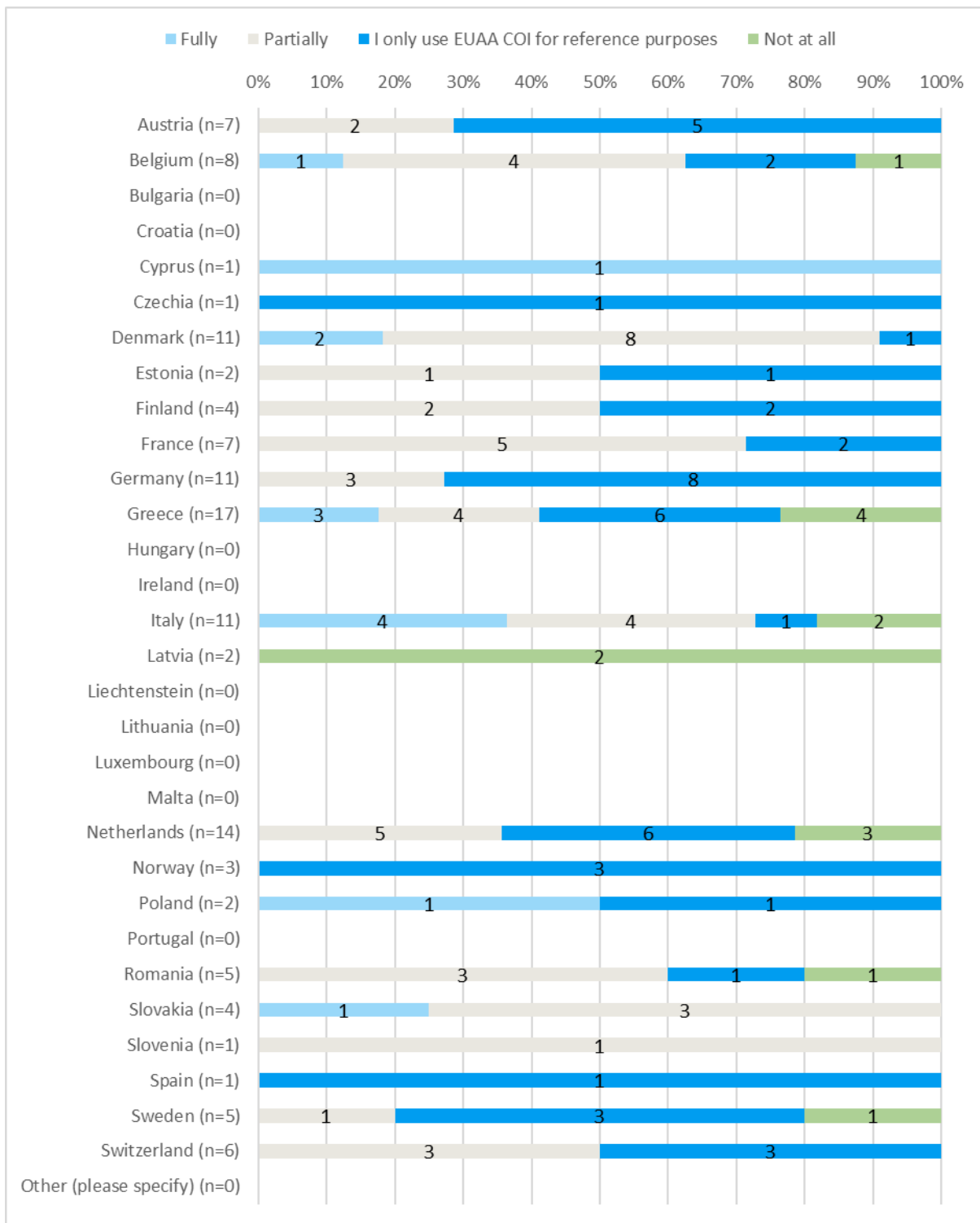
As for the integration of EUAA COI documents into national COI documents, nearly 40% of researchers indicated doing it partially. A similar percentage declared only using EUAA COI for reference purposes (Figure 57). Although the number of respondents across countries is not significant enough to allow meaningful comparisons, Figure 58 provides insights on the differences between countries in relation to this question. Looking at countries with more than ten respondents, it emerges that Denmark is the country with the highest number of respondents who either fully or partially integrate EUAA COI documents into national COI documents (over 90% of respondents do), whereas Germany is the country with the highest number of respondents who only use EUAA COI for reference purposes (over 70% of respondents do).

Figure 57. To what extent do you integrate the EUAA COI documents into national COI documents? (n=123)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 58. To what extent do you integrate the EUAA COI documents into national COI documents? crossed with: Which country do you work in?

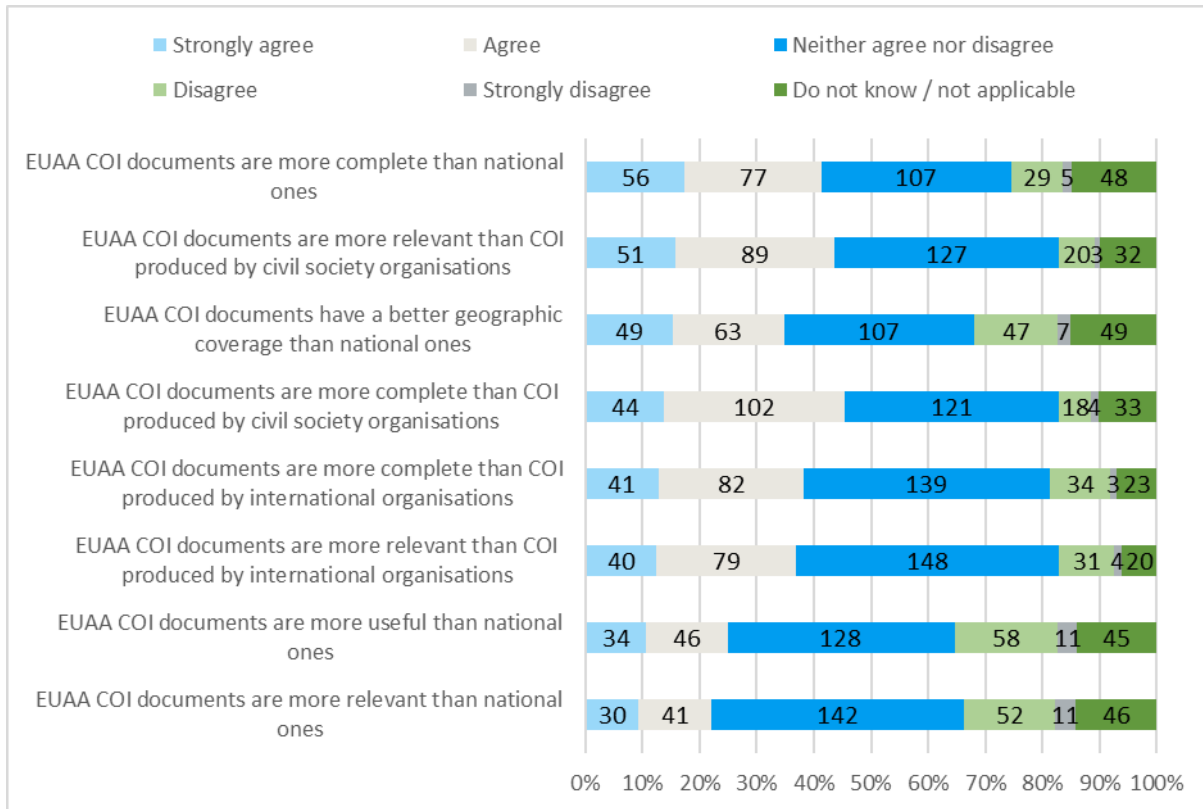


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

On a general level, over 40% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the fact that EUAA COI documents are more complete and more relevant than those produced by civil society organisations, and that they are more complete than national ones (Figure 59). Looking at

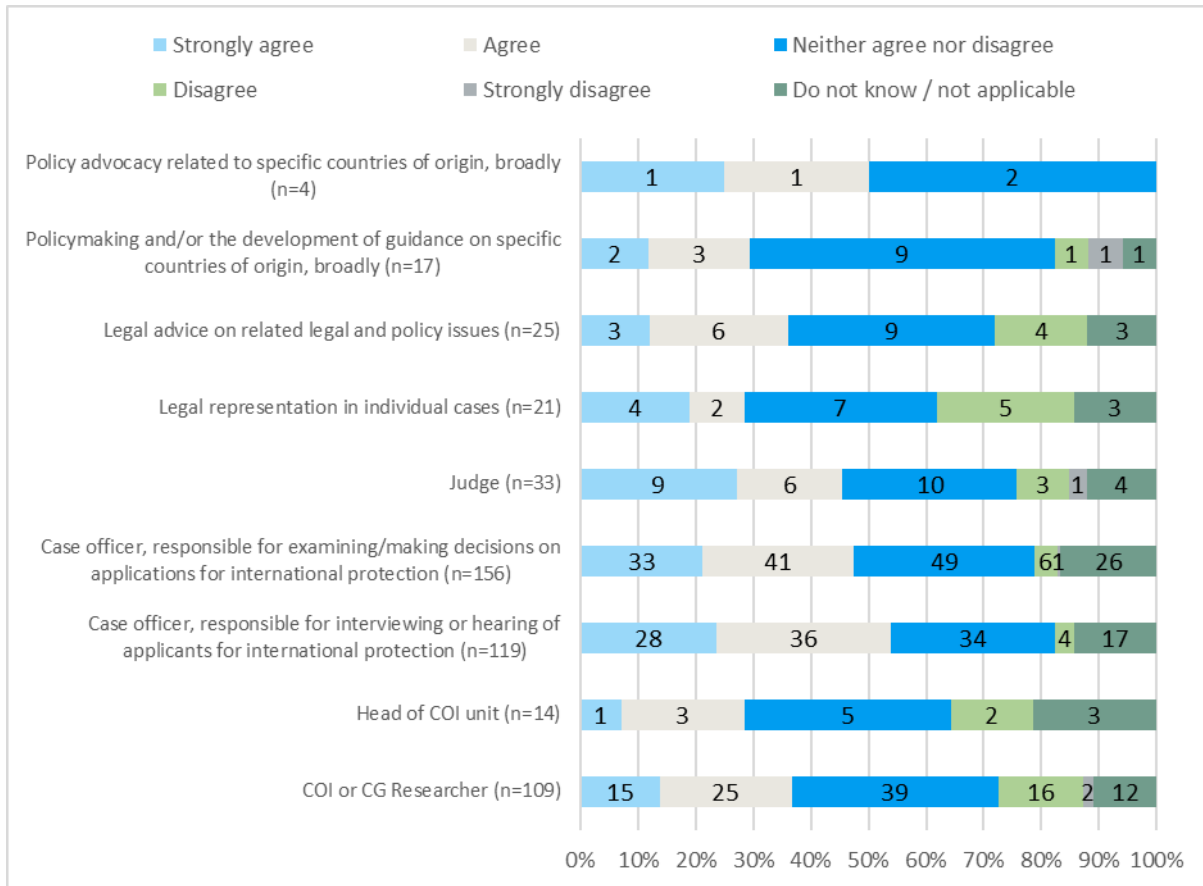
differences among respondent profiles, case officers responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection is the only group whose majority either agrees or strongly agrees with the fact that EUAA COI documents are more complete than national ones (Figure 60).

Figure 59. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=322)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 60. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? - EUAA COI documents are more complete than national ones. Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures?

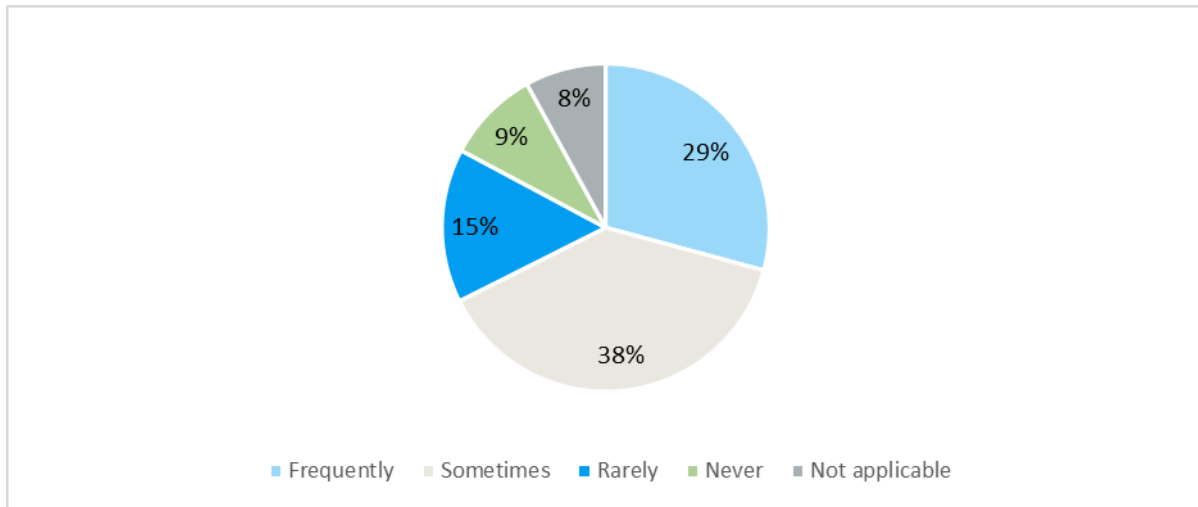


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

From the written responses provided by participants, there seems to be a common agreement that overlapping is inevitable and to a certain extent seen as desirable as the EUAA is not the only stakeholder producing these reports so there are more perspectives available. Some respondents (COI or CG researchers/experts from the Netherlands, Belgium, and France) perceive EUAA COI reports as a collection of relevant references which provide valuable contextual information and give them access to other sources of information. A COI or CG researcher/expert from Sweden, for instance, mentioned that they choose not to write a certain report if they know the EUAA will be drafting one so they act as peer-reviewers or drafters in the production of EUAA COI reports. A COI or CG researcher/expert from GERMANY mentioned the language as factors which may lead to duplication as national authorities might see the need of producing reports in their own languages. Two COI or CG researchers/experts from Germany and Austria mentioned that asylum administration in EU+ countries are the ones contributing to the duplication of information. In his/her view, as long as national administration produces COI, the EUAA products can certainly contribute little to more harmonization in terms of quality and methodology. Furthermore, a case officer (Latvia) identified that COI products contribute to the common understanding on decisions. Another answer was received from a respondent working in policymaking and developing guidance on specific countries of origin (Greece), who identified that COI reports but most importantly CG could facilitate convergence among EU+ countries.

Nearly 30% of respondents indicated frequently using the EUAA’s COI documents instead of their own country’s COI documents. Only 9% of the respondents reported never doing it (Figure 61).

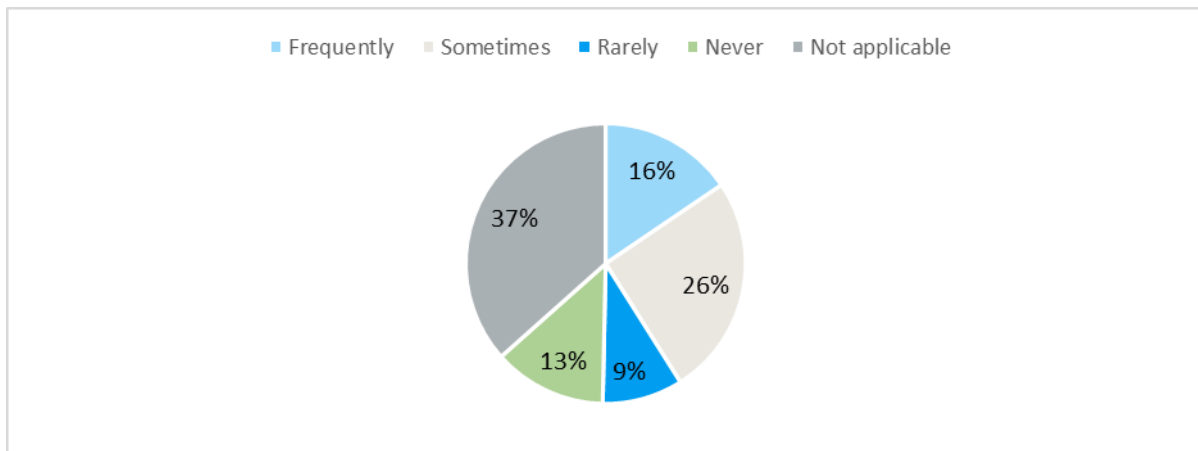
Figure 61. Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents instead of your own country’s COI documents? (n=250)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Half of survey respondents indicated using EUAA’s COI documents for the development of national COI products (frequently, sometimes, or rarely). In particular, 16% of respondents indicated frequently referring to EUAA’s COI documents for the development of national COI documents, 26% said they only do it sometimes, and 9% reported rarely doing it (Figure 62).

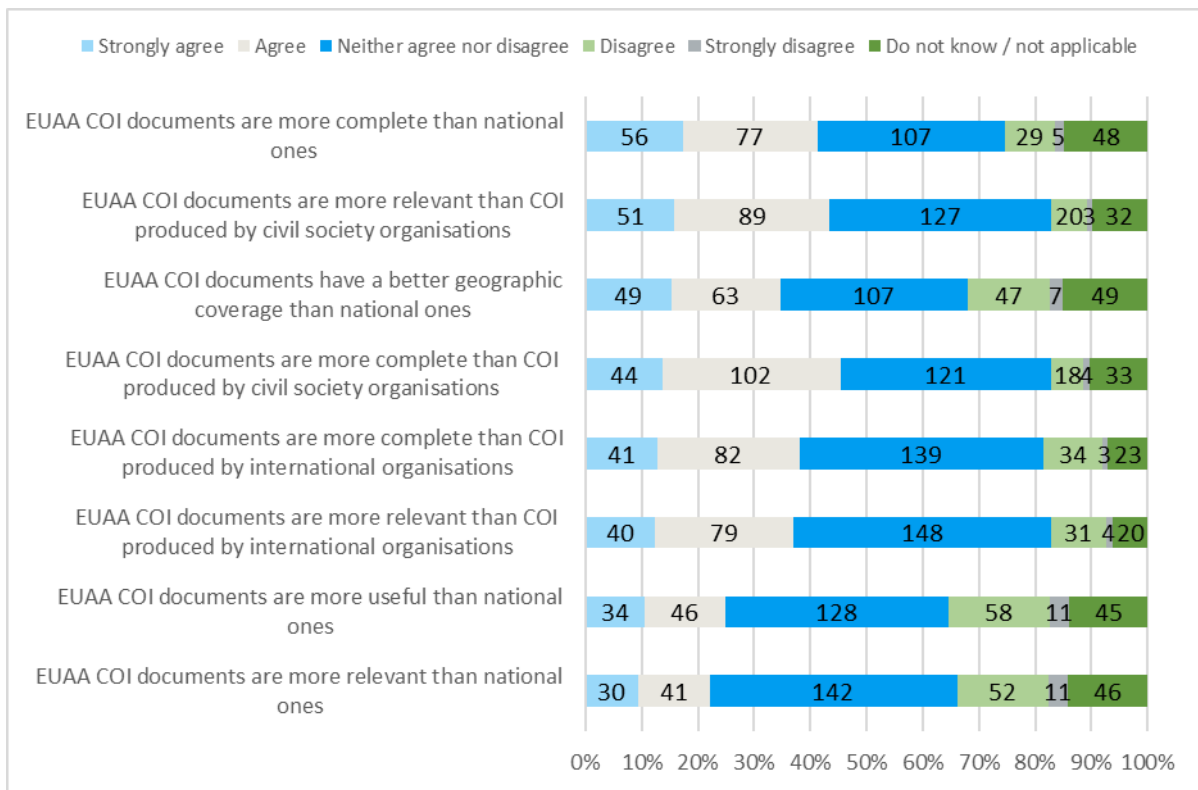
Figure 62. Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents for the development of your own country’s COI documents? (n=290)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Overall, about 40% of respondents consider EUAA COI documents more complete than national ones and than those produced by civil society organisations. However, national COI documents are perceived as more useful and relevant by a small minority (Figure 63).

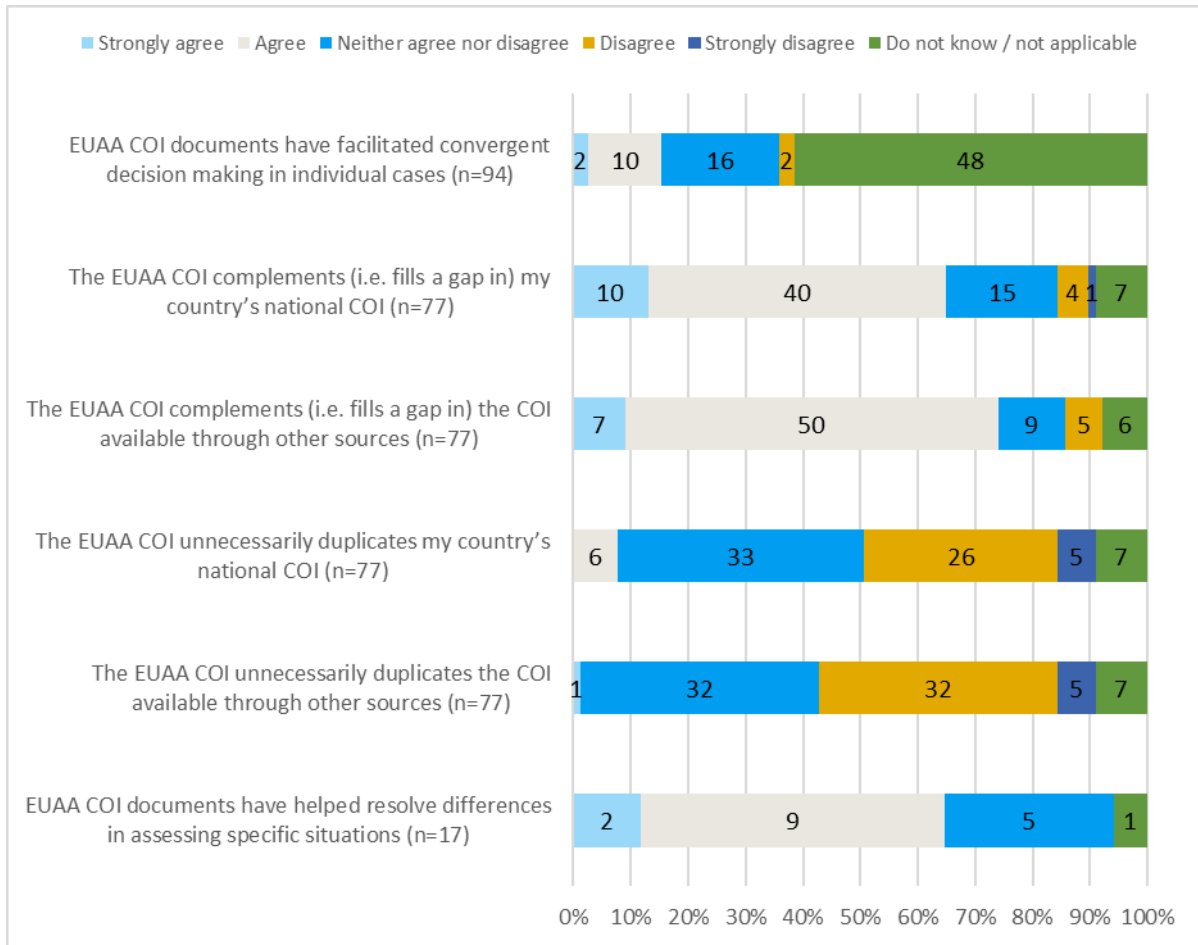
Figure 63. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding EUAA COI documents? (n=332)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Most respondents are not able to tell whether EUAA COI documents have facilitated convergent decision making in individual cases. However, nearly 50% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement ‘the EUAA COI unnecessarily duplicates the COI available through other sources’ (Figure 64). Looking at disaggregated data for different stakeholder groups, there are no marked differences of opinion.

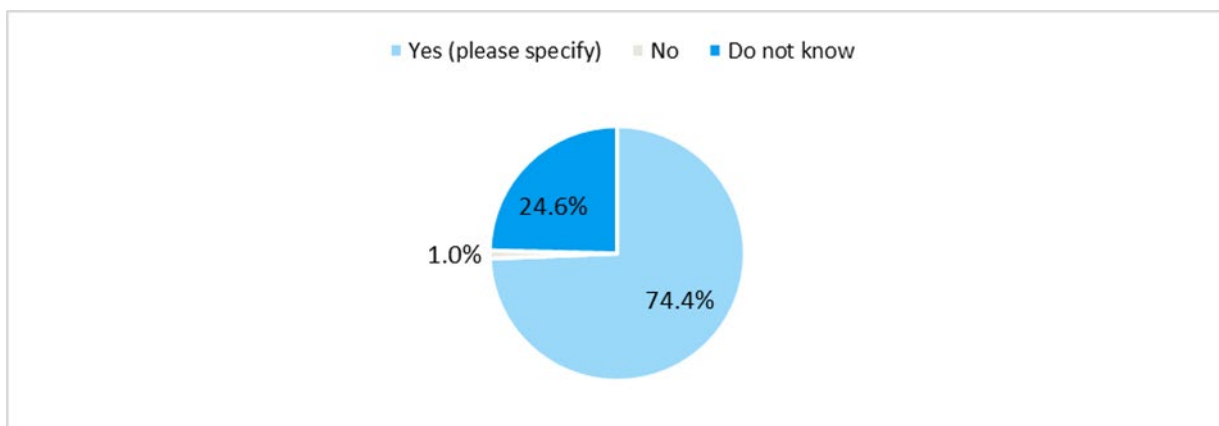
Figure 64. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

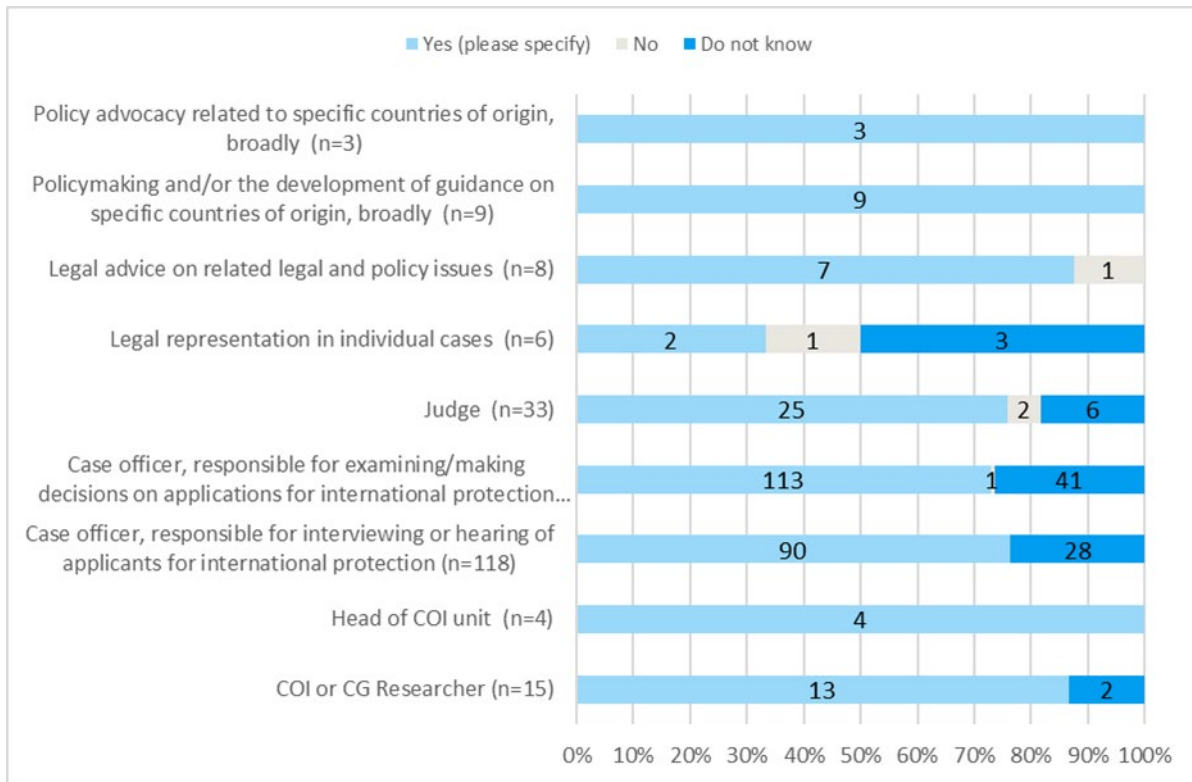
Most respondents (74%) believe that EU-level COI have added value for their work (Figure 65). More than 70% of respondents in each category believe so, except for legal representatives, for which the sample is very small (Figure 66).

Figure 65. Do you believe that having EU-level COI has added value for your work? (n=195)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 66. Do you believe that having EU-level COI has added value for your work? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)

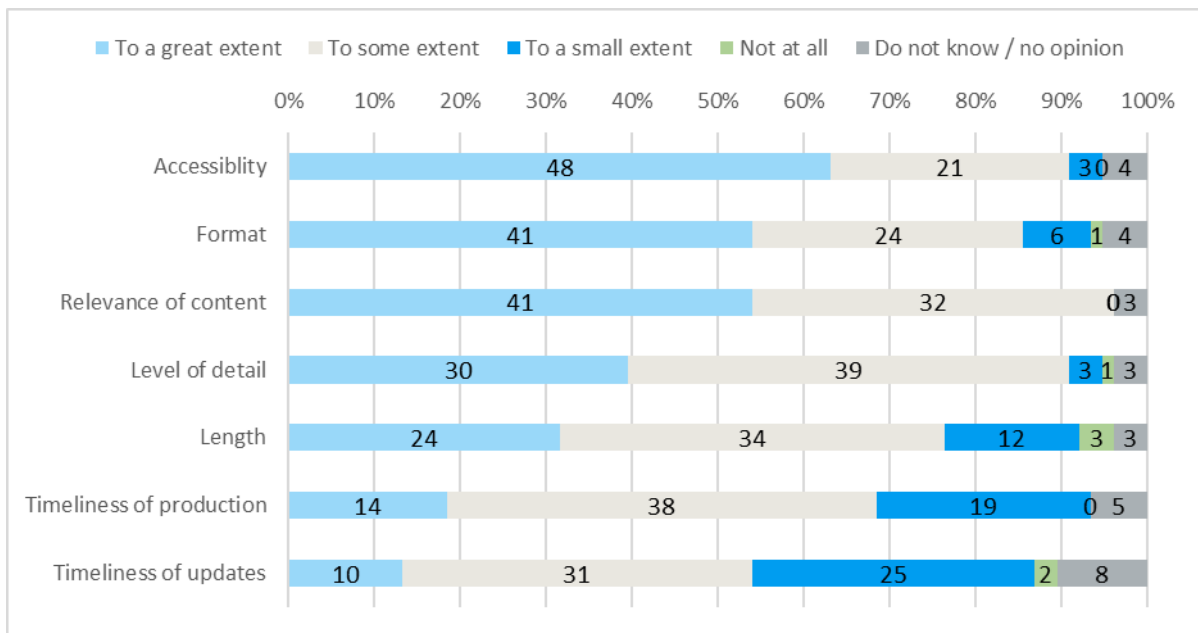


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When asked what the EUAA could do to increase the added value of its COI products, the following answers were provided: improve the user-friendliness (head of COI Unit, Finland; COI or CG researcher/expert, France), have up-to-date information (COI or CG researchers/experts from Greece, Sweden, Slovakia, Finland, Austria), shorter time spent when produce the products (COI or CG researchers/experts from Austria and Belgium), more fact-finding missions (COI or CG researchers/experts from Finland, Romania), and more translations using artificial intelligence (COI or CG researcher/expert, Germany).

Respondents who are members of COI networks are generally satisfied with the accessibility, format, and relevance of the content of EUAA’s COI documents. However, less than 30% of them can say the same for their length, timeliness of production and timeliness of updates (Figure 67).

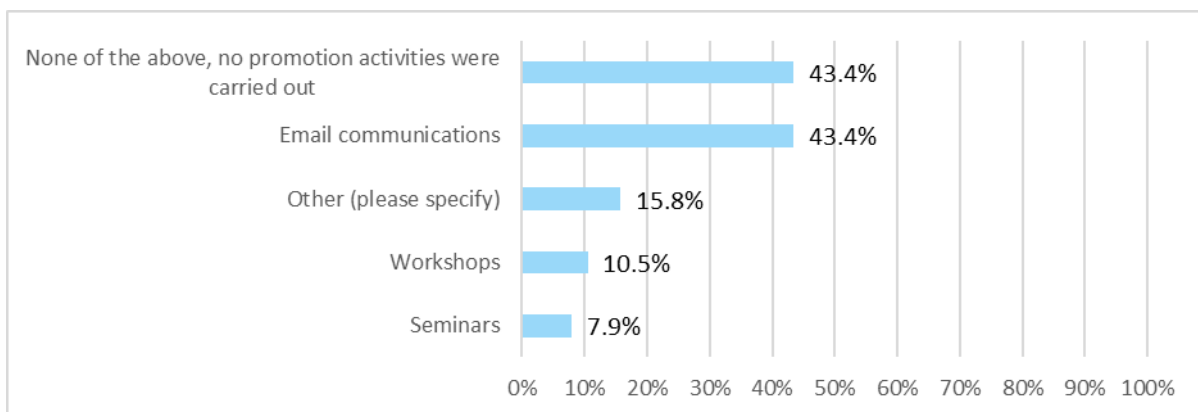
Figure 67. To what extent do you think the EUAA’s COI documents are adequate with regards to their... (n=76)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Over 40% of respondents who are members of COI networks reported that no activities to promote the use of EUAA COI products were carried out within their administrations. Another 40% reported that email communications were used to promote the use of EUAA COI products (Figure 68).

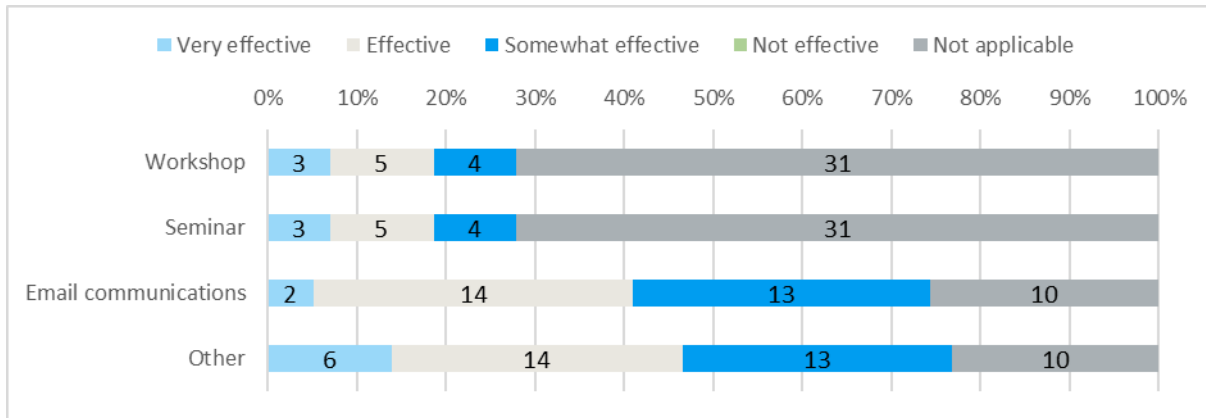
Figure 68. Did you or others in your organisation implement any activities to promote the use of EUAA COI within your administration? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=76)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

As for the effectiveness of the promotion efforts conducted within organisations, workshops and seminars are perceived as very effective or effective methods by less than 20% of the total number of respondents. Email communications and, most of all, other methods fare much better (over 40% of respondents identified them as being either effective or very effective) (Figure 69).

Figure 69. Please rate the effectiveness of the promotion efforts conducted by you or others in your organisation for EUAA COI products (n=43)

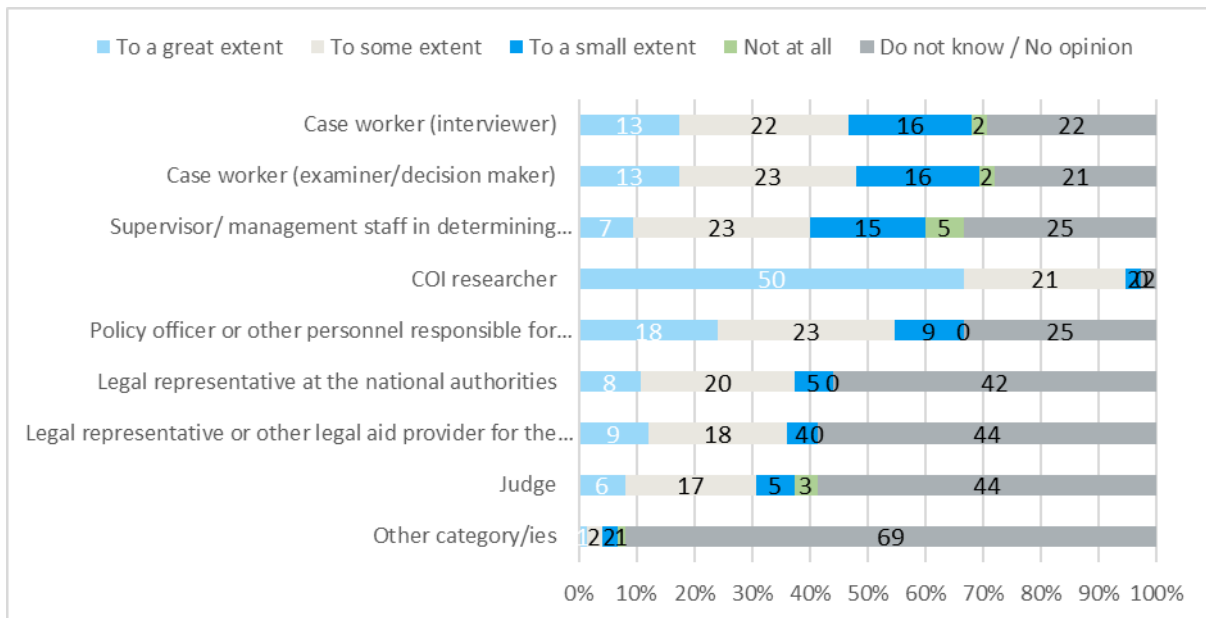


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Examples of promotion efforts by national administrations include training sessions (mentioned by one COI or CG researcher/expert in France), published in national databases (COI or CG researchers/experts in Sweden, Belgium) from word to mouth in internal meetings (COI or CG researchers/experts in the Netherlands, Finland).

Nearly 70% of respondents who are members of COI networks believe that COI researchers use, to a great extent, EUAA COI documents. Less than 10% of them believe that judges do the same (Figure 70).

Figure 70. To what extent do you think the following categories of targeted users in your country use EUAA COI documents? (n=75)



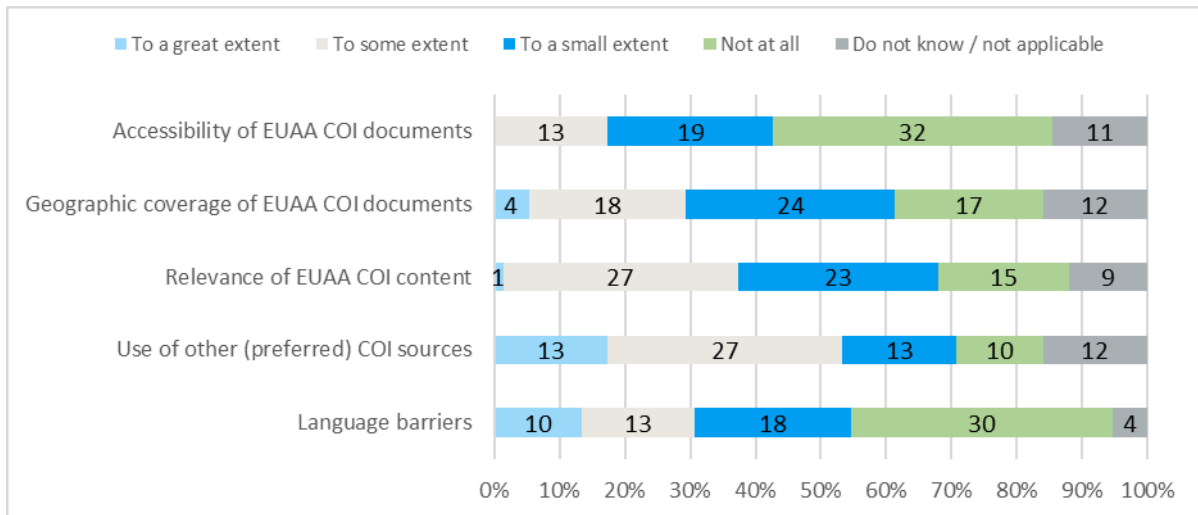
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Amongst the other categories of targeted users using the EUAA COI products, respondents mentioned specialists from some NGOs (head of COI Unit, Romania) and protection officers (COI or CG researcher/expert, Belgium). According to the Finnish respondent, in Finland mostly COI

researchers/experts use EUAA COI. Another Finnish respondent mentioned that in Finland case officers use reports indirectly, as references to EUAA COI products are mentioned in their national guidance. Case officers use the reports at least in a roundabout way, as information from the reports are included in country policy guidelines.

The main factors believed to significantly hinder the use of EUAA COI documents are the preference for other COI sources and language barriers (over 10% of respondents indicated they hinder the use to a great extent). The relevance of EUAA COI content is, to some extent, also an importance issue – almost 40% of respondents believe that it hinders COI use ‘to some extent’ (Figure 71).

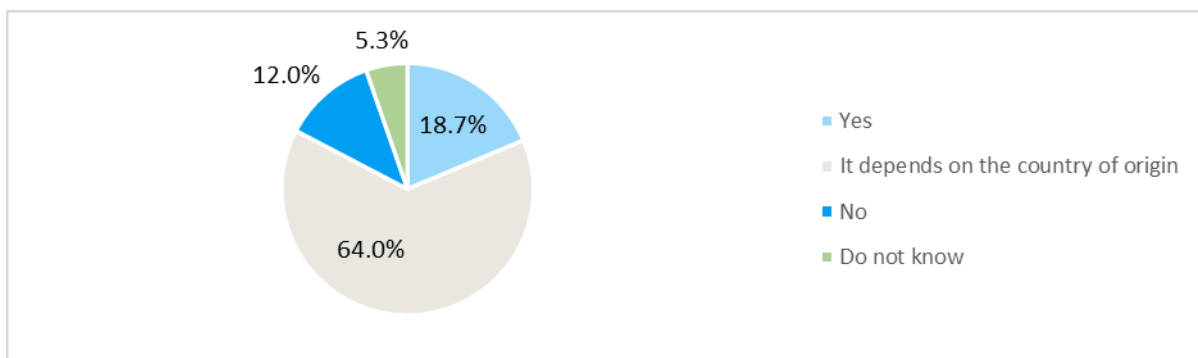
Figure 71. To what extent do you think the following factors hinder the use of EUAA COI documents in your country? (n=75)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Generally, national COI documents appear to be updated more frequently than the EUAA’s COI documents. This is always the case for almost 19% of respondents,⁶⁶ while it depends on the country of origin for 64% of respondents (Figure 72). The number of respondents is too low to allow for a breakdown across countries.

Figure 72. Are your national COI documents updated more frequently than the EUAA’s COI documents? (n=75)



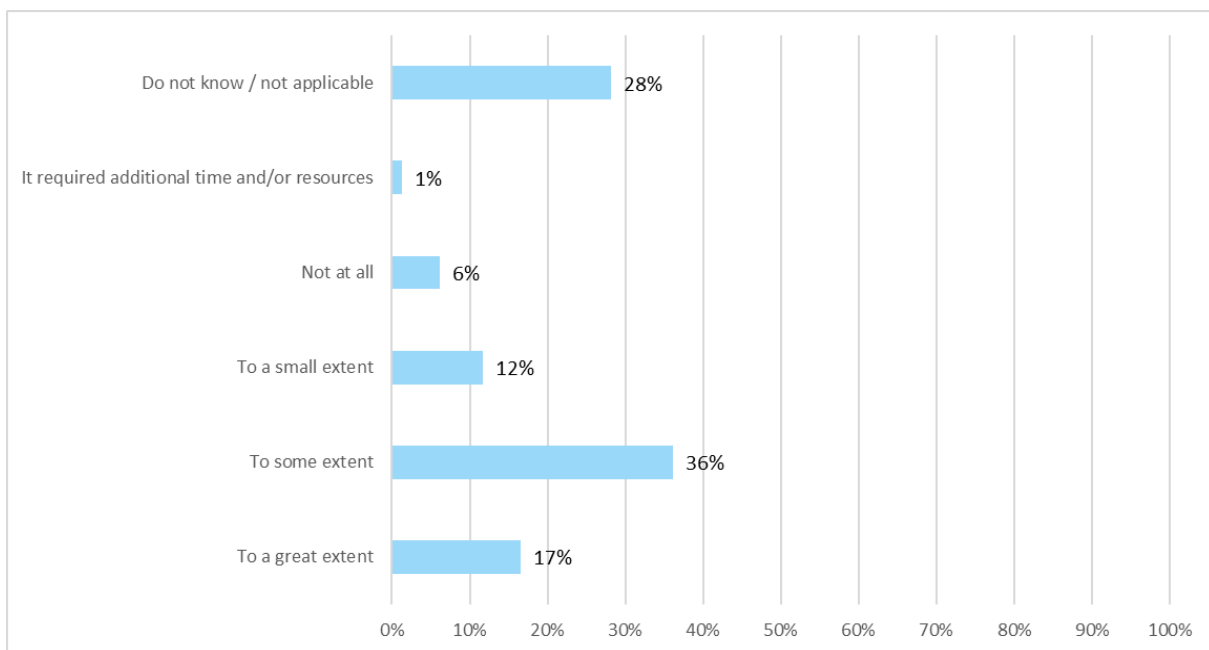
⁶⁶ Members of COI Networks

Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Respondents, through written responses, explained that the frequency of the updates of their national COI products varies from case to case, depends on users’ needs, topics and countries (whether they are conflict-ridden areas such as Afghanistan). The frequency mentioned ranges from every six months to every two years.

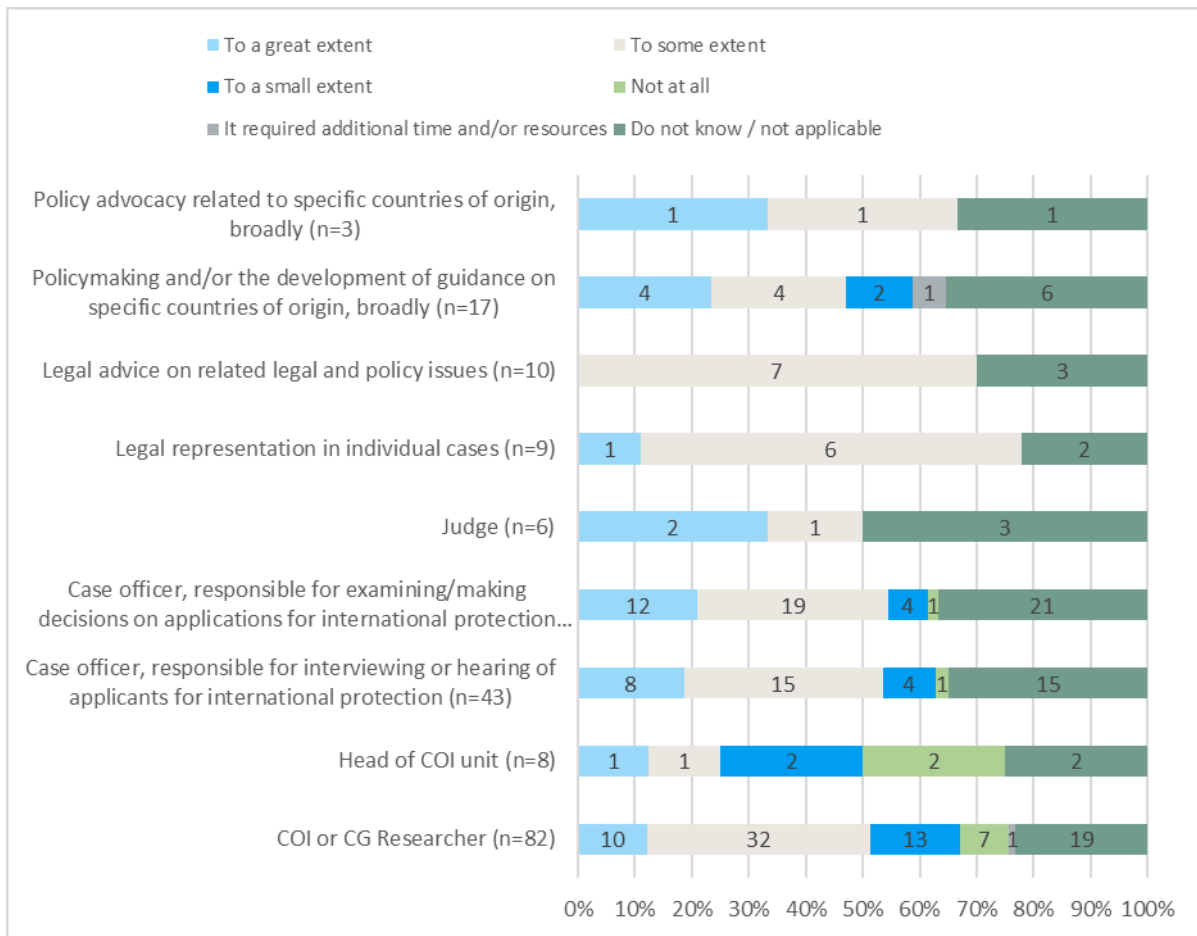
Over 30% of respondents who are members of COI networks believe that the use of the EUAA COI products has to some extent saved their administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing (Figure 73). Looking at disaggregated data by stakeholder group, it appears that this was the case especially for legal advisers and representatives (Figure 74).

Figure 73. To what extent has the use of the EUAA COI products saved your administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing? (n=163)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 74. To what extent has the use of the EUAA COI products saved your administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)

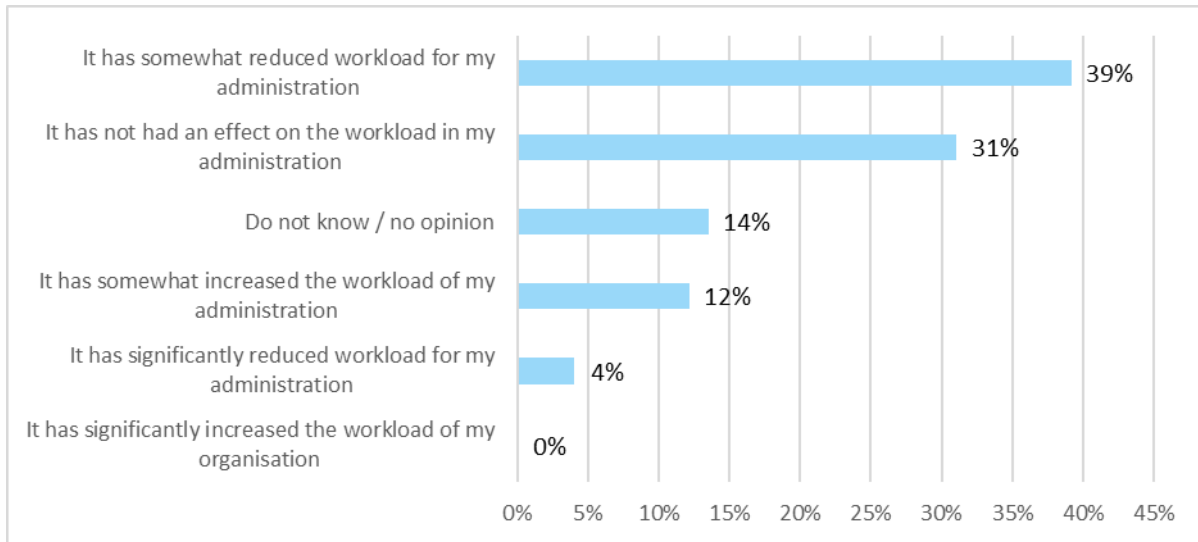


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The majority of respondents who provided written responses mentioned that having centralised information contributes to saving time in terms of information-collection. However, a respondent in Slovakia mentioned that this was not the case concerning information sharing as they need to translate all the reports. COI or CG researchers/experts from Germany and Austria make reference to efficiency gains derived from EUAA COI products when producing national products. Countries like Denmark and Norway mentioned that there were no differences in this regard as they still need to produce their own documents. A COI or CG researcher/expert in Belgium and Finland respectively mentioned that spending time on the production of EUAA COI products as drafter or peer reviewer takes time. Furthermore, one case officer (Latvia) answered that, without a COI Unit, the existence of EUAA COI documents facilitates the daily work of case officers.

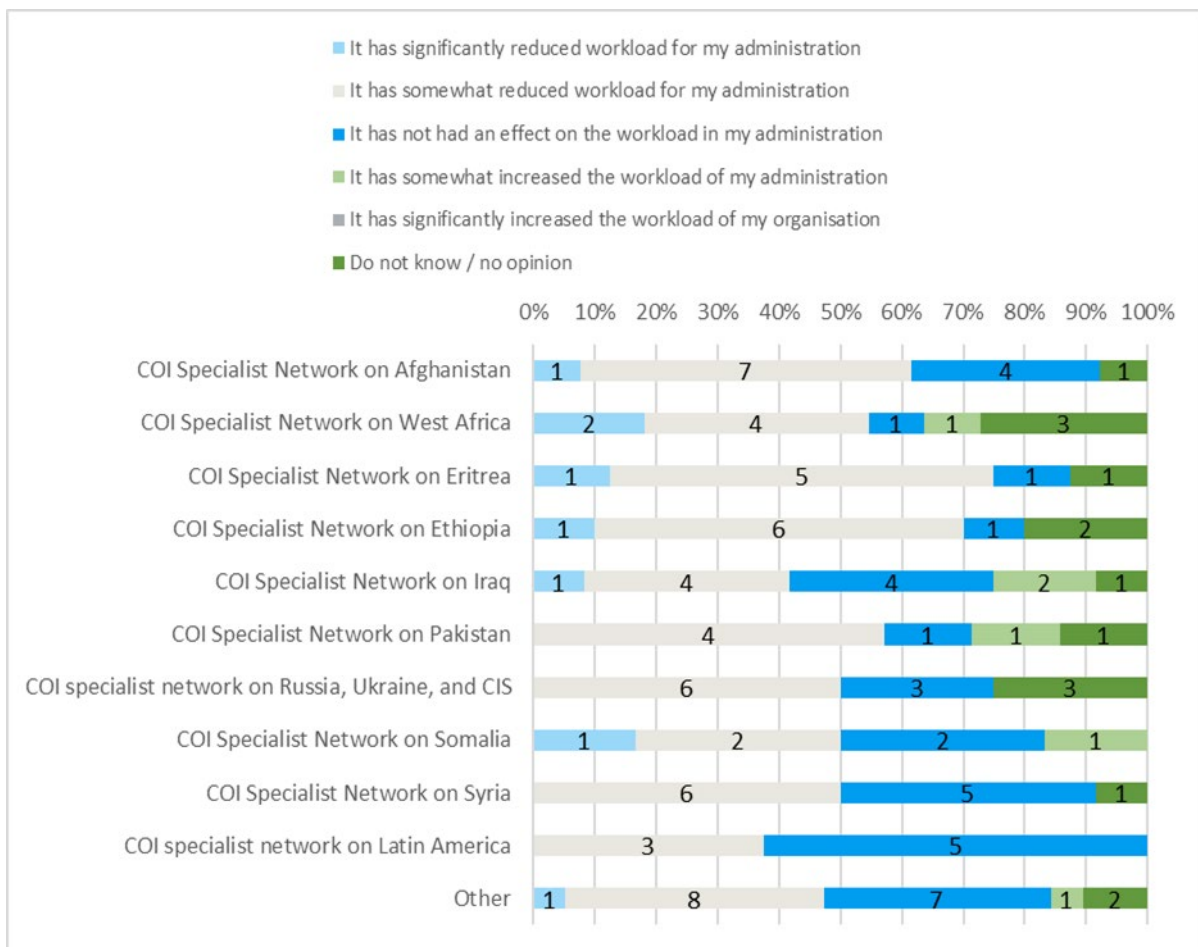
Participation in EUAA networks on COI has somewhat reduced workload for administrations according to nearly 40% of respondents. However, 12% of respondents believe the opposite happened (Figure 75). Looking at differences among different COI specialist networks: the ones on Eritrea, Ethiopia and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan, appear to have been more successful at reducing the workload for administrations (Figure 76).

Figure 75. To what extent do you think your participation in EUAA networks on COI has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g., for the production of own COI)? (n=74)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

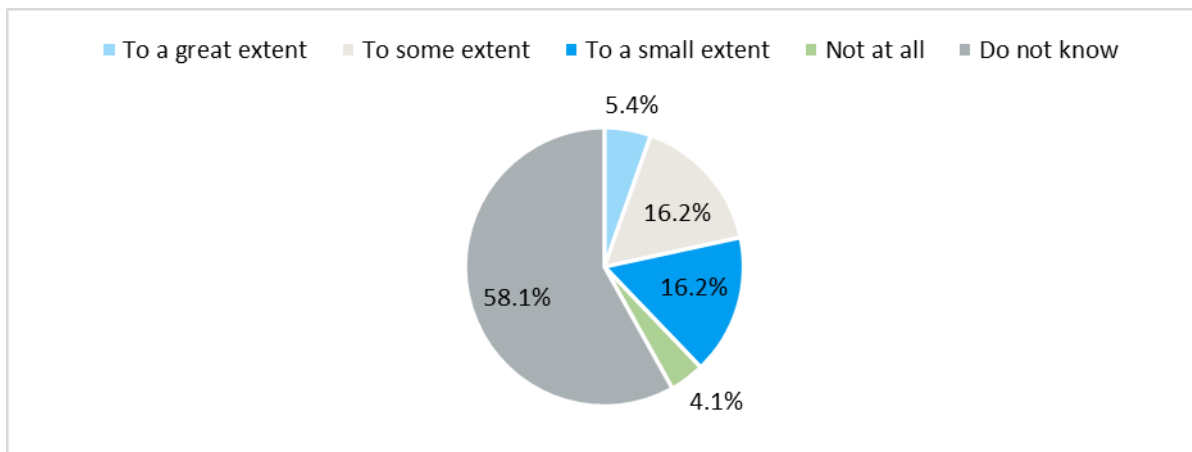
Figure 76. To what extent do you think your participation in EUAA networks on COI has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own COI)? Crossed with: Please specify which COI specialist network(s) you are a member of



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Most respondents (58%) are not able to tell whether EUAA COI documents have contributed to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries. 38% of respondents believe that such documents did have an impact on convergence, but to different extents (Figure 77).

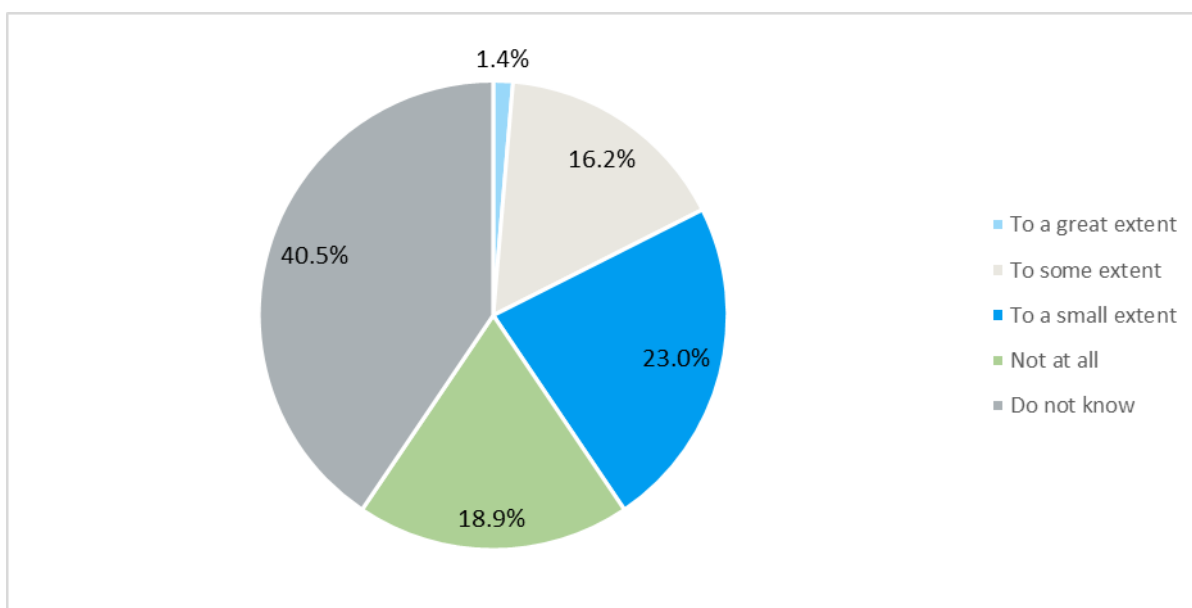
Figure 77. To what extent have EUAA COI documents contributed to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries? (n=74)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Only around 19% of respondents who are members of COI networks believe that convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could not be achieved among Member States without the EUAA COI products (Figure 78).

Figure 78. Do you believe convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA COI products? (n=74)

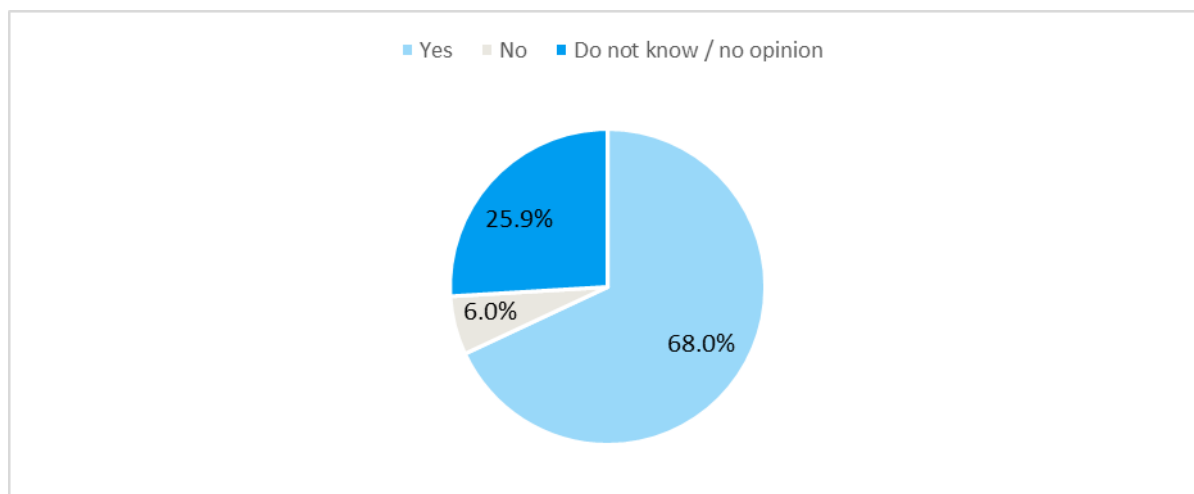


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

When asked if convergence could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA COI products, the answers pointed out to the importance of collaboration in order to achieve a common understanding in decision-making across Member States (COI and CG researchers/experts from France and Austria). At the same time, one respondent (COI or CG researcher/expert from Denmark) answered that Denmark is not involved due to its opt-out from the EU assessment of international protection.

Nearly 70% of respondents believe that the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents, and only 6% are opposed to the idea (Figure 79). Zooming in to account for different views among different stakeholder groups, one can see that the groups with the highest share of people opposed to the idea are heads of COI units (21%) and COI or CG researchers/experts (10%) (Figure 80).⁶⁷

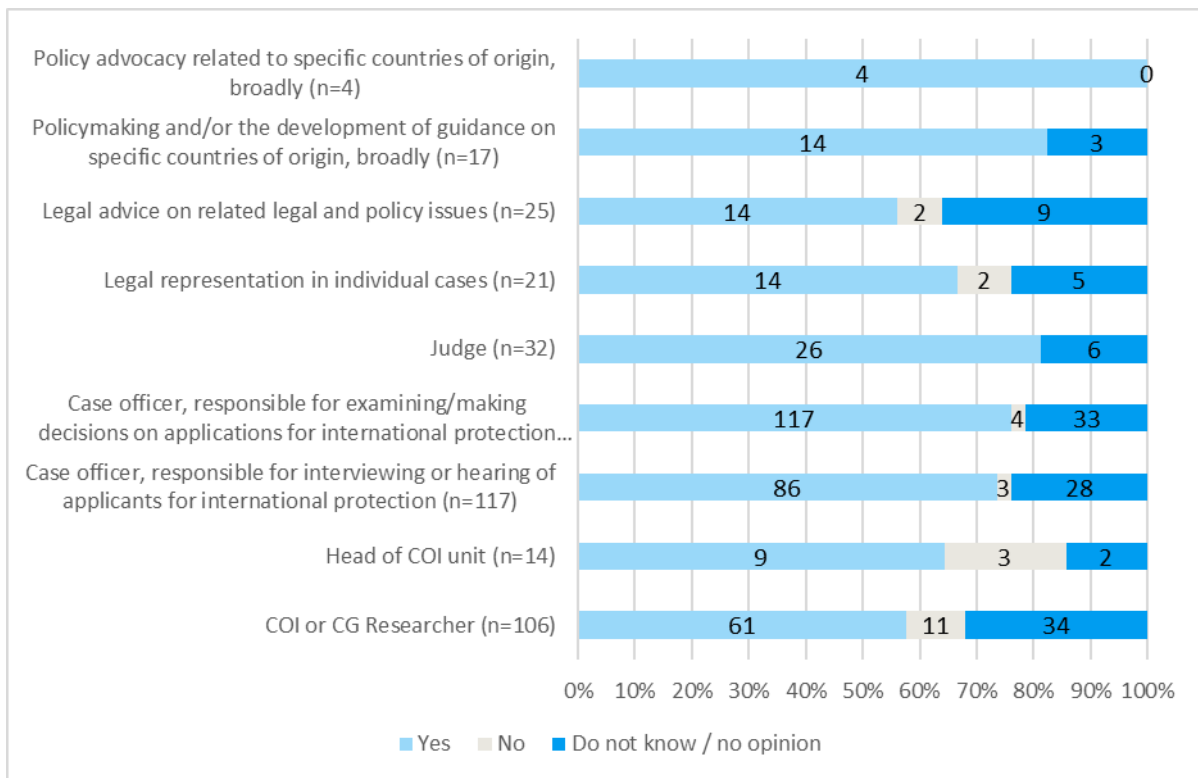
Figure 79. Do you believe the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents? (n=316)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

⁶⁷ The number of respondents among heads of COI units is very small (n=14), so caution must be taken when considering its representativeness.

Figure 80. Do you believe the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



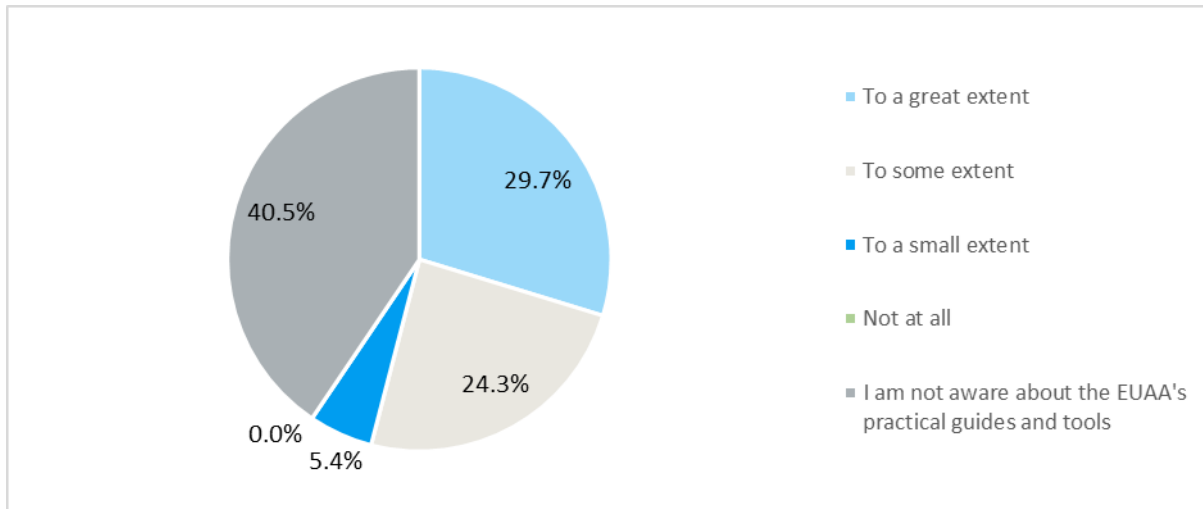
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Most respondents, of those who provided an answer to this question, supported that there is added value and that the EUAA has an important role in producing EU-level COI products. This comes in the form of having a common understanding in the assessment of international protection claims and as much information as possible. However, some respondents highlighted the importance of understanding the national needs of COI production and the importance of an assessment of needs across Member States. Moreover, some respondents highlighted the importance of efficiency and of preventing double-work / overlaps with EU+ countries and of understanding the importance of nationally-produced COI and of national needs in this respect.

When policymakers were asked whether the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents, two policymakers responded. The policymaker from Latvia answered that the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents and the respondent from Greece pointed out that decision-making should not only rely on one single document, even if it contains information from different sources.

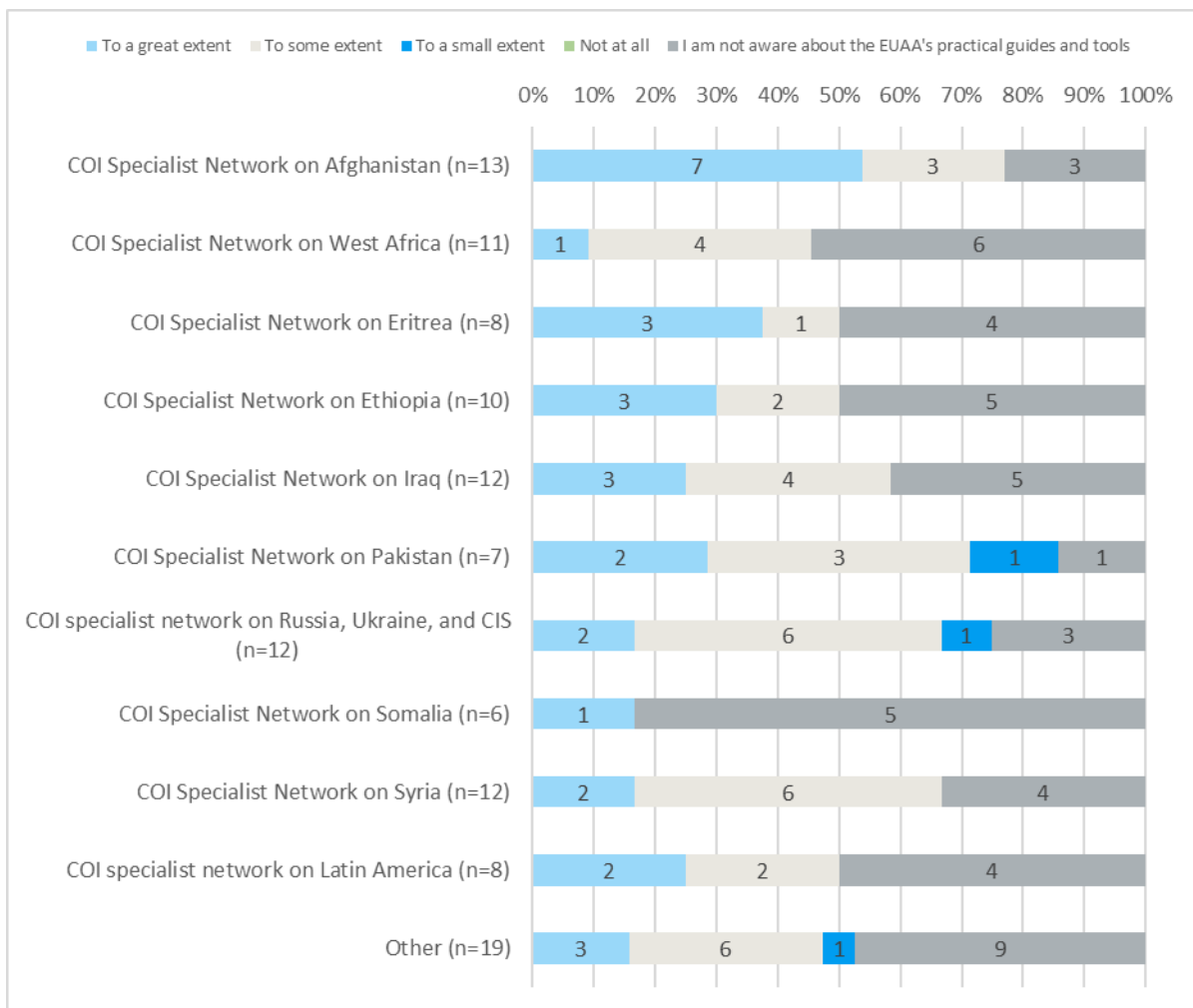
As for coherence between EUAA’s COI products and the scope and objectives of relevant EUAA practical tools and guides, no respondent indicated a lack of coherence, but 24% of respondents indicated not being aware of such tools and guides (Figure 81). A higher degree of coherence is perceived among members of the COI Specialist network on Afghanistan, and minor issues have been detected among members of the COI Specialist networks on Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine and CIS (Figure 82).

Figure 81. To what extent are the EUAA’s COI products coherent with the scope and objectives of the relevant EUAA practical tools and guides? (n=74)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 82. To what extent are the EUAA’s COI products coherent with the scope and objectives of the relevant EUAA practical tools and guides? Crossed with: Please specify which COI specialist network(s) you are a member of



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

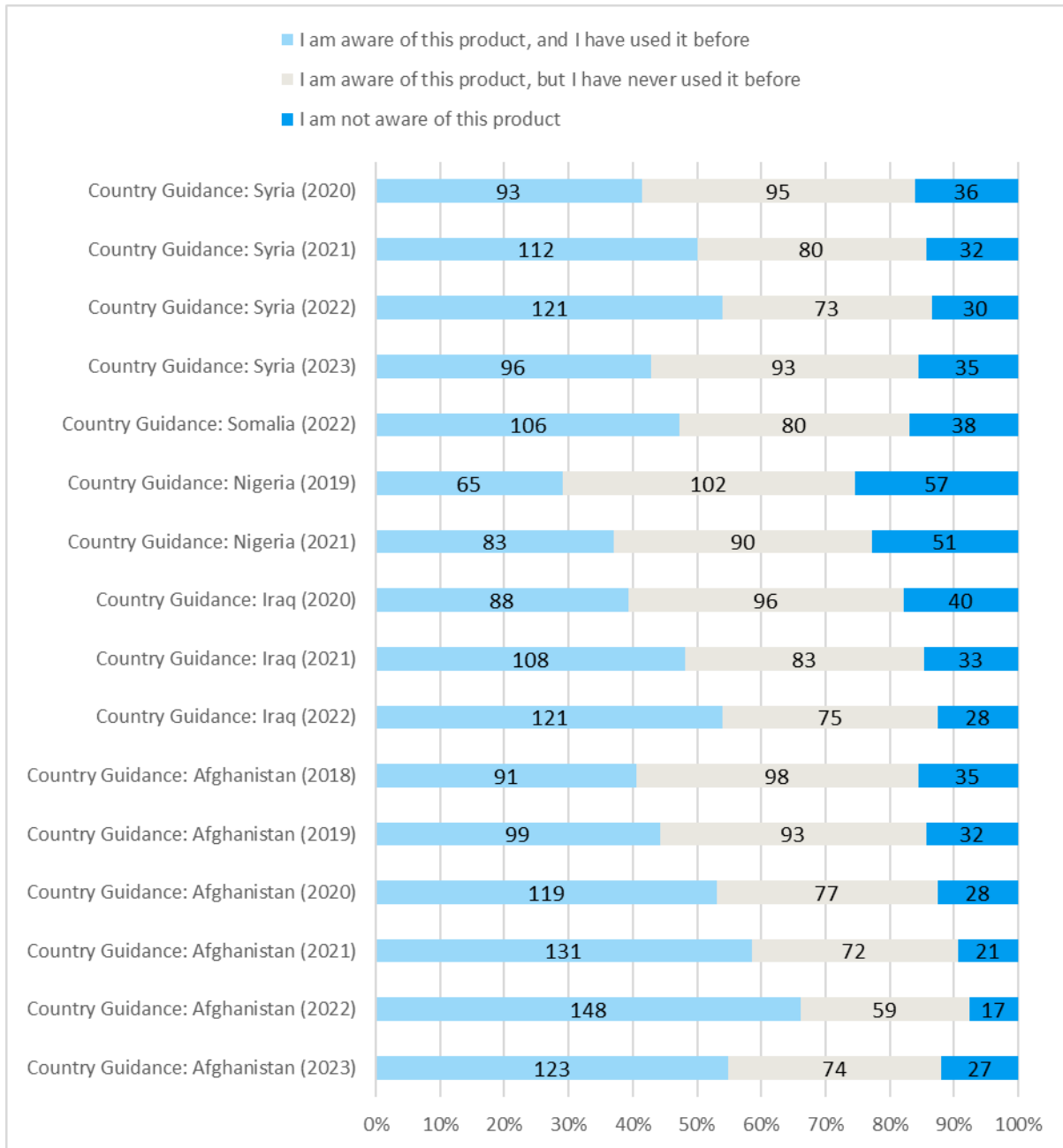
One COI or CG researcher/expert (Austria) identified that EUAA COI and EUAA guidelines can be intertwined well.

Questions for those aware about EU-level CG documents

This section shows the answers to questions that were only shown to respondents who indicated being aware of and willing to answer questions on EUAA CG products. As explained in section 1.3, through a complex set of activations, respondents were only shown questions that were relevant to them.

Figure 83 provides an overview of the level of use/awareness of different country guidance products. Products on Nigeria are the least known/used (less than 80% of respondents are aware of these products), whereas the most widely known/used products are those on Afghanistan (from 2020 onwards), Syria (2022) and Iraq (2022).

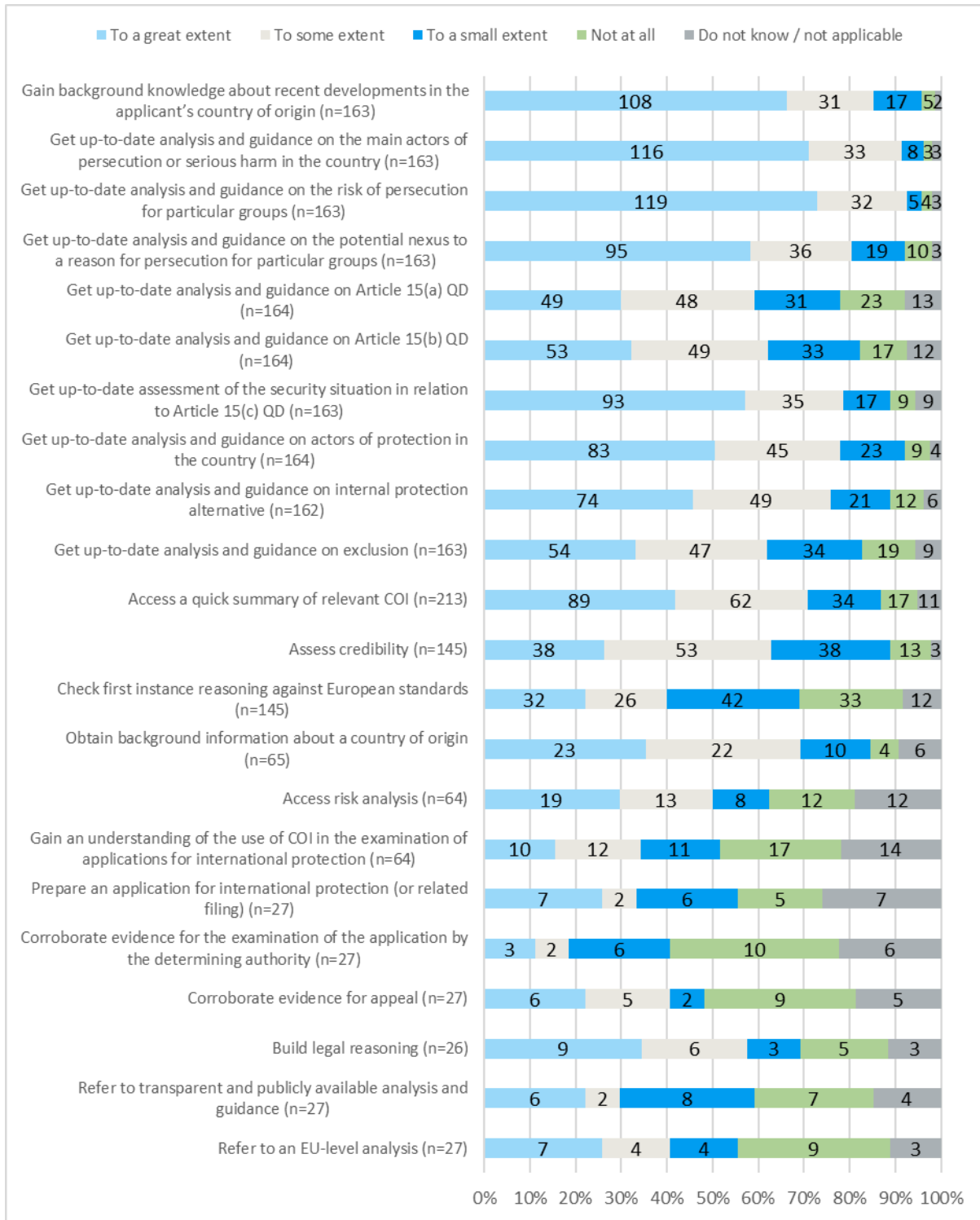
Figure 83. Which of the following CG products have you used before/are you aware of? (n=224)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

CG documents appear to be mostly used to get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the risk of persecution for particular groups and on the main actors of persecution or serious harm in the country, as well as to gain background knowledge about recent developments in the applicant’s country of origin (more than 65% of respondents indicated doing so to a great extent)(Figure 84).

Figure 84. What have you used the EUAA country guidance documents for?

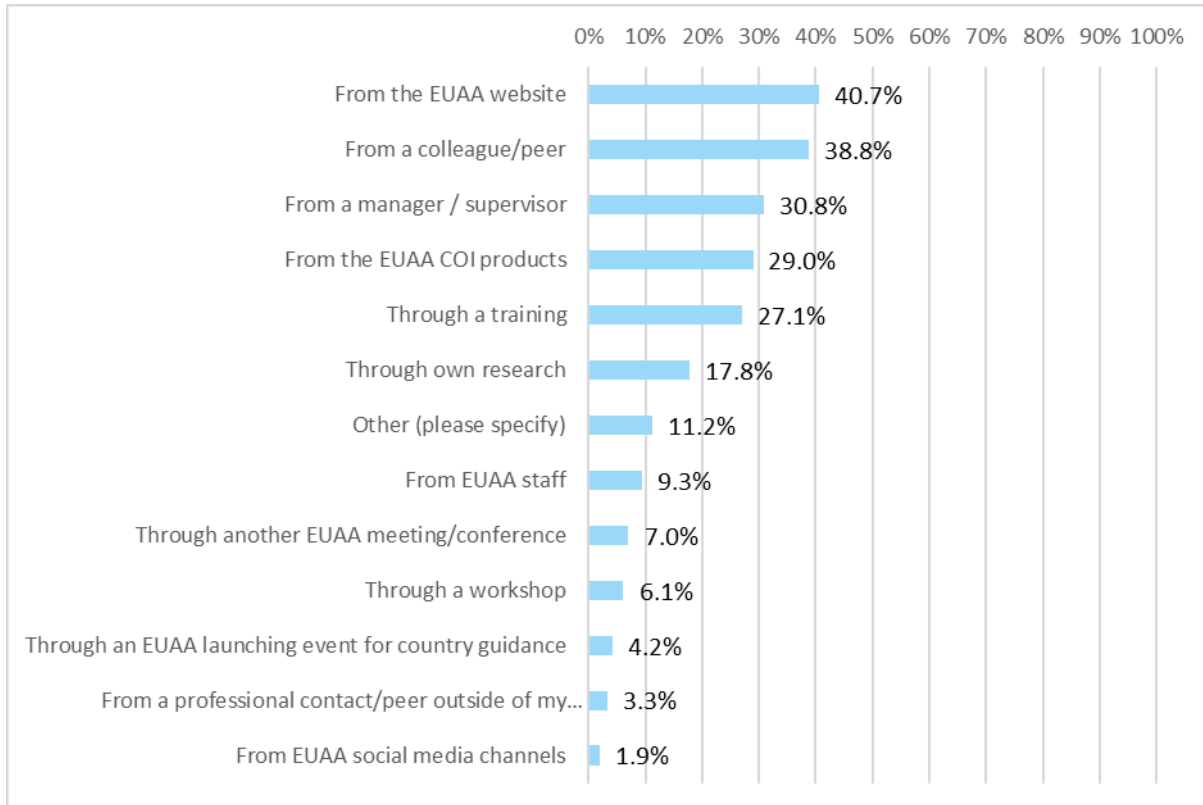


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Additional reasons for using EUAA’s CG products include the fact that CG products are clear, reliable, up to date, and generally constitute the basis of reasoning. Furthermore, useful insights can be drawn by comparing information coming from different sources.⁶⁸

Survey respondents mainly found out about the EUAA’s CG products via the EUAA website and/or through colleagues/peers (Figure 85).

Figure 85. How did you find out about the EUAA’s CG products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) (n=214)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Table 11 shows that there exist significant differences in the way stakeholders find out about EUAA’s CG products in different countries. For example, colleagues/peers play an important role in Finland and Romania (around 80% of respondents indicated finding out about EUAA’s CG products through them), and a much less important role in countries such as Greece and Italy (where only 33% and 23% of respondents indicated the same). There appear also to be differences across different stakeholder groups, although the high variation in the number of respondents among groups calls for caution when interpreting the findings (Figure 86).

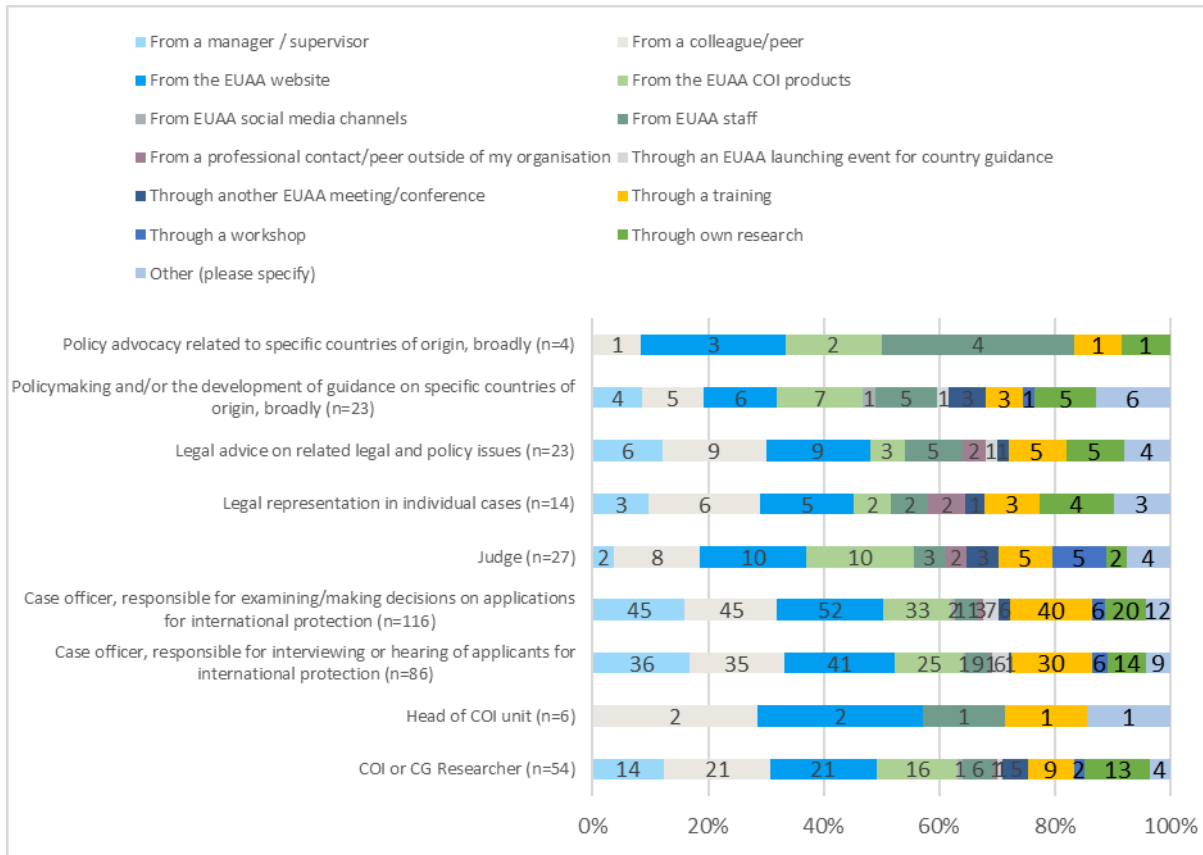
⁶⁸ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please specify any additional reason(s) for which you use CG documents in your work.”

Table 11. How did you find out about the EUAA’s CG products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) Crossed with: Which country do you work in?

	Austria (n=10)	Belgium (n=13)	Bulgaria (n=3)	Croatia (n=1)	Cyprus (n=2)	Czechia (n=3)	Denmark (n=18)	Estonia (n=1)	Finland (n=9)	France (n=6)	Germany (n=11)	Greece (n=43)	Hungary	Ireland (n=6)	Italy (n=22)	Latvia (n=4)	Liechtenstein	Lithuania (n=2)	Luxembourg (n=3)	Malta (n=2)	Netherlands (n=6)	Norway (n=2)	Poland (n=2)	Portugal (n=1)	Romania (n=10)	Slovakia (n=2)	Slovenia (n=2)	Spain (n=2)	Sweden (n=20)	Switzerland (n=2)	Other (please specify)
From a manager / supervisor	40%	27%	67%	0%	0%	0%	44%	0%	44%	33%	27%	26%		33%	9%	25%		50%	33%	50%	67%	0%	0%	0%	60%	50%	100%	50%	30%	0%	0%
From a colleague/peer	40%	60%	33%	0%	0%	0%	39%	0%	78%	17%	45%	33%		50%	23%	50%		50%	0%	50%	50%	50%	0%	80%	50%	0%	0%	45%	50%	0%	
From the EUAA website	10%	20%	33%	0%	67%	33%	44%	100%	11%	33%	18%	56%		50%	73%	25%		50%	67%	50%	33%	50%	50%	0%	30%	0%	50%	100%	30%	50%	0%
From the EUAA COI products	0%	27%	0%	0%	33%	33%	17%	100%	0%	0%	36%	40%		50%	59%	50%		50%	33%	0%	33%	0%	0%	100%	20%	0%	0%	25%	50%	0%	
From EUAA social media channels	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%		0%	5%	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
From EUAA staff	10%	7%	0%	0%	67%	0%	6%	0%	0%	33%	9%	14%		0%	0%	25%		0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	50%	33%	
From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%		0%	0%	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	33%	
Through an EUAA launching event for country guidance	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	12%		0%	0%	0%		0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Through another EUAA meeting/conference	20%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	7%		17%	0%	25%		0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	10%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Through a training workshop	20%	13%	33%	0%	0%	67%	11%	100%	56%	33%	0%	42%		33%	32%	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	70%	50%	50%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Through own research	40%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	18%	2%		17%	5%	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	50%	9%	26%		17%	27%	0%		100%	67%	0%	17%	50%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	
Other (please specify)	10%	13%	0%	0%	0%	33%	28%	0%	0%	0%	18%	5%		0%	9%	0%		0%	0%	0%	17%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	33%	

Source: Ramboll elaboration (2023) based on results from the targeted survey to COI&CG users

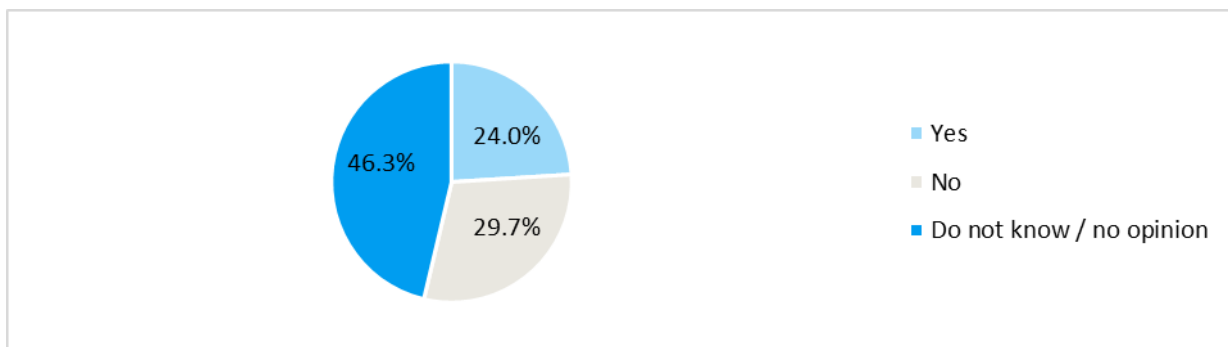
Figure 86. How did you find out about the EUAA’s CG products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

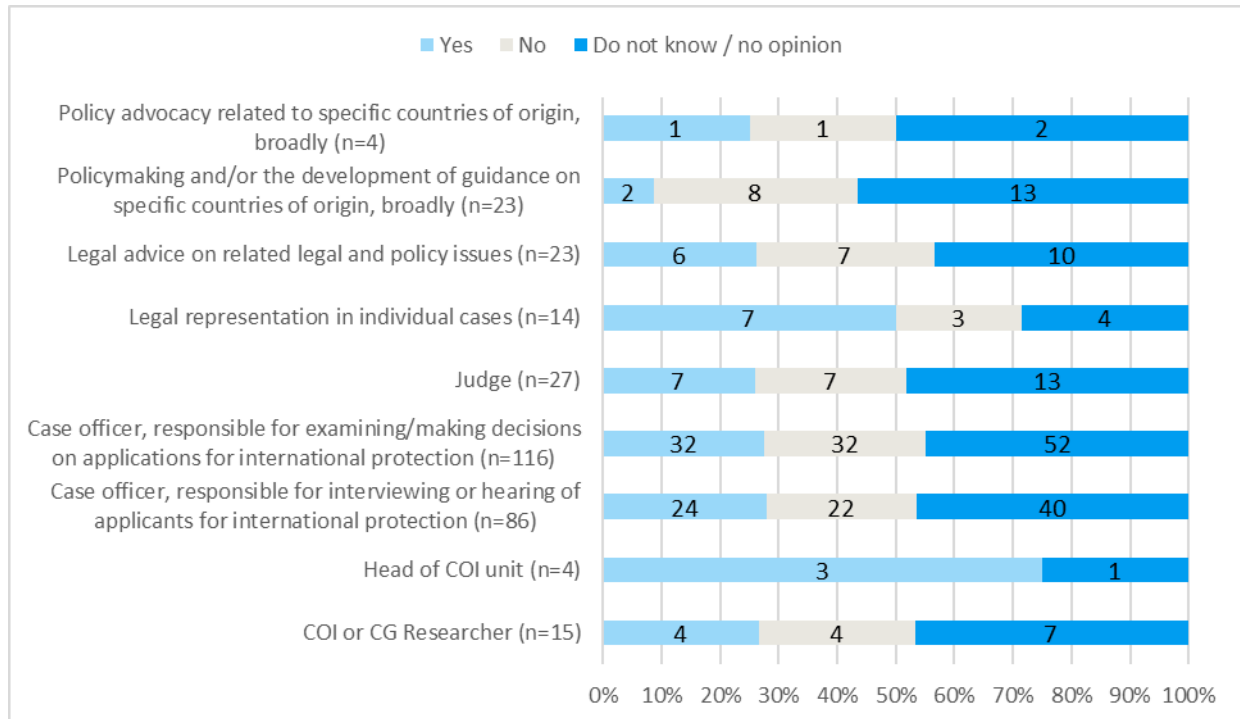
Around 46% of respondents do not have an opinion on whether the EUAA could have done more to disseminate EUAA CG documents. Among those who do have an opinion, the majority believe that the answer is 'no' (Figure 87). Figure 88 presents a breakdown by respondent profile, while 89 shows differences among countries, although caution is in order when drawing conclusions due to the small number of respondents.

Figure 87. Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the CG documents? (n=175)



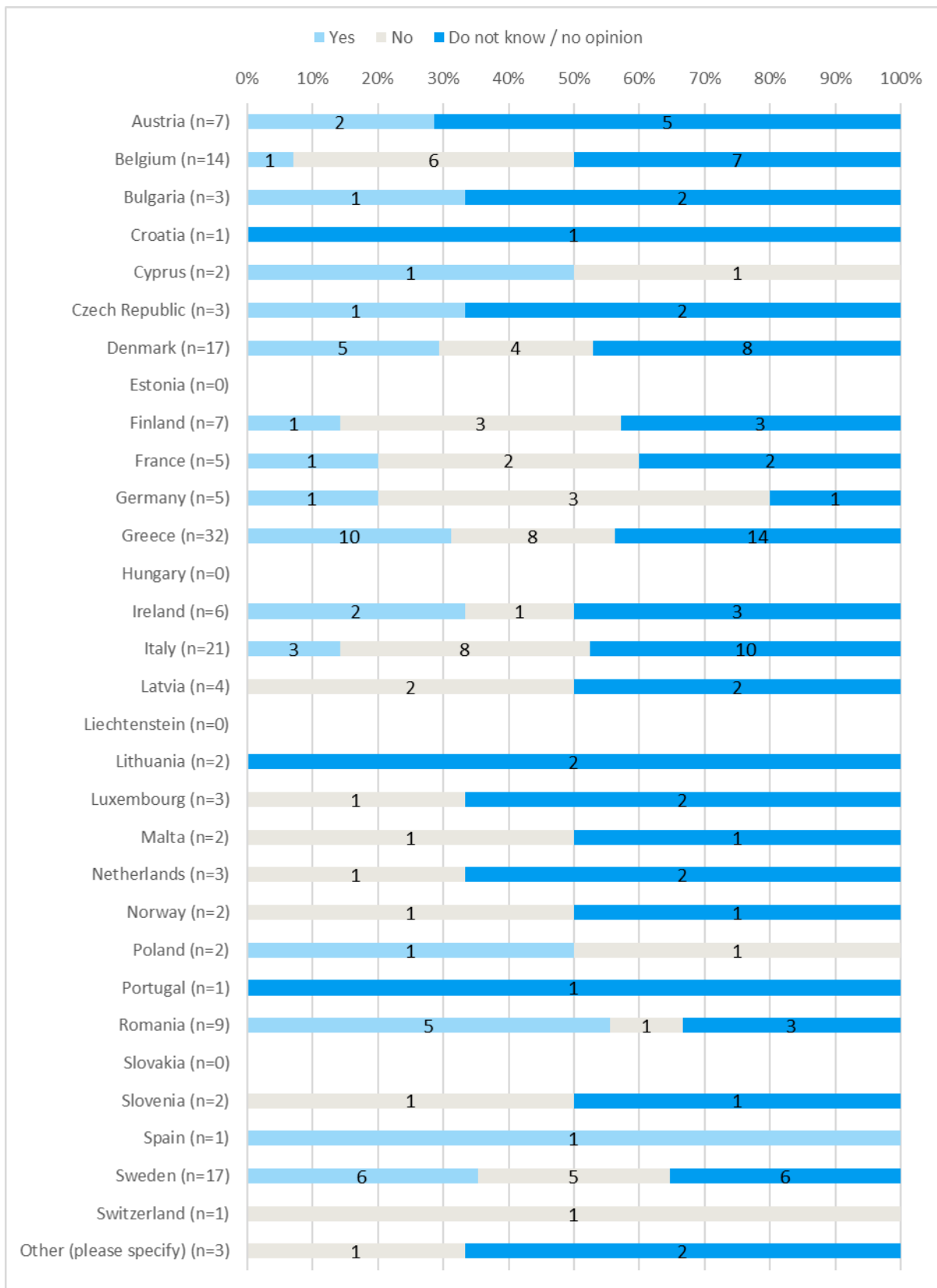
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

**Figure 88. Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the CG documents?
Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)**



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

**Figure 89. Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the CG documents?
Crossed with: Which country do you work in?**

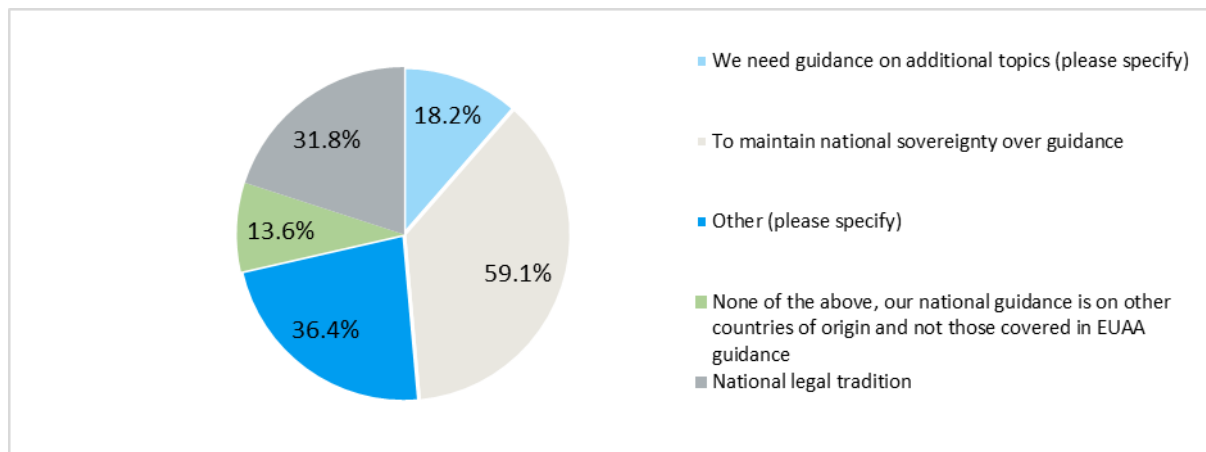


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

To better disseminate CG documents, the EUAA should consider translating the documents into all EU languages (respondents from Romania, Czechia, Austria and Ireland raised this issue), making online access easier, uploading the documents on ECOI.net, sending email notifications and organizing short webinars.⁶⁹

The main reason behind the production of national guidance on countries covered by EUAA country guidance appears to be national sovereignty (Figure 90). Table 12 shows that national sovereignty is a very important reason in Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania, and Switzerland.

Figure 90. For what reason(s) do you produce national guidance on countries covered by EUAA country guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=44)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

⁶⁹ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “If yes, please specify what more the EUAA should have done for CG dissemination.”

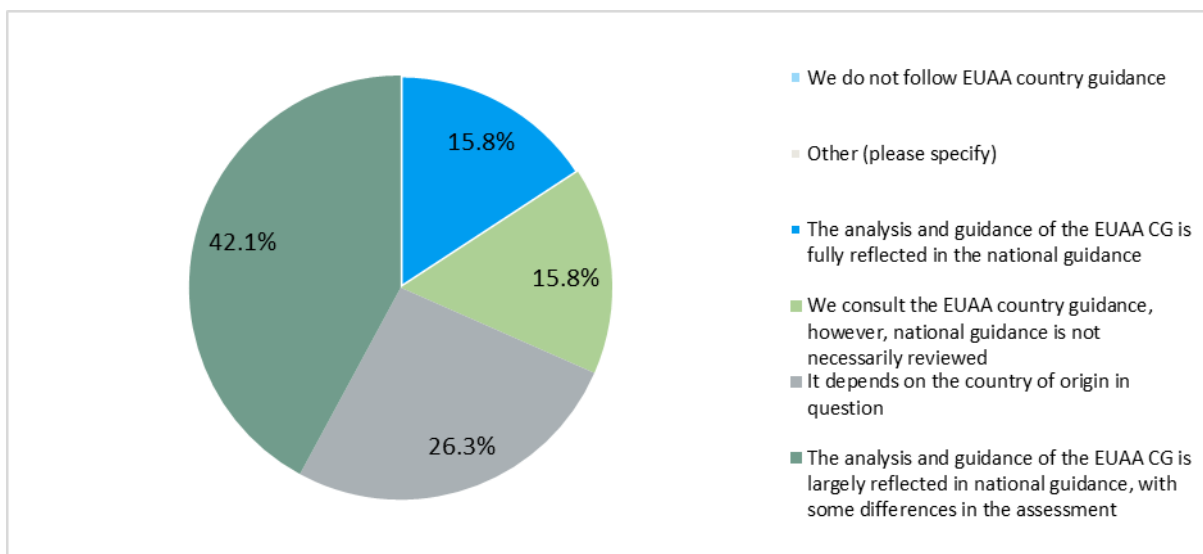
Table 12. For what reason(s) do you produce national guidance on countries covered by EUAA country guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) Crossed with: Which country do you work in?

	To maintain national sovereignty over guidance	We need guidance on additional topics (please specify)	National legal tradition	None of the above, our national guidance is on other countries of origin and not those covered in EUAA guidance	Other (please specify)
Austria (n=3)	67%	33%	67%	0%	33%
Belgium (n=5)	40%	0%	0%	40%	20%
Denmark (n=1)	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Finland (n=3)	67%	33%	67%	0%	67%
France (n=4)	50%	25%	50%	0%	50%
Germany (n=8)	75%	0%	63%	0%	25%
Greece (n=6)	83%	50%	17%	17%	17%
Netherlands (n=5)	80%	0%	20%	40%	20%
Norway (n=1)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Romania (n=1)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sweden (n=5)	0%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Switzerland (n=2)	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%

Source: Ramboll elaboration (2023) based on results from the targeted survey to COI&CG users

Over 40% of policymakers from countries that produce national guidance indicated that the analysis and guidance of the EUAA CG is largely reflected in national guidance, albeit with some differences in assessment. No respondent indicated never following EUAA country guidance (Figure 91). The small number of respondents does not allow for meaningful comparisons among countries.

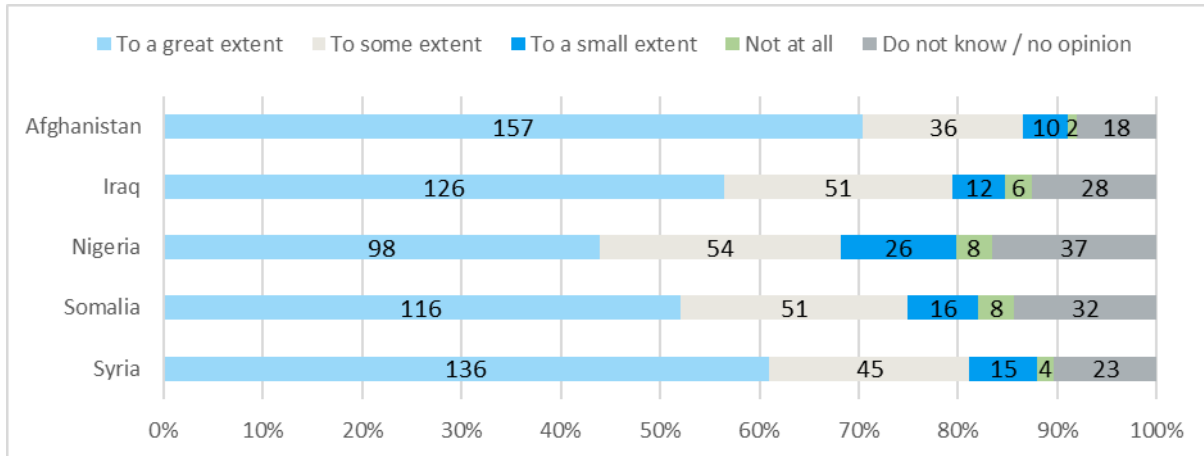
Figure 91. How are EUAA CG documents taken into account in the development and/or update of your national guidance? (n=19)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

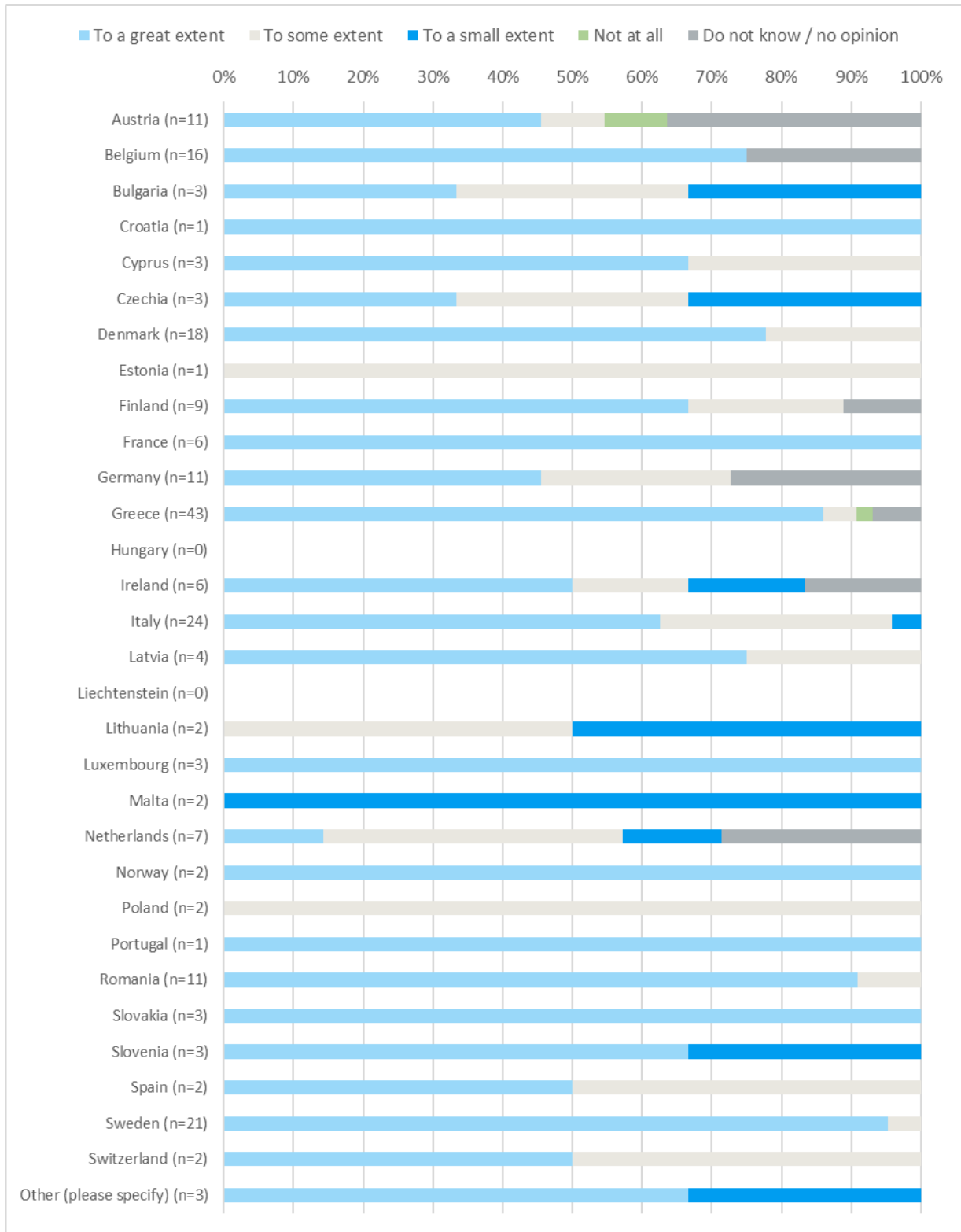
CG products on Afghanistan appear to be the most relevant products (more than 70% of survey respondents indicated that they are to a great extent), while those on Nigeria appear to be the least relevant (Figure 92). The following figures show the differences among countries for each country of origin. For example, CG on Iraq does not appear to be very relevant for Slovenia and Estonia, while Somalia is not at all relevant for Estonia.

Figure 92. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? (n=223)



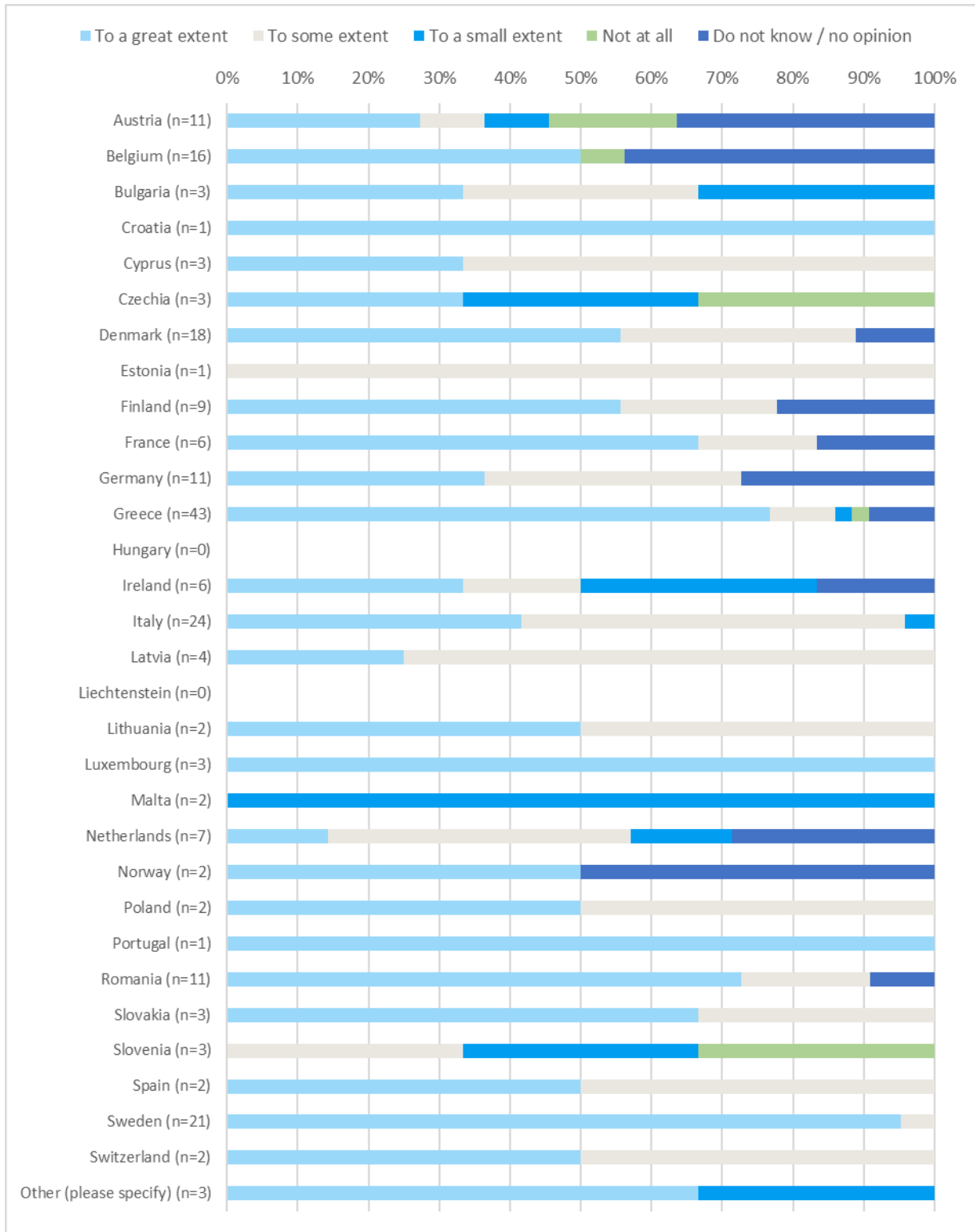
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 93. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? – Afghanistan Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



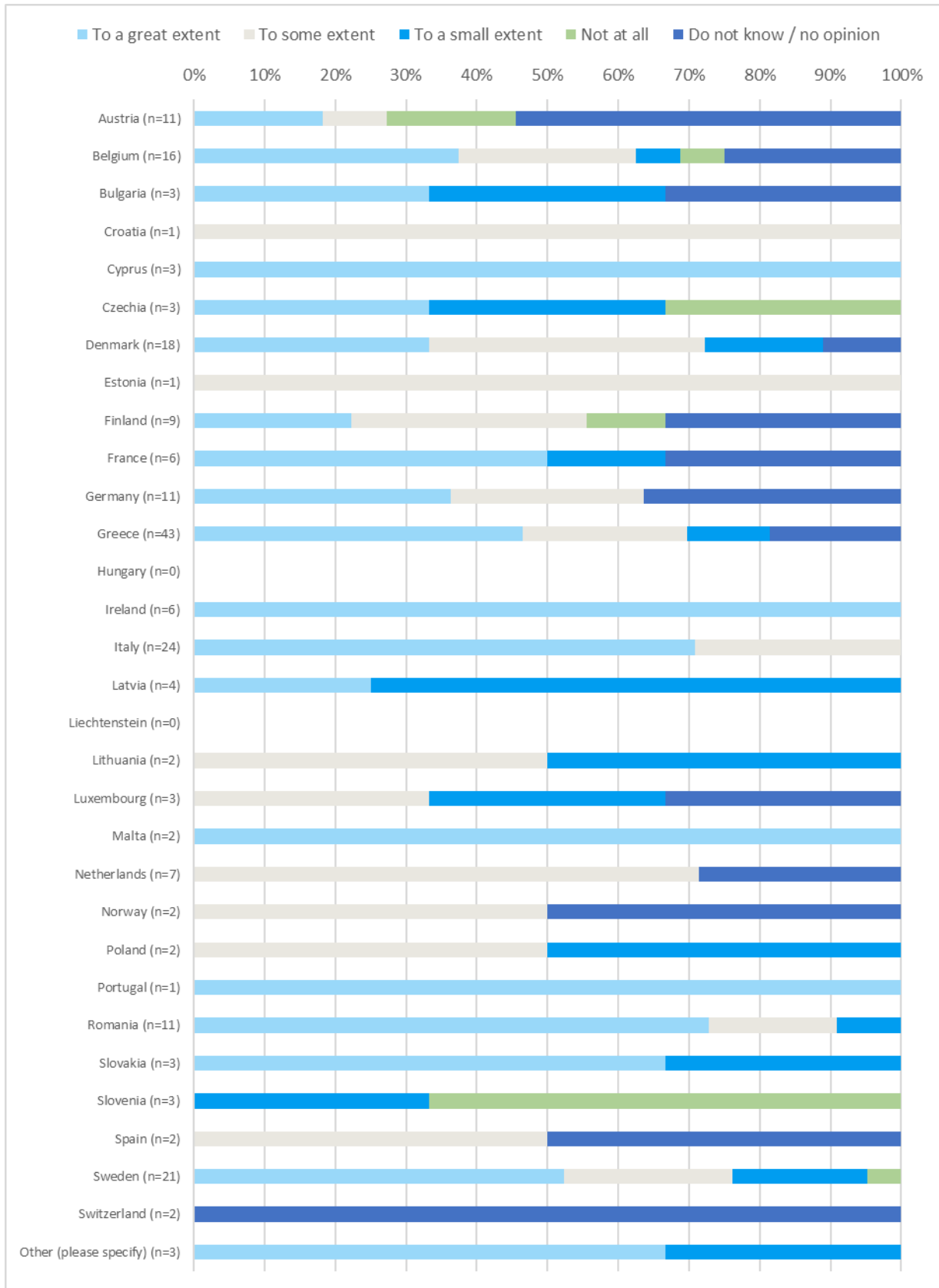
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 94. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? – Iraq Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



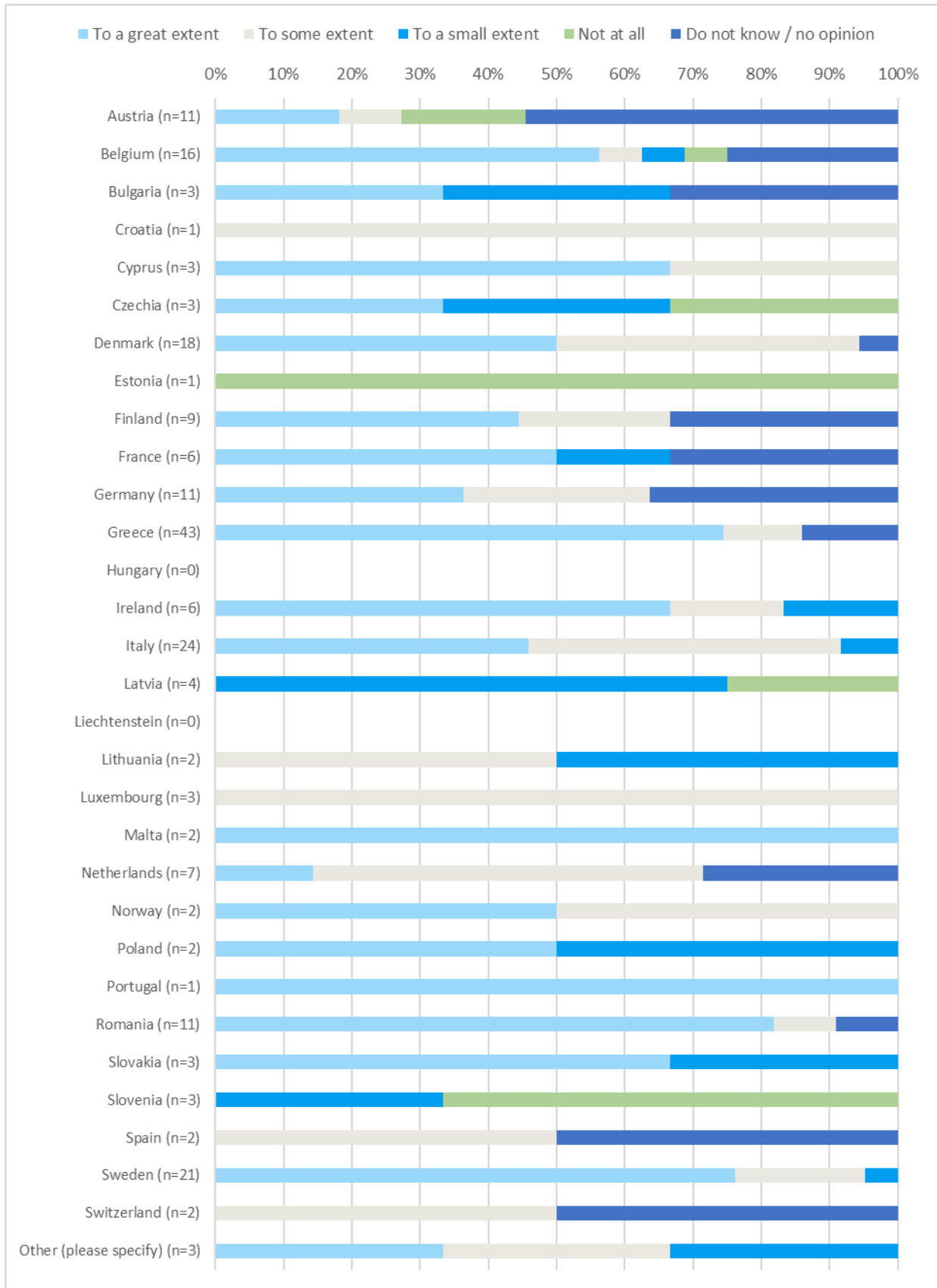
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 95. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? – Nigeria Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



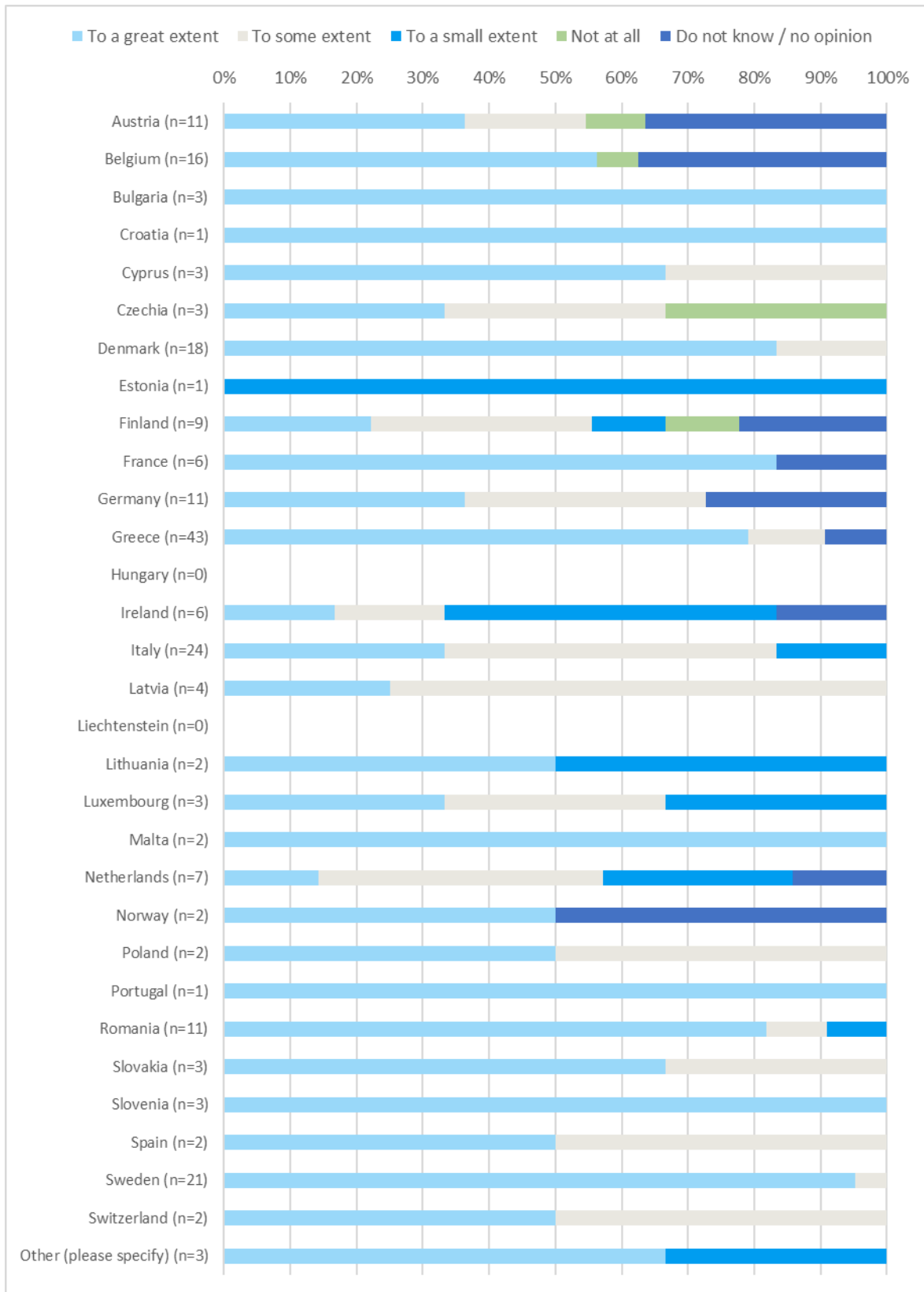
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 96. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? – Somalia Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 97. To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? – Syria Crossed with: Which country do you work in?

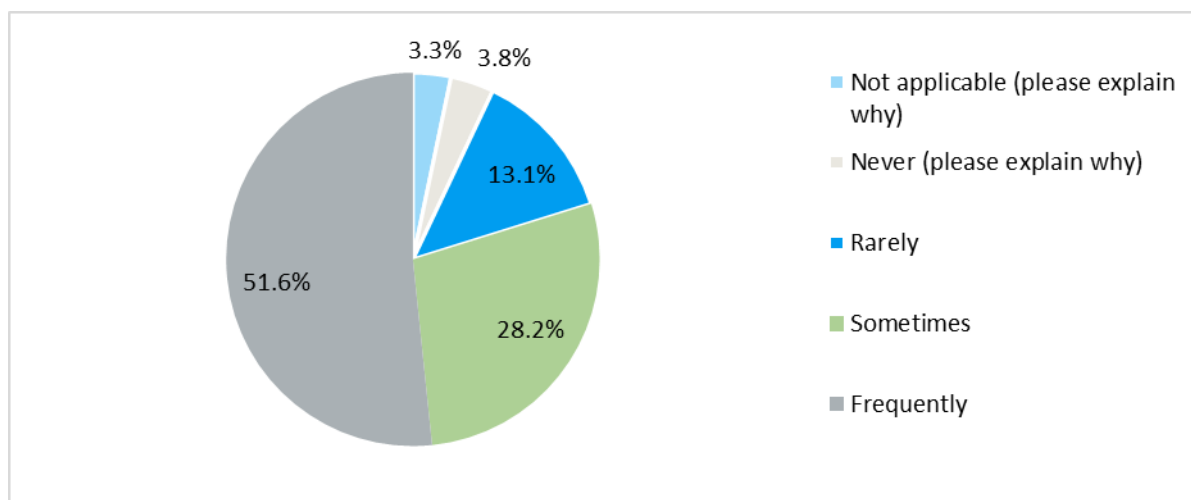


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Finland and Germany appear to consult EUAA CG documents when producing and/or updating national guidance, so normally national guidance corresponds to EUAA CG documents. Importantly, EUAA CG products are by some countries (e.g., Latvia) not perceived as relevant because of the low number of asylum seekers from the countries of origin covered.⁷⁰

About half of survey respondents⁷¹ declare frequently referring to EU-level CG documents in their work (Figure 98). COI or CG researchers/experts appear to refer to them less often than other groups, and a small percentage never refers to them (Figure 99).

Figure 98. How frequently do you refer to EU-level CG documents in your work? (n=213)

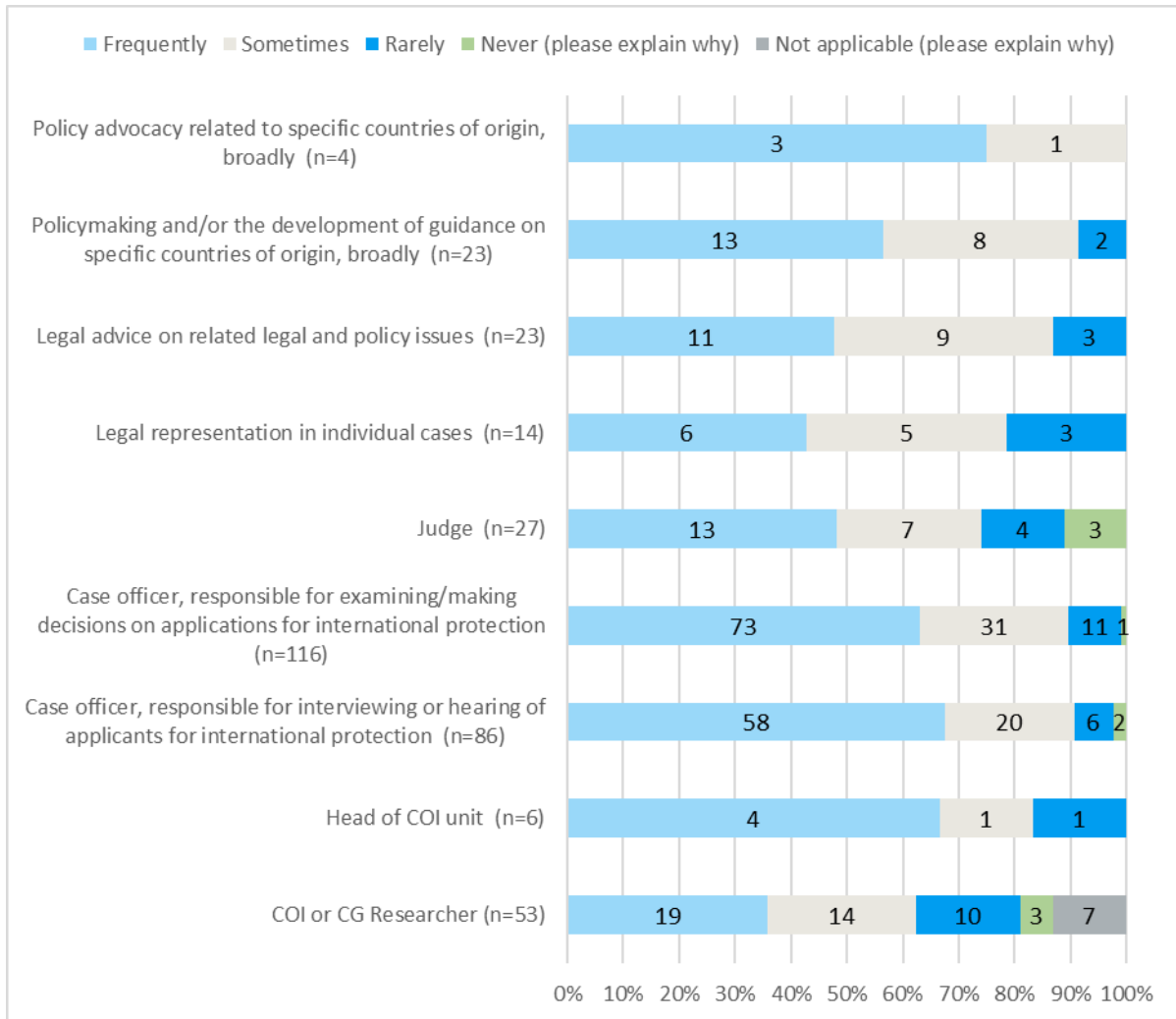


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

⁷⁰ Based on respondents' answers to the open-ended question "Please explain your answer."

⁷¹ Not counting COI network members

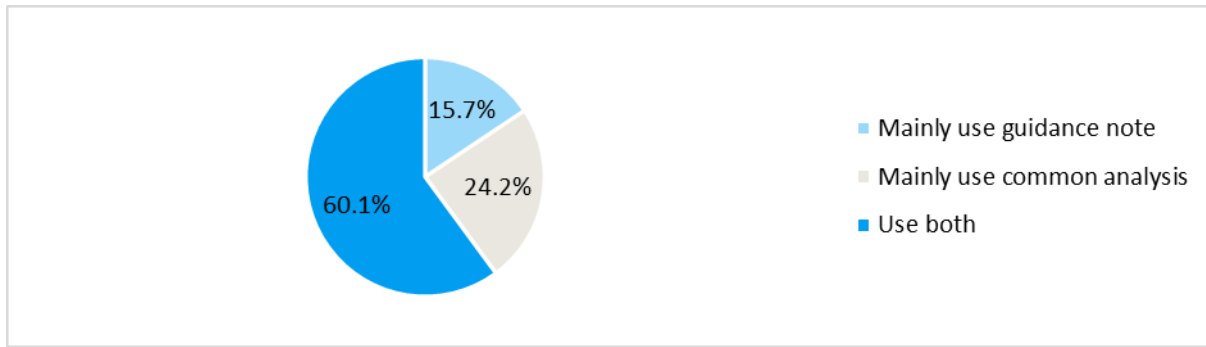
Figure 99. How frequently do you refer to EU-level CG documents in your work? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

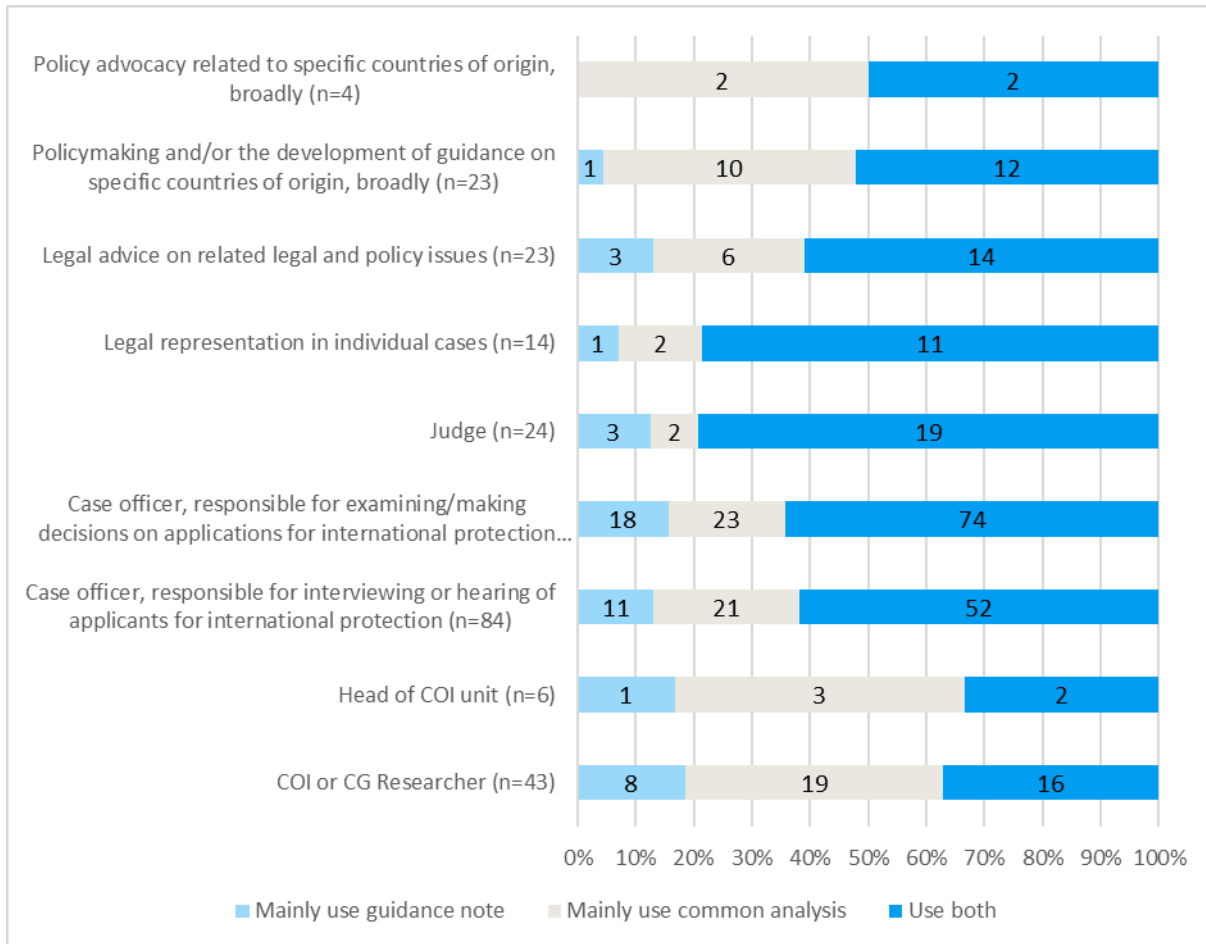
Around 60% of respondents use both the guidance note and the common analysis part of CG. Around 24% of respondents mainly use common analysis (Figure 100). Figure 101 shows a breakdown by category of respondent.

Figure 100. To what extent do you use the guidance note versus the common analysis parts of the CG in practice? (n=198)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

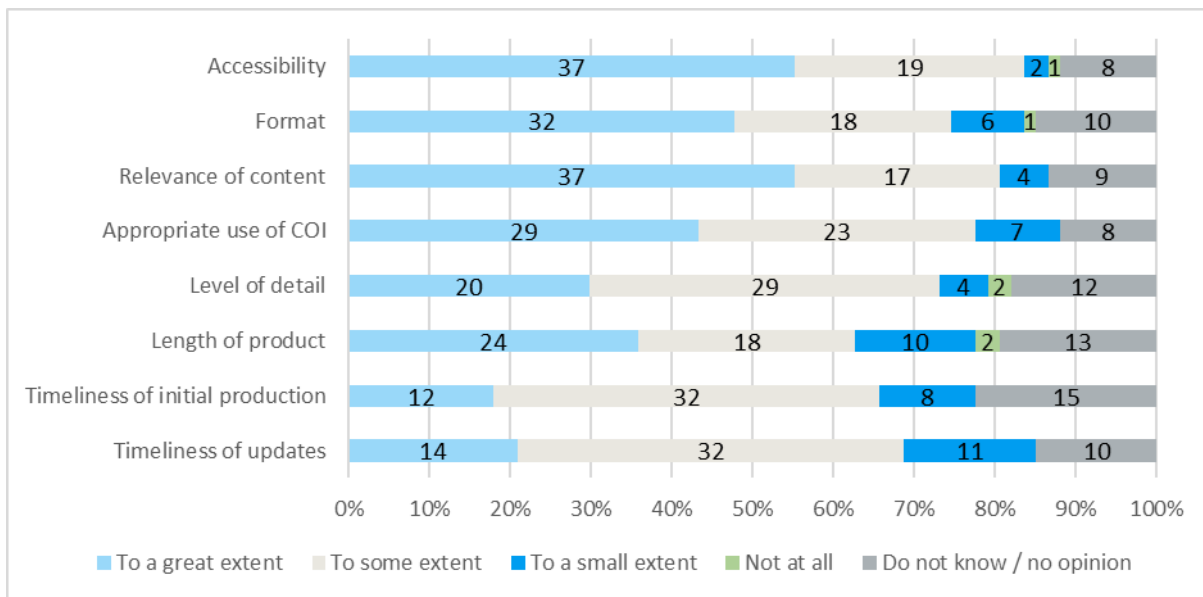
Figure 101. To what extent do you use the guidance note versus the common analysis parts of the CG in practice? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Most respondents agree to a great extent with the fact that EUAA CG documents are adequate with regards to accessibility and relevance of content. A much smaller percentage (around 20%) says the same about the timeliness of the initial production and of updates (Figure 102).

Figure 102. To what extent do you think EUAA CG documents are adequate with regards to the following aspects? (n=67)



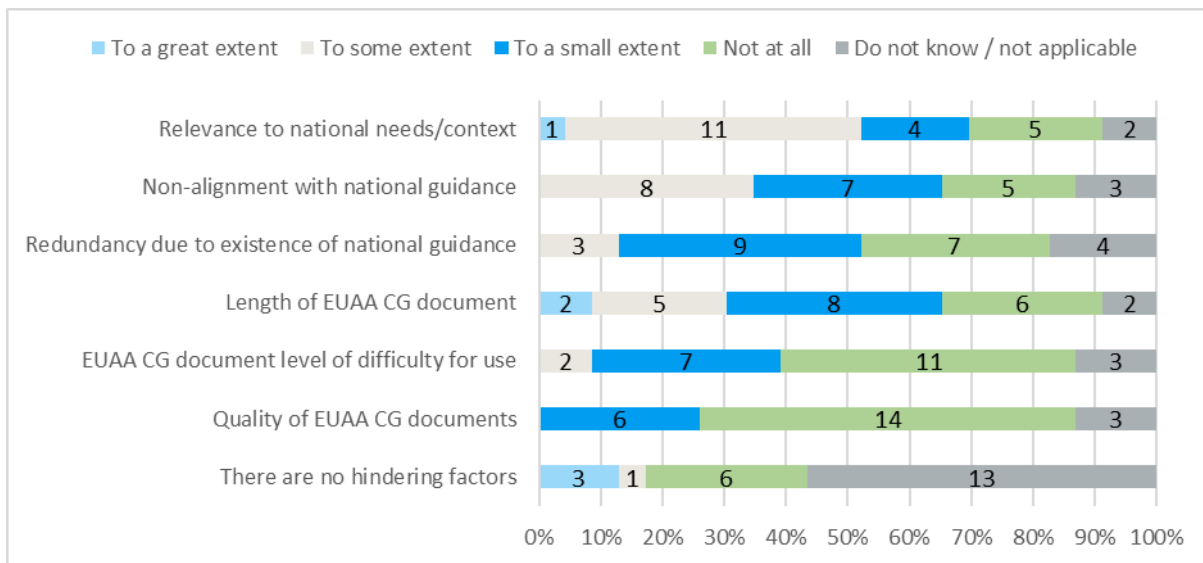
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Solutions to improve the overall adequacy of the EUAA CG documents include more flexibility in the use of sources (to ensure that the most up to date COI reports are considered), better geographic coverage and accessibility, translations into more languages, reduced text length (case officers, policy makers raised this issue), and timely updates.⁷²

The main factors hindering the use of EUAA CG in national contexts appear to be relevance to national needs/context and non-alignment with national guidance (Figure 103). The small number of respondents to this question does not allow for meaningful comparisons among countries.

⁷² Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “What could be done to improve the overall adequacy of the EUAA CG documents?”

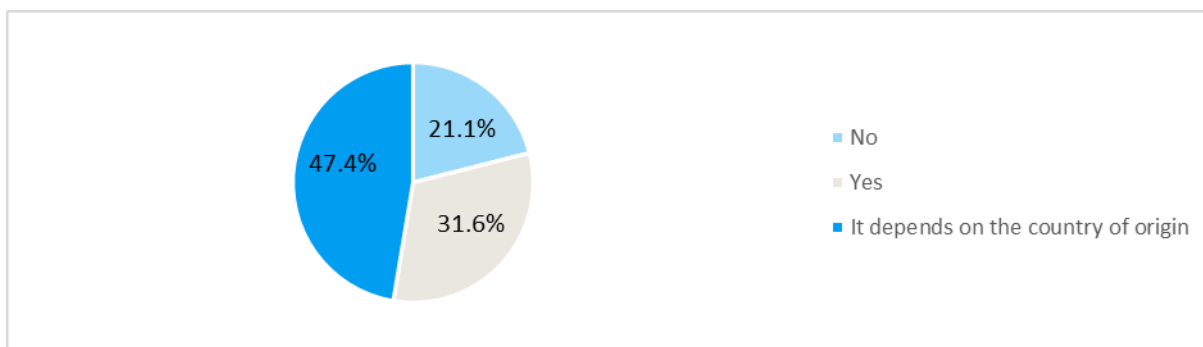
Figure 103. To what extent do the following factors hinder the use of EUAA CG in your national context? (n=23)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

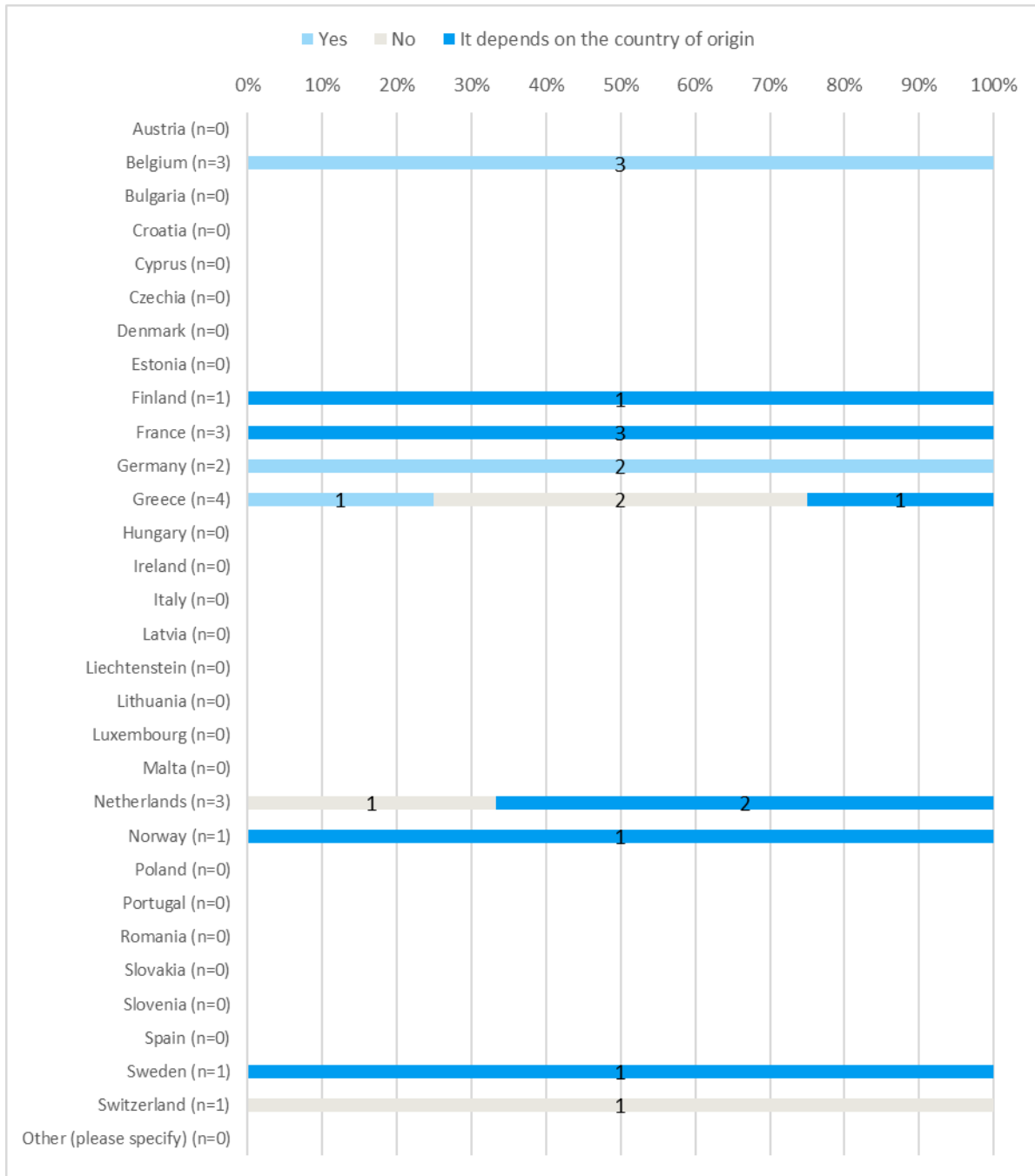
More than 30% of survey respondents indicated that national country-specific guidance documents are updated more frequently than the EUAA’s CG documents, while nearly 48% indicated that the frequency of updates depends on the country of origin (Figure 104). Although the number of respondents to this question is too small to allow for meaningful comparisons among countries, Figure 105 provides insights in this regard. For example, it seems that Belgian and German guidance documents are always updated more frequently than the EUAA’s CG documents, whereas Swiss guidance never is.

Figure 104. Are your national country-specific guidance documents updated more frequently than the EUAA’s CG documents? (n=19)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 105. Are your national country-specific guidance documents updated more frequently than the EUAA’s CG documents? Crossed with: Which country do you work in?



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

National CG products are checked and updated at least once a year (e.g., In Finland) or on a need basis (e.g., in Sweden and in Belgium, if the situation in country of origin about specific profiles changes, or when certain asylum profiles become more prominent in caseload).⁷³

⁷³ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “If applicable, please explain how and when your national CG is updated.”

More than 80% of respondents indicated policy-officers and those responsible for national guidance in the national determining authority as users of EUAA CG documents in their national contexts (Figure 106). The small number of respondents to this question does not allow for a meaningful breakdown at the country level.

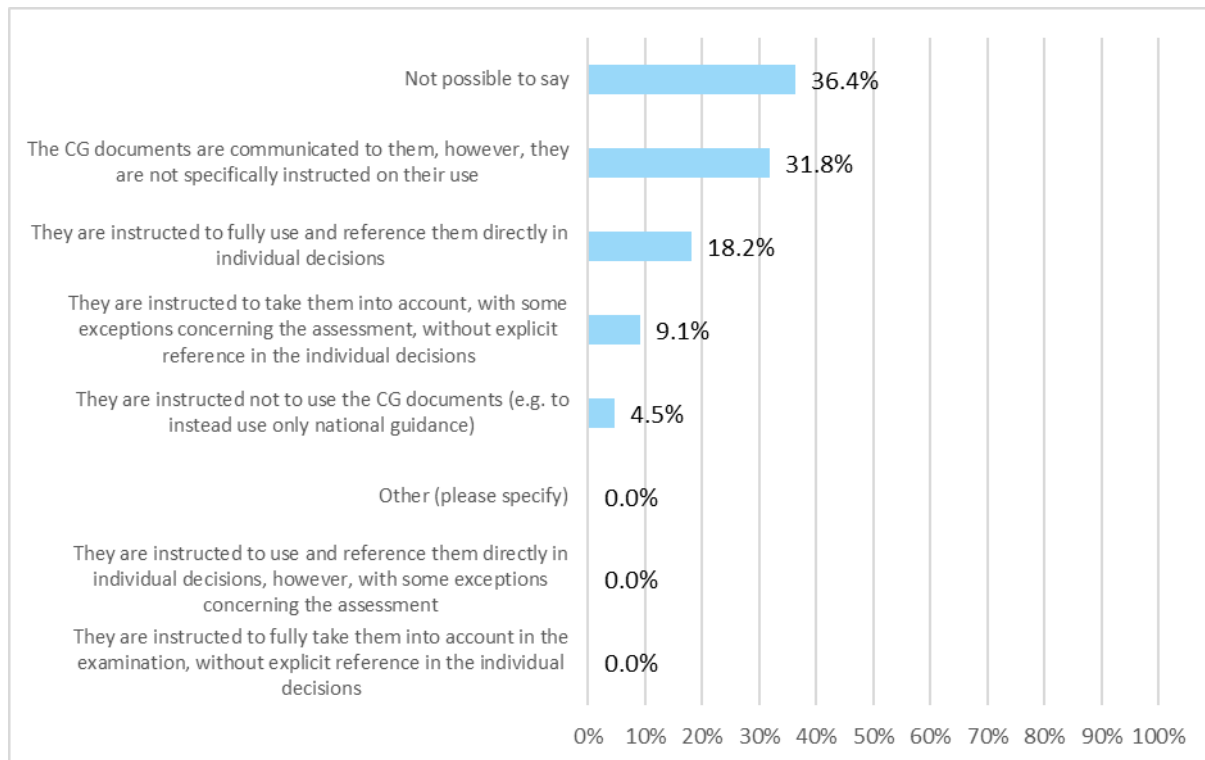
Figure 106. Which stakeholders are users of the EUAA CG documents in your national context? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=23)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

It seems that, in most cases, CG documents are communicated to national decision-makers, but that the latter are not specifically instructed on their use (nearly 32% of respondents indicated so) (Figure 107).

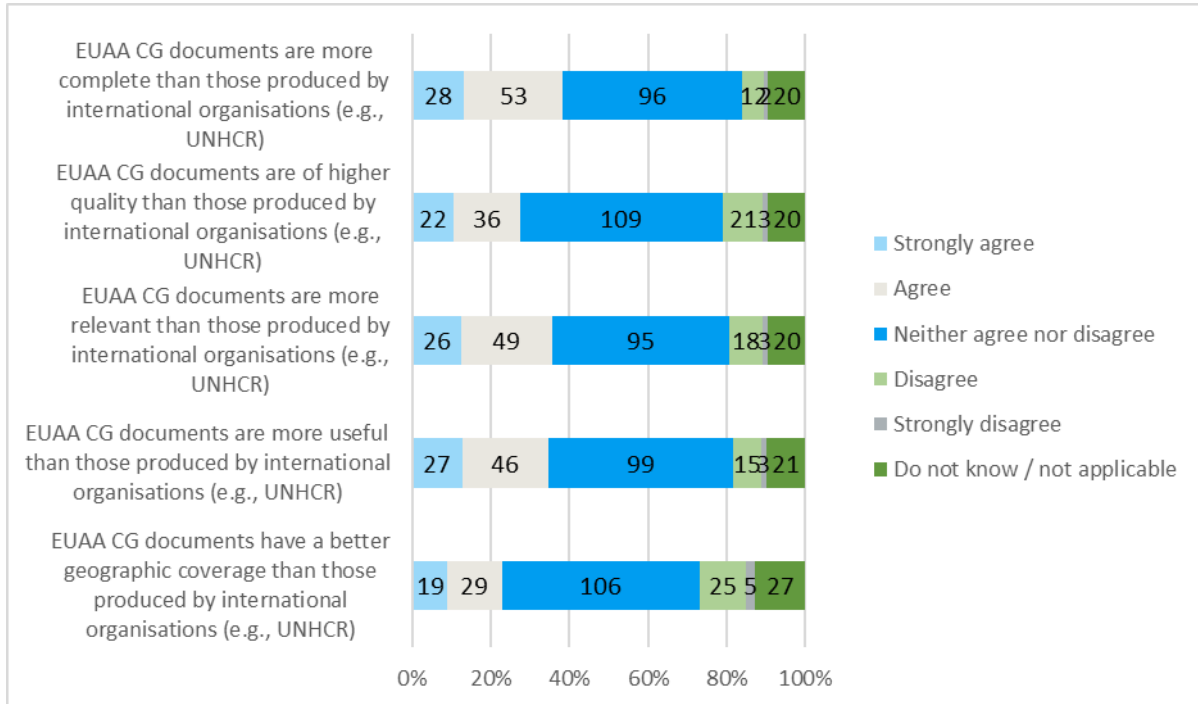
Figure 107. Are national decision-makers instructed to use the CG documents? (n=22)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Nearly 40% of respondents agree or strongly agree that EU-level CG documents are more complete than those produced by international organisations, but over 10% of respondents do not believe that the quality of the former is better than that of the latter (Figure 108).

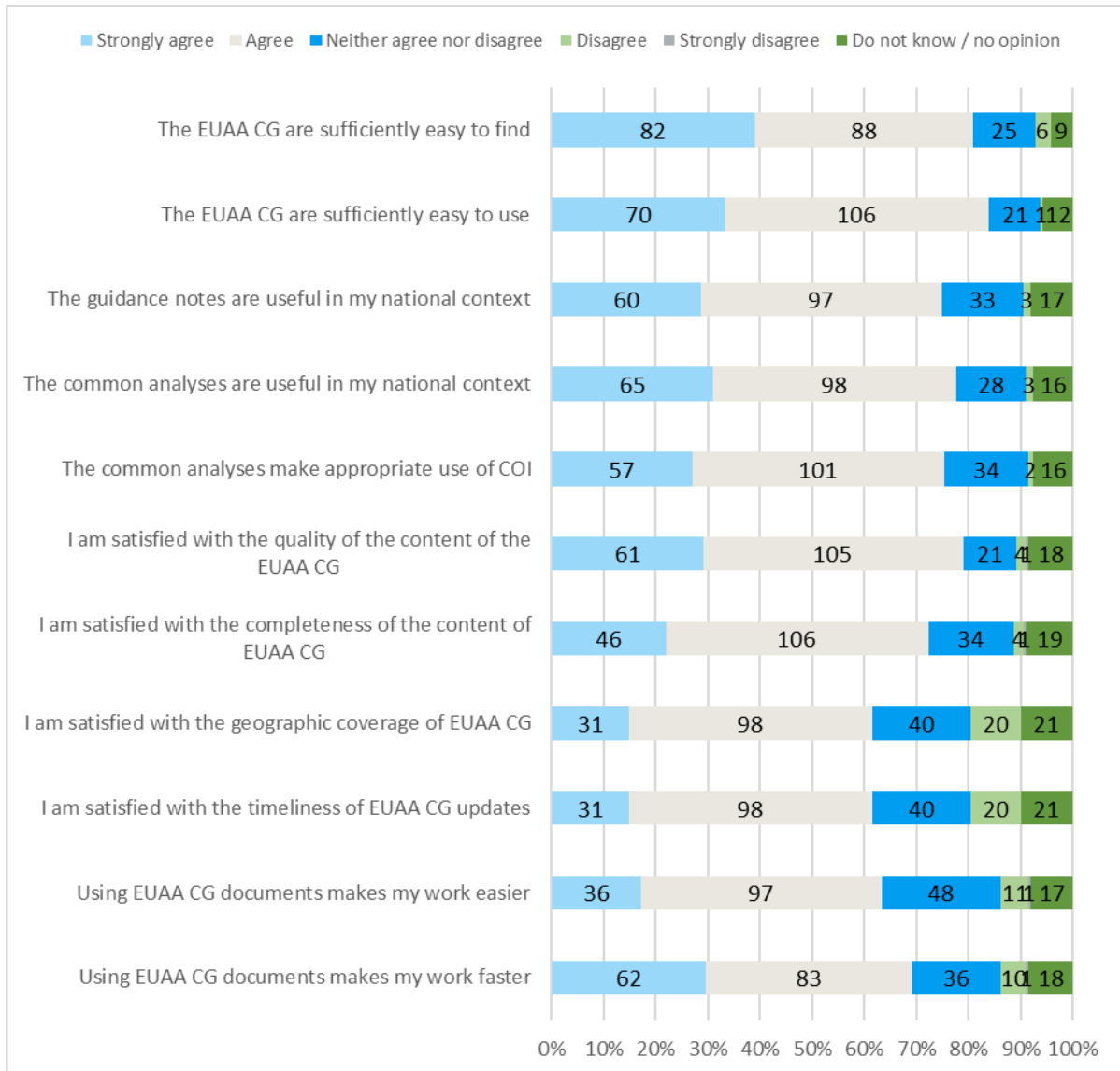
Figure 108. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=211)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

There appears to be room for improvement when it comes to the geographic coverage and the timeliness of updates of EU-level CG documents, as about 10% of respondents are not satisfied with the two criteria (Figure 109).

Figure 109. To what extent do you agree with these statements? (n=210)



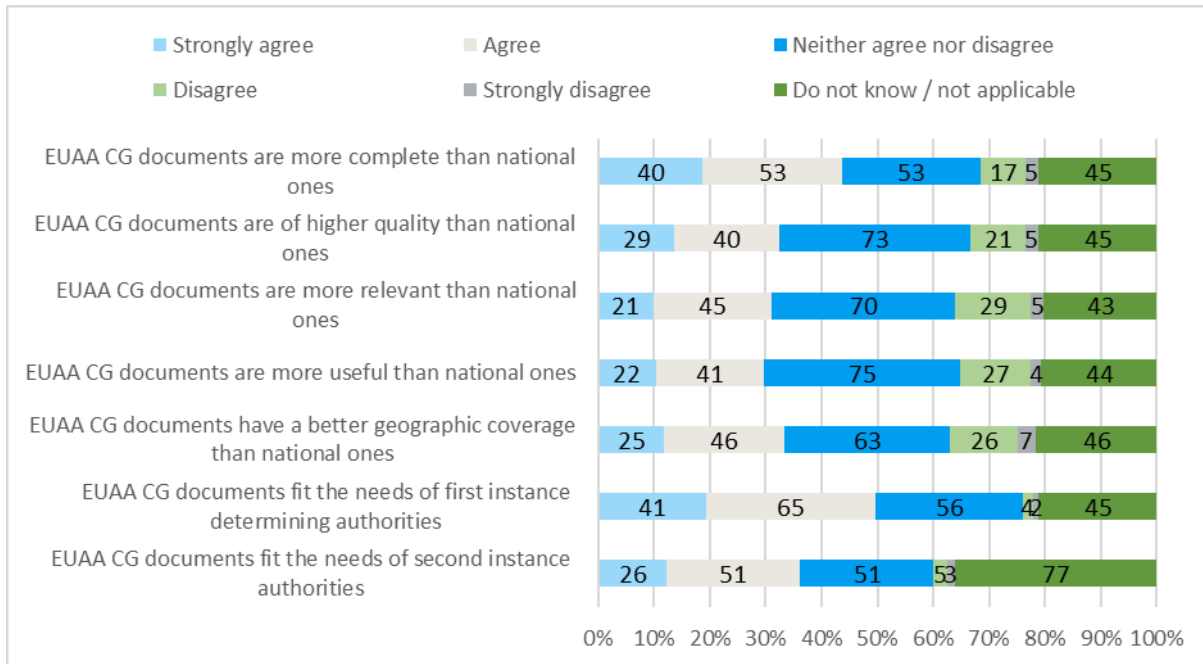
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

On a general level, EUAA CG documents should be easier to find, be updated more often, and cover more countries - although several respondents do not expect the EUAA to be able to cover all relevant countries.⁷⁴

More than 40% of respondents agree or strongly agree that EUAA CG documents are more complete than national ones, and 50% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they fit the needs of first instance determining authorities (Figure 110).

⁷⁴ Based on respondents' answers to the open-ended question "Please explain your answers and provide suggestions for improvement."

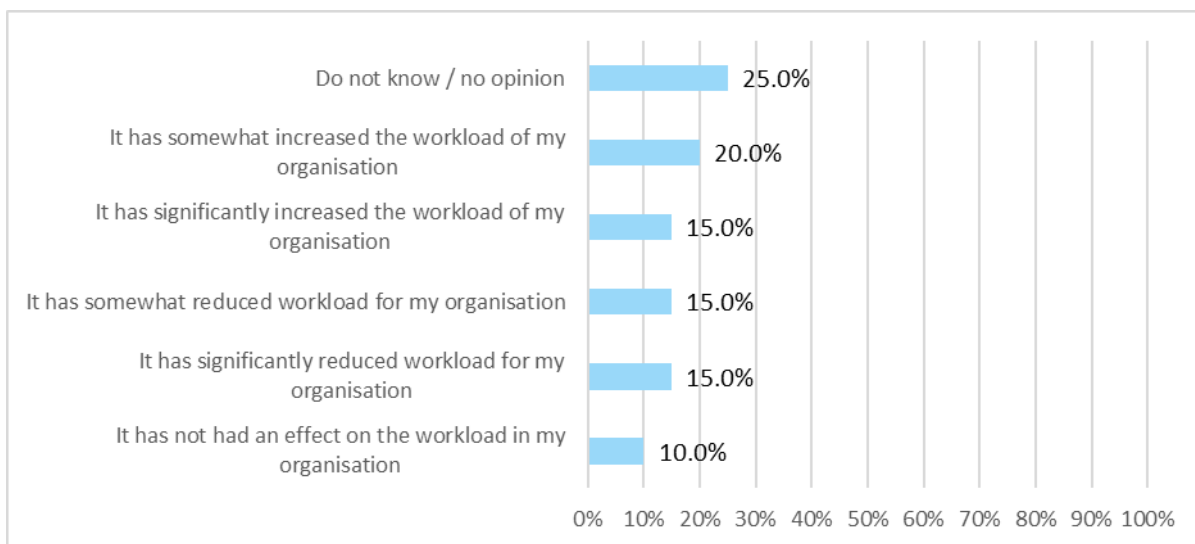
Figure 110. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n=213)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

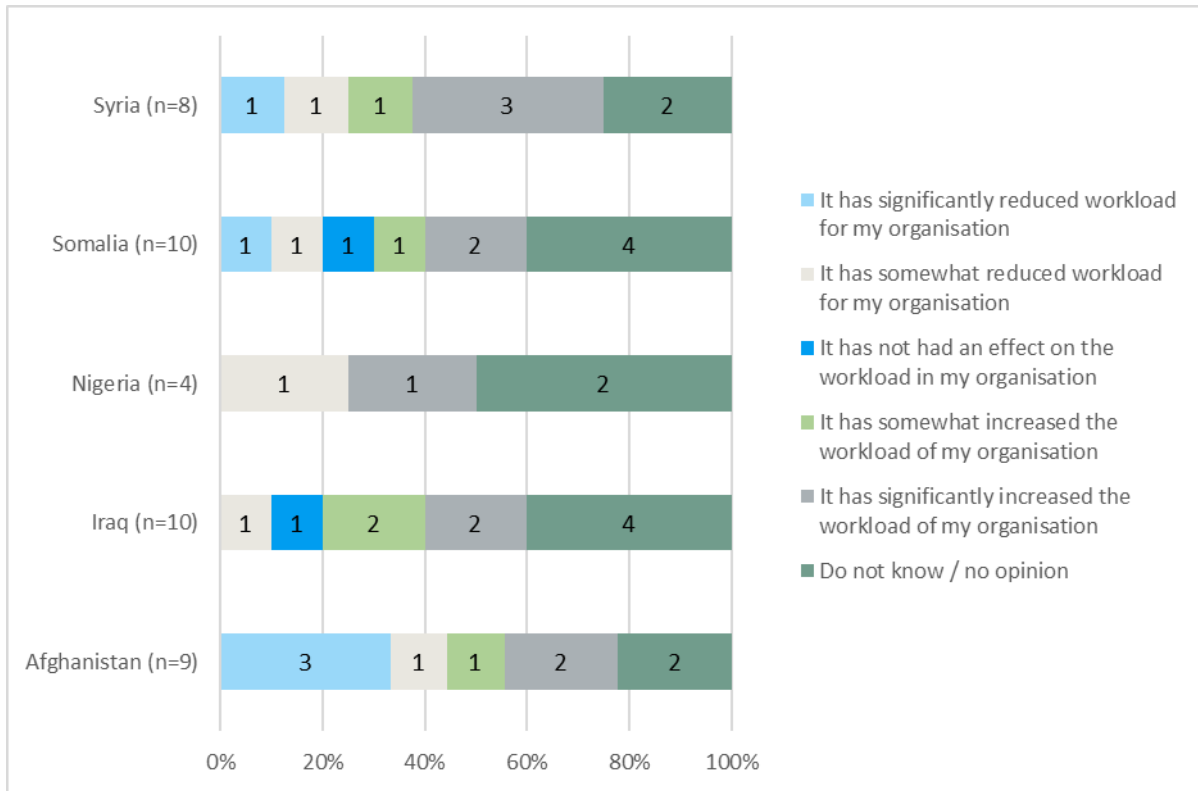
Participation in the EUAA CGNet has somewhat increased the workload of the organisation of about 20% of respondents, and significantly increased it for 15% of respondents (Figure 111). Looking at differences among the countries on which respondents engage on in the CG Net: Syria and Iraq appear to be the countries for which there has been the most detrimental effect on workload, with over 40% of respondents indicating that the workload has increased (Figure 112).

Figure 111. To what extent do you think your participation in the EUAA Country Guidance Network has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own guidance)? (n=20)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 112. To what extent do you think your participation in the EUAA Country Guidance Network has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own guidance)? Crossed with: Please specify which countries you engage on in the CGNet



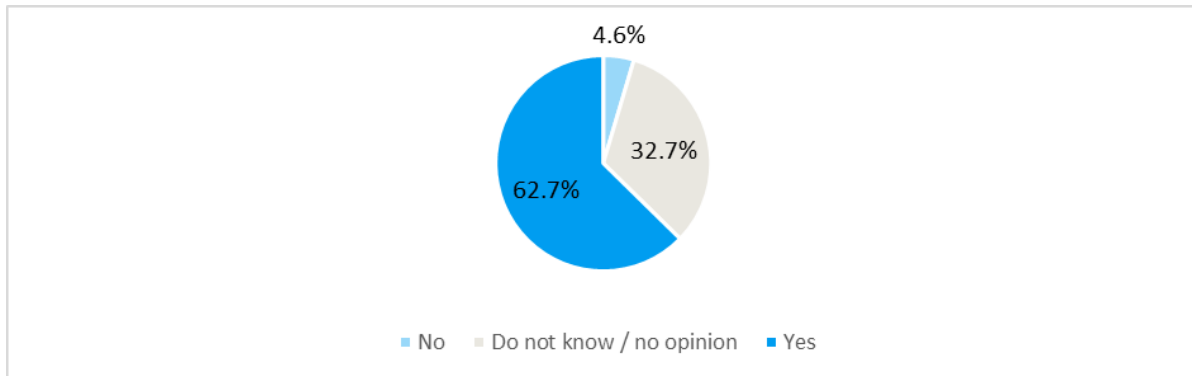
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Participation in the EUAA CGNet has a minimal impact for respondents from some countries (such as Latvia) because of the limited capacity of their organisations. For others, it has clear benefits as it allows alignment on convergence criteria or allows for a reduction in time spent on developing national guidance.⁷⁵

Over 60% of respondents believe that the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents, and less than 5% believe the opposite (Figure 113). However, the percentage of respondents who believe that EU-level country guidance has added value to their work is lower – only 48% (Figure 114). When looking at differences among stakeholder groups, policymakers and case officers appear to be the most convinced about the added value of EU-level CG documents (Figure 115).

⁷⁵ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please clarify your answer.”

Figure 113. Do you believe the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents? (n=217)

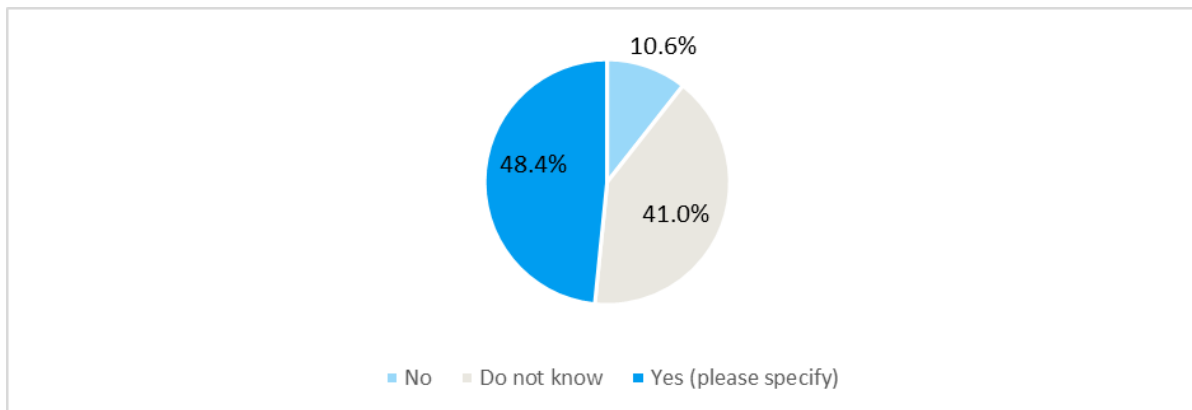


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Respondents generally believe it is important that the EUAA facilitates the development of EU-level CG documents, since the use of the same guidance by all EU+ countries will contribute to the harmonisation of the criteria for qualification for asylum and of the acceptance rates across EU. They argue, however, that each Member State should be free to adopt higher standards if it sees it fit. Furthermore, before publishing documents, Member State COI units should be consulted. If the Member State COI units provide information that contradicts the findings of EUAA, these findings should be analysed, and if the findings seem credible, they should be included in CG.

One respondent pointed out that if CG documents are used only in small EU countries that do not have their own COI experts and no guidelines are developed, the desired result - equation of the decisions taken under the same circumstances of the case - may not be achieved regardless of the development of CG documents.⁷⁶

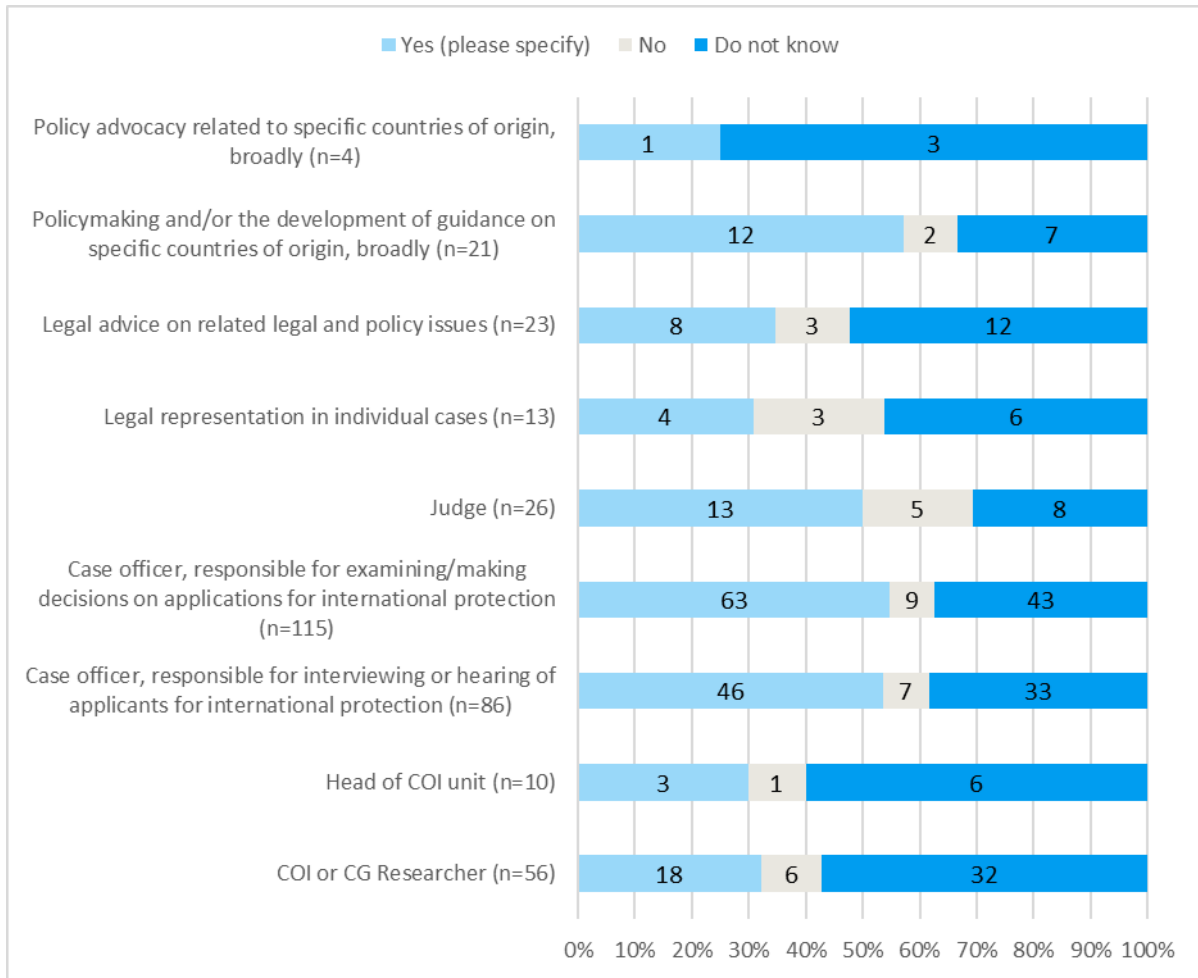
Figure 114. Do you believe that having EU-level country guidance has added value for your work? (n=217)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

⁷⁶ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please clarify your answer.”

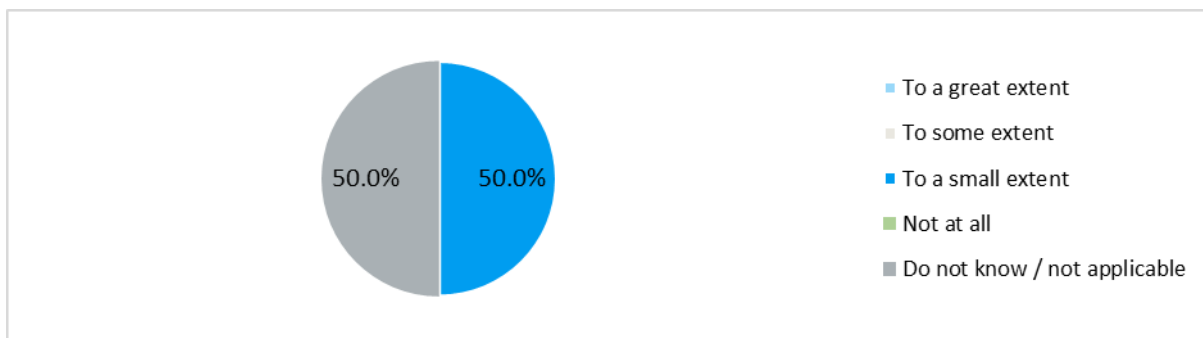
Figure 115. Do you believe that having EU-level country guidance has added value for your work? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The EUAA Consultative Forum does not appear to have greatly facilitated organisations’ use of EUAA COI products, as half of the survey respondents who are members of the forum indicated that it only did to a small extent (Figure 116). This question could only be shown to four respondents. In this sense, results are not representative of the survey’s sample.

Figure 116. To what extent do you think participation in the EUAA Consultative Forum has facilitated your organisation’s use of the EUAA COI products? (n=4)

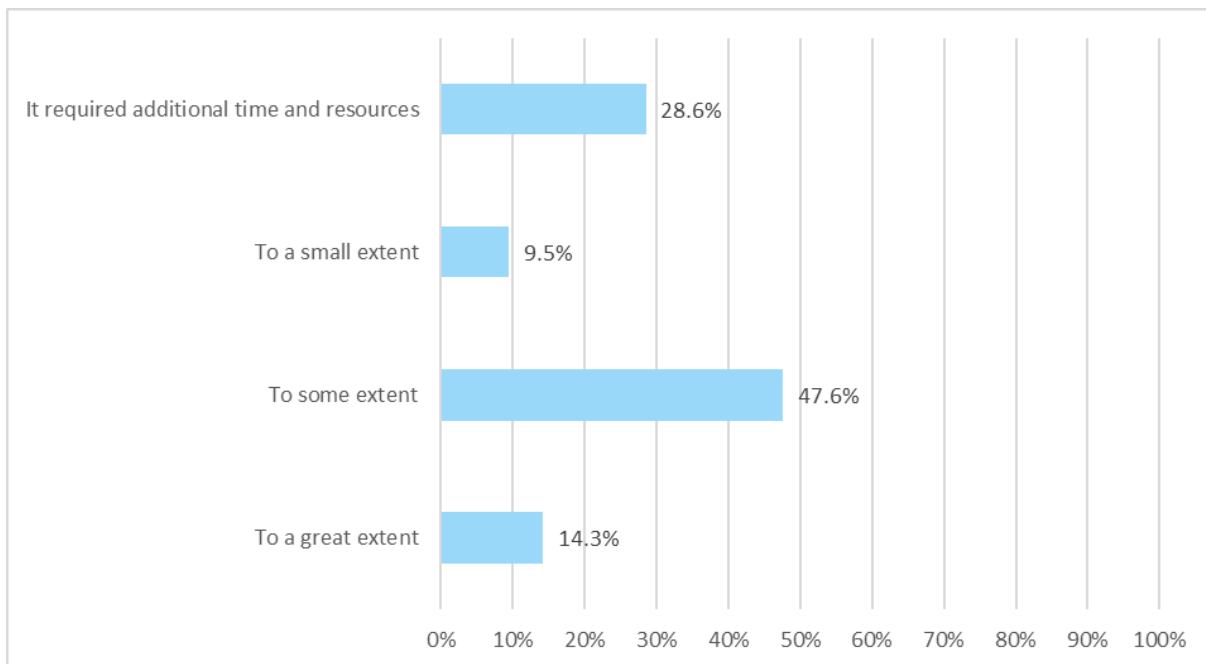


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The respondent who provided further information, a legal representative (Denmark), identified that the EUAA Consultative Forum is not necessarily a factor in the organisations’ use of EUAA COI products. However, the respondent also mentioned that the impact of the meetings could be linked to better insights into how they are made and the considerations behind it.

Nearly half of all policymakers reported that the use of EU-level CG products has, to some extent, saved their administration time and/or financial resources, but nearly 30 indicated that it translated in an increase in time and resources needed for policymaking and decision making (Figure 117).

Figure 117. To what extent has the use of the EU-level CG products saved your organisation time and/or financial resources in terms of policymaking and decision making? (n=21)



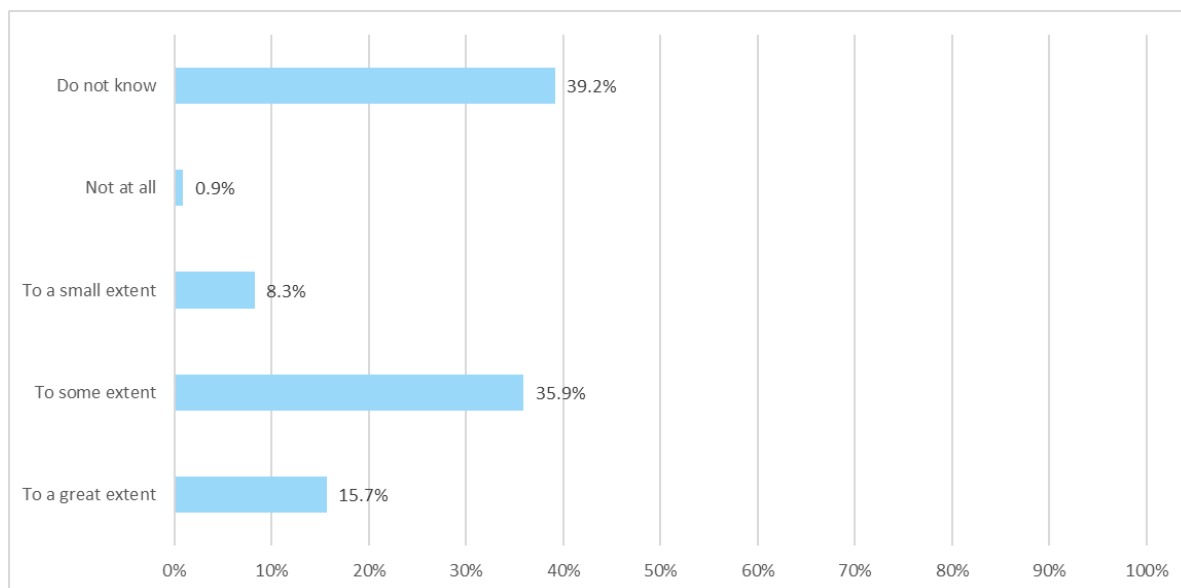
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

EUAA CG products saved national organisations resources in terms of policymaking and decision making because they are ready-made documents that reduce the time needed for research to acquire the information needed (this is the case, for instance, in Latvia). In some countries (like Sweden and the Netherlands), CG products translate into an increase in workload even if one is not actively included in the drafting team.⁷⁷

About 60% of respondents believe that CG documents have, to different degrees, contributed to convergence in the assessment of international protection needs across EU+ countries. 16% of respondents believe this happened to a great extent. 1% of respondents believe that CG documents had no impact at all on convergence (Figure 118).

⁷⁷ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please explain your answer.”

Figure 118. To what extent have CG documents contributed to convergence in the assessment of international protection needs across EU+ countries? (n=217)



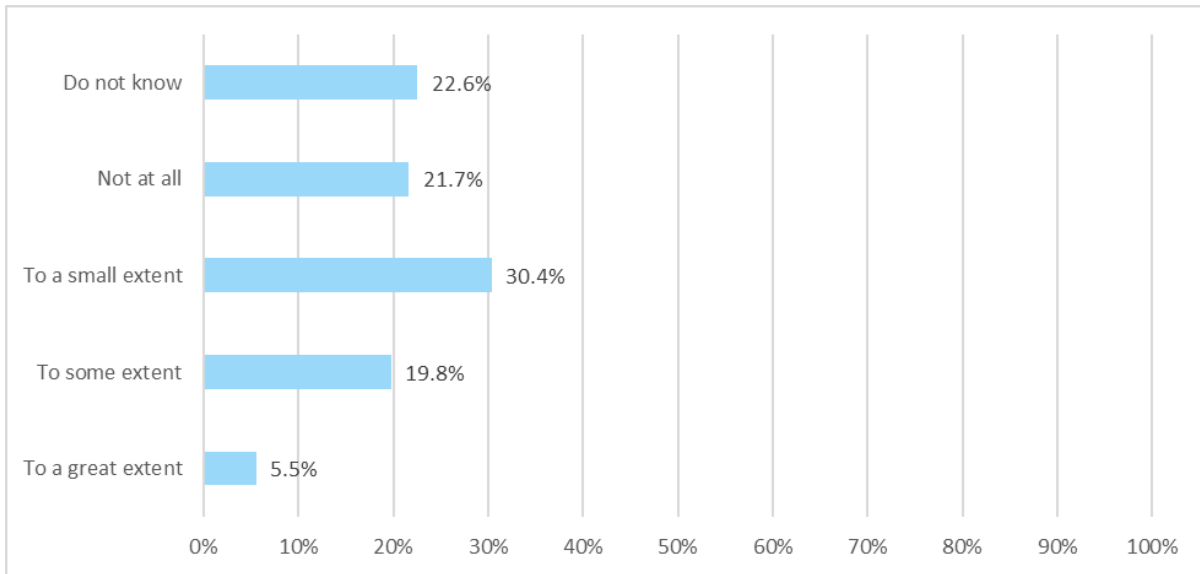
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

In this respect, some respondents point to the persisting difference in recognition rates by country of origin to show that national guidance still prevails (e.g., for Syria and Afghanistan). “In 2021, the recognition quota of people from Afghanistan fluctuated between 9% in Bulgaria and 100% in Spain and Portugal”. A judge in Belgium noted that “guidance cannot harmonize the examination of credibility, specific to each judge, and there are procedural differences which hinder completely convergence, but for the appreciation of risk profiles or security conditions in countries of origin, I think that this unifies the substantive analysis of the files.” A judge from Germany thinks that convergence can only be achieved with a higher European court. Finally, it emerged that practice and habits, which are difficult to change, might further hinder convergence.⁷⁸

As to whether convergence could be achieved without the use of EUAA’s CG products, 30% of respondents believe that, to a small extent, convergence would indeed be possible (Figure 119). There are no important differences in the way stakeholders from different groups think about this possibility (Figure 120).

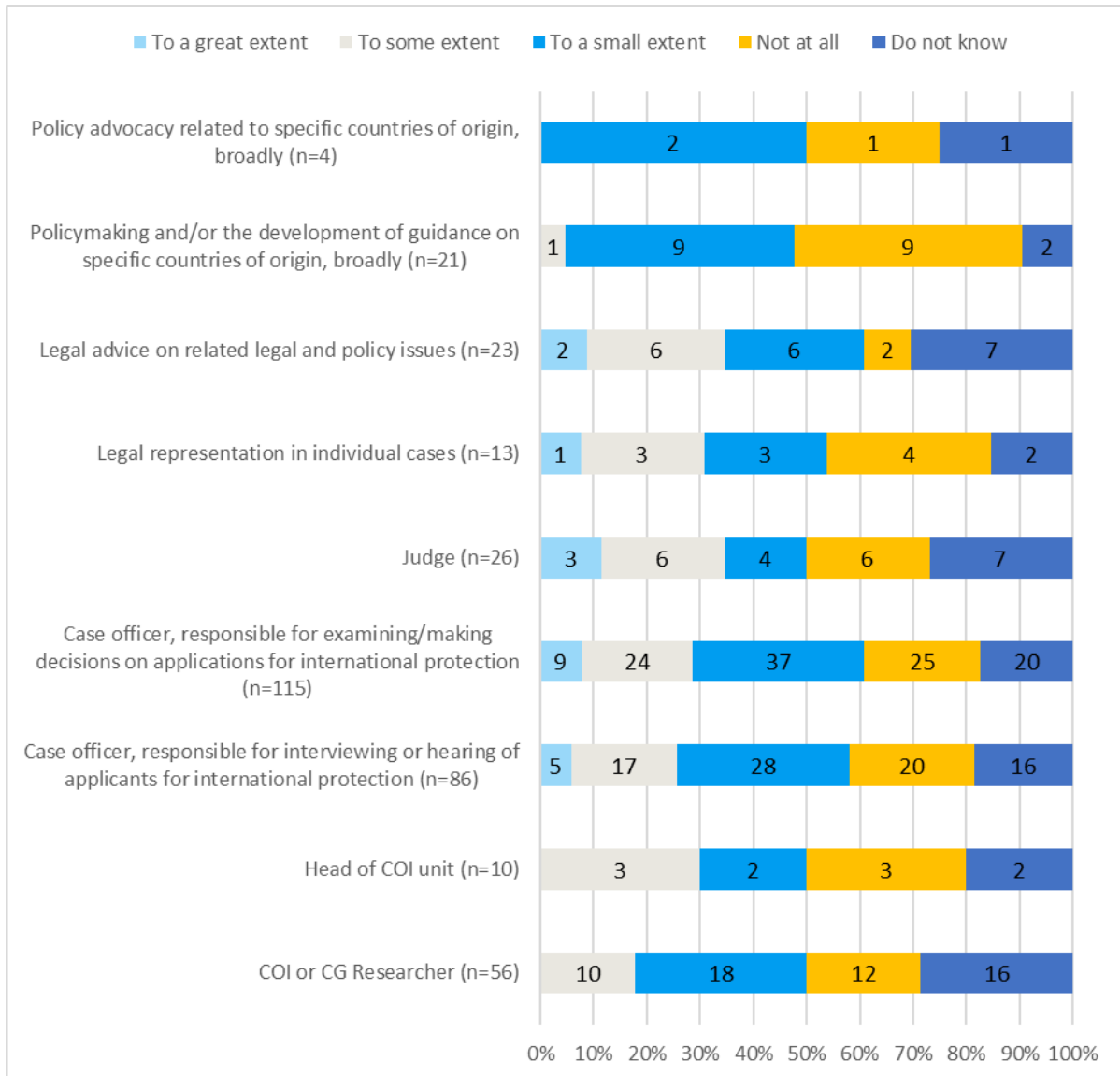
⁷⁸ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please explain your answer.”

Figure 119. Do you believe convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA's CG products? (n=217)



Source: *Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey*

Figure 120. Do you believe convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA’s CG products? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



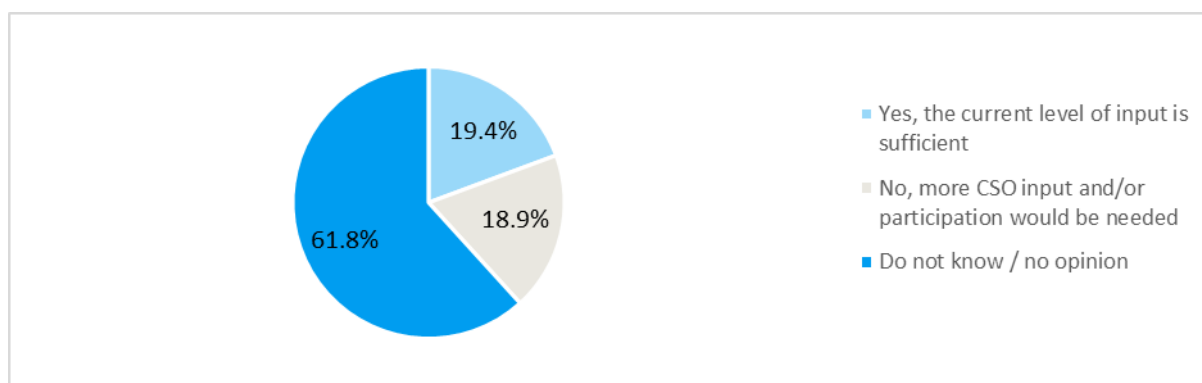
Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Some respondents believe that the EUAA’s CG products facilitate and speed up convergence in the assessment of international protection claims, but that these products alone are not enough because currently, everything works at the discretion of a single case officer or judicial authorities. Common training, better alignment on the interpretation of joint reports and the mandatory nature of the products are some of the solutions that could be considered.⁷⁹

Most respondents do not have an opinion as to whether there is sufficient civil society input in the development of EUAA country guidance documents. Those who do have an opinion are split more or less equally between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ (Figure 121).

⁷⁹ Based on respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “Please explain your answer.”

Figure 121. Do you think there is sufficient civil society input in the development of EUAA country guidance documents? (n=217)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Many case officers admit not knowing whether CSOs are sufficiently involved in the development of EUAA country guidance documents. Several respondents think that that the EUAA should in general allow more space for civil society input as CSOs have considerable on-the-ground expertise and experience. Ways to include CSOs include considering their reports as reliable sources, allowing representatives to speak at events, and having them involved in the peer-review process.⁸⁰

To increase the added value of its CG products, the EUAA could consider:

- Updating the products more frequently. Several countries highlighted this. In the case of Italy, more timely updates would be needed on Pakistan, Mali, and Afghanistan;
- Adding more countries to the CG process, as well as CSOs;
- Extending the geographic coverage;
- Keeping the documents short and avoiding making too many repetitions because the preparation time for an interview with an asylum seeker can be relatively limited;
- Making the products easier to find on the website, and disseminating them better;
- Improving product clarity and preciseness, although this would make reaching conclusions in the CGNet more difficult;
- Continuing working with the countries that have the most asylum seekers in the EU;
- Involving international organisations (e.g., UNHCR), CSOs and NGOs in the CGNet;
- Translating the products into other EU languages;
- Keeping in touch with operators working in the field, using more primary sources;
- Obtaining an external advisory opinion or establishing a direct evaluation system (questionnaire) or indirectly (number of uses by citation, similar interpretation, etc.);
- Obtaining information directly from sources rather than only obtaining information from other available reports;
- Including interview transcripts;
- Including a section on what happens on return to failed asylum seekers from that country;
- Organising workshops for decision -makers both at the level of the authorities and the courts;
- Improving communication - clearer content to better convey what can/what cannot constitute a need for protection and the steps to arrive at this conclusion;
- Carrying out language checks;
- Better formatting;
- Making the products binding and more specific;

⁸⁰ Based on respondents' answers to the open-ended question: "Please explain your answer."

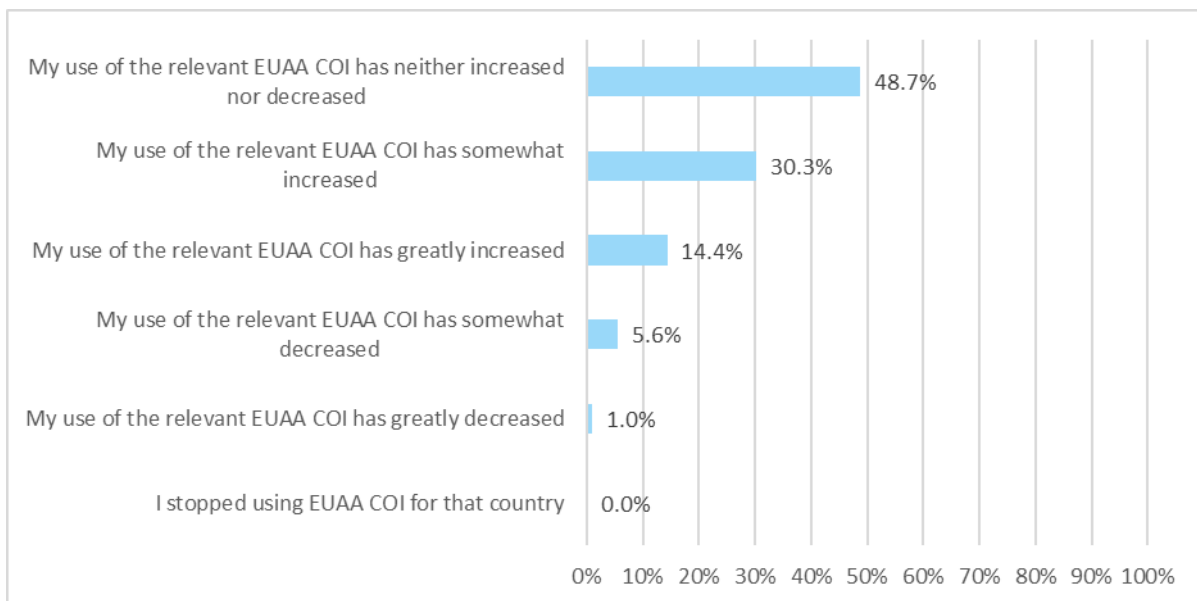
Furthermore, although not all relevant information for a CG product can be included in public versions (e.g., national security aspects or exclusion cases), information from diplomatic sources, intelligence organisations, military organisations can be of crucial relevance in an individual case and efforts need to be made in the interest of the state and the asylum seeker to find a way to assess the evidentiary value and reliability of such information in a non-public way.⁸¹

Questions on both EUAA COI and CG documents

This section shows the answers to questions that were shown to respondents who indicated being aware of and willing to answer questions on both EUAA COI and CG products. As explained in section 1.3, through a complex set of activations, respondents were only shown questions that were relevant to them.

A survey question intended to gauge the effect of the introduction of an EU-level CG document on a given country on the use of EUAA COI documents on that same country. It emerged that, for nearly half of the respondents, there is no effect. However, for about 30% of respondents, the use of relevant EUAA COI has somewhat increased. None of the respondents stopped using EUAA COI for that country (Figure 122).

Figure 122. How has the introduction of an EU-level CG document on a specific country influenced your use of EUAA COI documents on that same country? (n=195)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

The introduction of an EUAA CG document on a specific country does not really seem to influence the use of EUAA COI documents on that same country for decision makers in Latvia, case officers and judges in Ireland, and case officers in Denmark and Poland because COI and CG documents are perceived to be complementary. In other cases (such as Sweden), COI documents are only used when a deeper understanding of the situation is needed.⁸²

⁸¹ Based on respondents' answers to the open-ended question "What could the EUAA do to increase the added value of its CG products?".

⁸² Based on respondents' answers to the open-ended question "Please explain your answer."

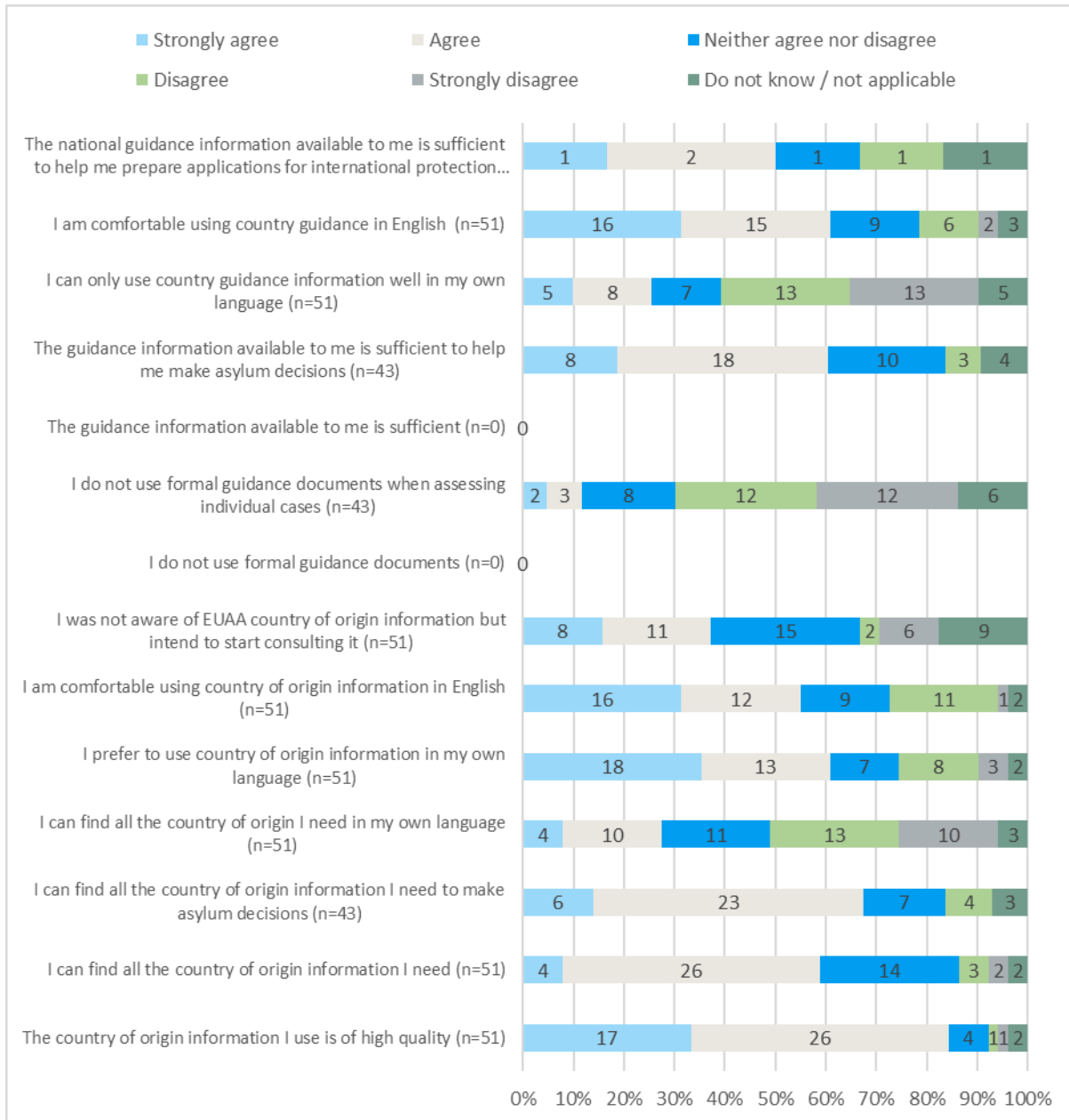
No major changes on the use of EUAA COI reports on countries for which CG exists were reported by respondents providing further information in writing. Most respondents explained that they use both types of products. A COI or CG researcher/expert from Sweden explained that the use of COI has increased as references are made to these reports in CG documents.

Questions for those not aware about EUAA COI and CG products

This section shows the answers to questions that were only shown to respondents who indicated not being aware of and not willing to answer questions on EUAA COI and CG products. As explained in section 1.3, through a complex set of activations, respondents were only shown questions that were relevant to them.

Among respondents who indicated not being aware of EUAA COI and CG products, more than 60% declared either agreeing or strongly agreeing to the fact that they feel comfortable using CG in English, and that the guidance information available to them is sufficient to help me make asylum decisions. As for COI, nearly 70% of respondents indicated that they can find all the COI they need to make asylum decisions, and more than 80% indicated that the COI they use is of high quality (Figure 123).

Figure 123. Please indicate whether you agree with the below statements.

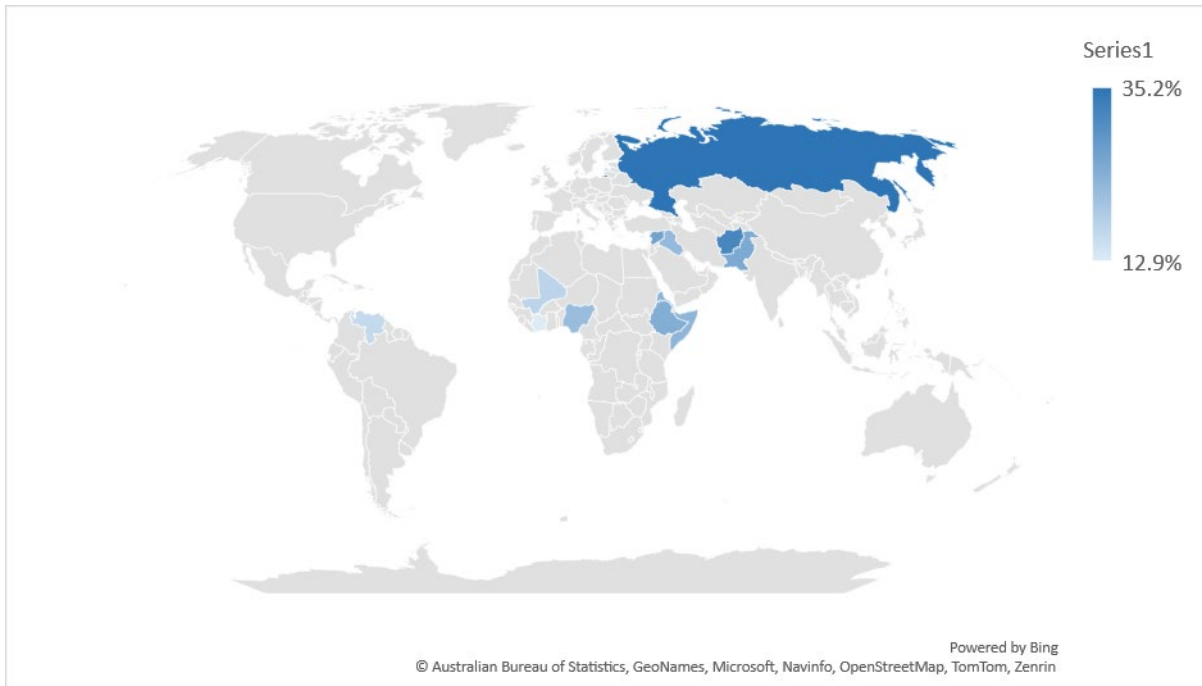


Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Closing questions

Respondents would like to have more country of origin information on the Russian Federation (35.2%), Afghanistan (31.8%), Syria (26.5%), Pakistan (25.2%). Furthermore, over 20% of respondents selected Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Iraq, and Nigeria. Less than 17% of respondents selected Mali, Venezuela, and the Côte d'Ivoire (Figure 124). Around 30% of respondents pointed to the need of having country of origin information on other countries.

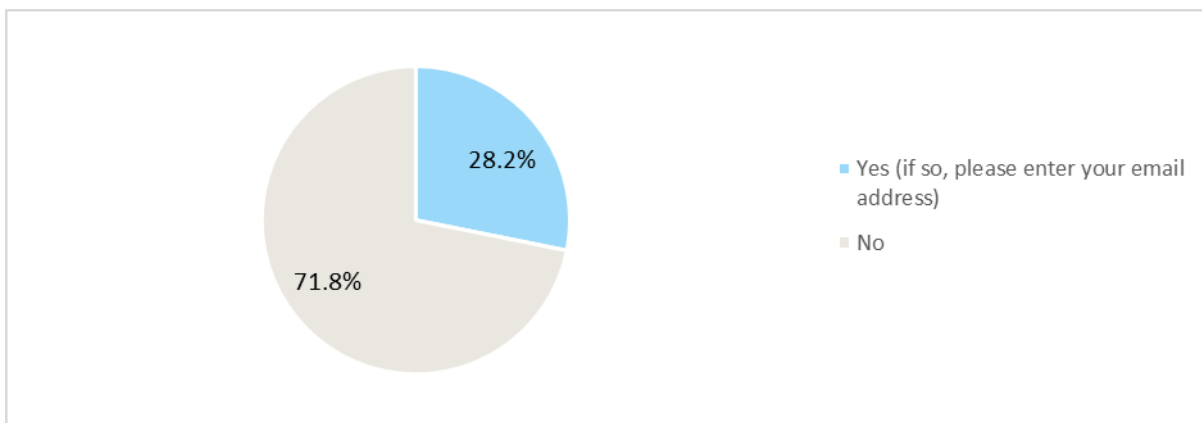
Figure 124. On which of the below countries, if any, would you like to have more country of origin information? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) (n=381)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

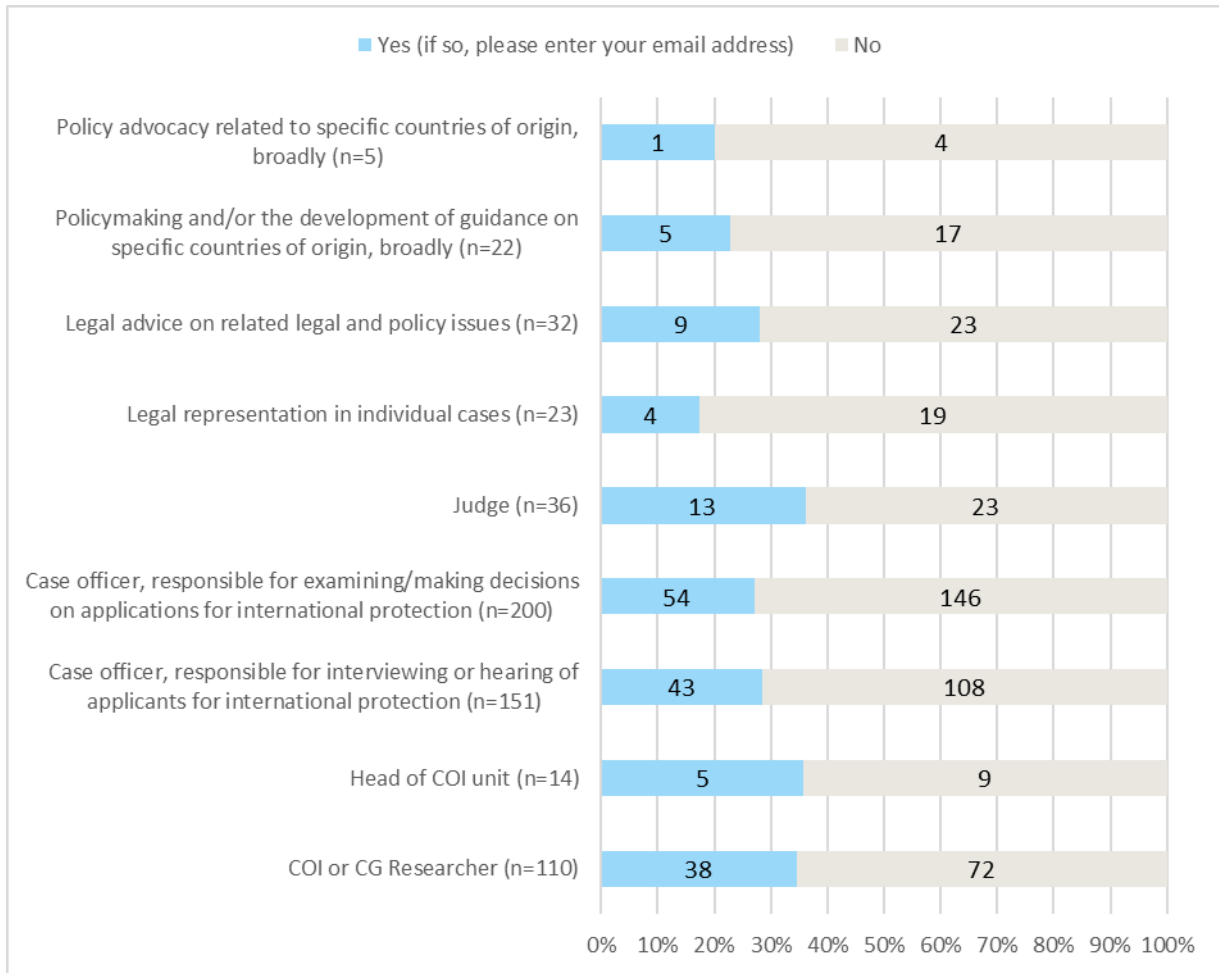
Around 28% of survey respondents indicated being available for further follow-up (Figure 125). All stakeholder profiles are represented in this category (Figure 126).

Figure 125. Are you willing to be contacted again for follow up questions or to schedule an interview in the context of this evaluation study? (n=380)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

Figure 126. Are you willing to be contacted again for follow up questions or to schedule an interview in the context of this evaluation study? Crossed with: What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable)



Source: Elaboration of the Consortium (2023) based on the targeted survey

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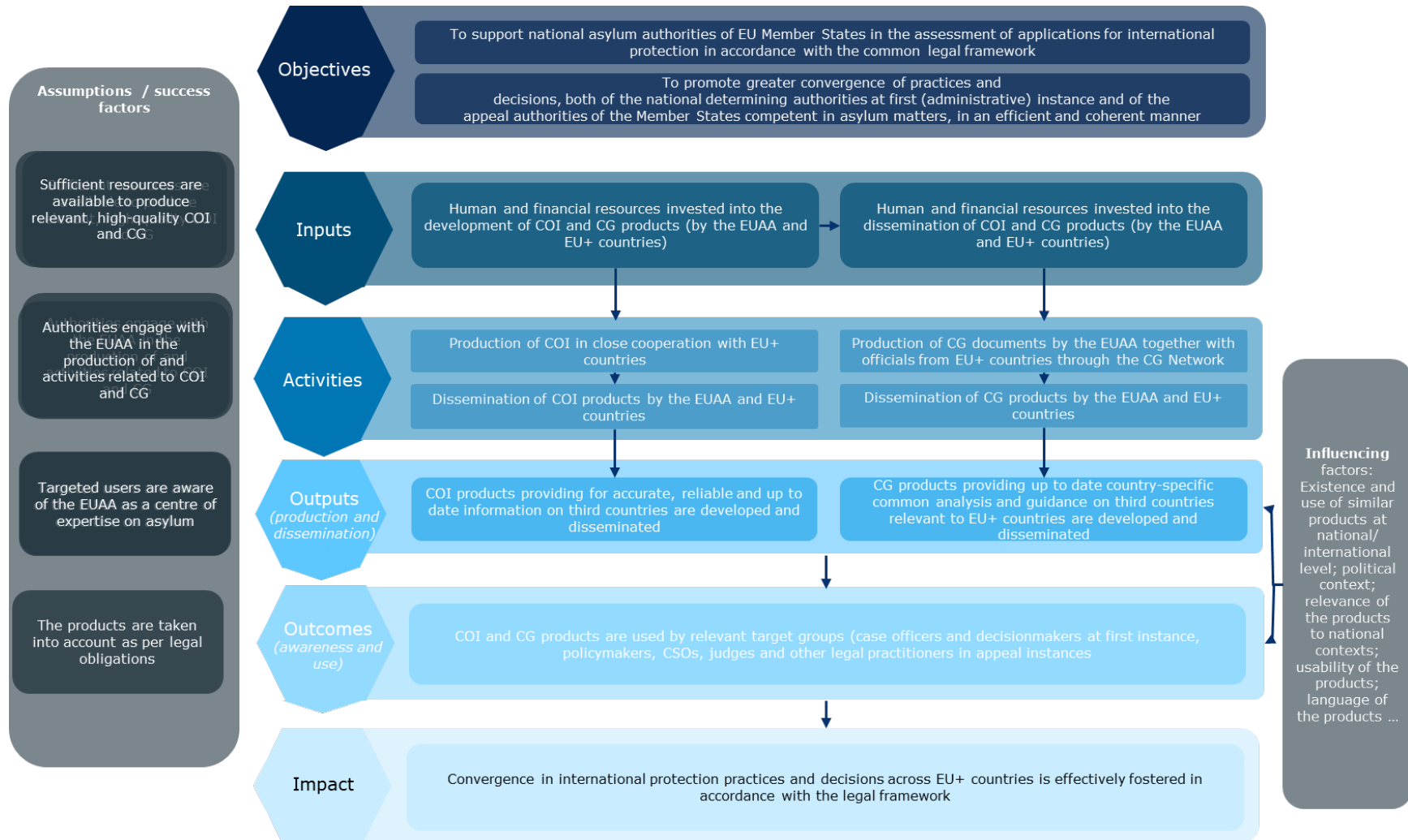
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Annex 3 Intervention logic



Annex 4 Evaluation Matrix

Our evaluation design relies on a structured evaluation matrix to guide the evaluation process and define the manner in which the evaluation questions are to be answered and presented. The matrix below outlines key evaluation questions per evaluation criterion and are further operationalised by sub-questions and corresponding indicators. While a common evaluation matrix is presented here, the evaluation questions were answered separately for COI and CG and synergies and/or any relation across the two products was analysed and highlighted in the relevant findings.

Table 13. Evaluation matrix

Key evaluation questions	Operationalised questions	Indicators / descriptors	Judgement criteria	Sources of evidence
Effectiveness				
1. To what extent are COI and CG products disseminated to relevant users?	<p>What efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI and CG products (outreach activities) to the national administrations and their staff?</p> <p>What efforts were made by national authorities to distribute and promote EUAA products (uptake activities) to the end users in their administration/country?</p> <p>How effective were the different distribution and promotion efforts (by EUAA and authorities) in promoting uptake among the target groups?</p> <p>Which factors explain differences in effectiveness of the uptake activities, including in different countries (e.g., language, access, organisation, resources...)?</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of activities by the EUAA and national authorities to disseminate / promote the use of the products</p> <p>Evidence / examples / stakeholder views of changes in the level of awareness and/or use of the products as a result of outreach and uptake activities</p> <p>Evidence / examples / stakeholder views of reasons explaining the effectiveness of outreach and uptake activities</p> <p>Examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p>	<p>There is evidence of increased awareness and/or use of (certain) EUAA products among end users which can reliably be attributed to the outreach and uptake activities of the EUAA and/or authorities</p> <p>In the absence of robust evidence of increased awareness and/or use, stakeholders agree that the uptake activities have been effective in promoting awareness and use of (certain) EUAA products</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>

	<p>Are there examples of good practices in dissemination / promotion activities?</p> <p>How could the Agency make the dissemination of these products more effective vis-à-vis the respective stakeholder groups?</p>			
<p>2. To what extent and how are COI and CG products used by the intended users?</p>	<p>To what extent are the products being used across different countries and by users at different levels (case officers, policymakers, judges, others)?</p> <p>How are the products being used in different countries and by different users?</p> <p>If the products have only been of limited use, what are the reasons? (e.g., relevance of the products, awareness about the products, usability of the products,...).</p> <p>Are there examples of good practices / lessons learned among the products being evaluated?</p> <p>Are decision-makers aware of the obligation established in Article 11(3) of the EUAA Regulation to consider common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection?</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of use and application of EUAA COI and CG products in different countries / by different users</p> <p>Identified reasons for use or non-use of the products</p> <p>Identified helping or hindering factors</p> <p>Examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p>	<p>Relevant users make use of / make reference to the EUAA's COI and CG products</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
<p>3. To what extent have CG documents informed corresponding national</p>	<p>To what extent have corresponding guidance documents existing at national level been updated after the</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of references to CG documents</p>	<p>CG documents are referred in corresponding national</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to networks</p>

<p>guidance documents when relevant?</p>	<p>publishing of a relevant CG document?</p> <p>To what extent are CG documents taken into consideration when drafting (new) national guidance documents?</p> <p>To what extent do existing national guidance documents refer to CG documents?</p> <p>What factors explain reasons why CG documents are used to inform national guidance documents or not?</p>	<p>in national guidance documents</p> <p>Evidence / examples of references to CG documents in discussions or preparatory works leading to the adoption of national guidance documents</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which CG documents are used to develop / update national guidance</p>	<p>guidance documents or preparatory documents</p>	<p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
<p>4. To what extent have COI reports contributed to a common understanding of the situations at stake?</p>	<p>To what extent and how have COI reports facilitated and supported decision-making processes?</p> <p>To what extent have COI reports helped resolve differences of views about a particular situation?</p> <p>In the case of a lack of common understanding, what caused this?</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of COI reports facilitating and supporting decision making processes</p> <p>Evidence / examples of situations resolved by COI reports</p> <p>Identified helping or hindering factors</p>	<p>COI reports have contributed to the common understanding of the situation at stake</p> <p>COI reports have resolved differences of views about a particular situation</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
<p>5. To what extent have CG documents contributed to a common assessment of the situation in main countries of origin and to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries?</p>	<p>To what extent are CG documents consulted by administrative or judicial authorities before deciding on an asylum case?</p> <p>To what extent CG documents helped resolve differences of views about a particular situation and how to assess it?</p> <p>To what extent can convergence in the assessment and decisions on</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of situations resolved through the use of CG documents</p> <p>Evidence / examples / stakeholder views of reasons explaining how CG documents contribute to convergence</p> <p>Examples of good practices of use of CG documents</p>	<p>CG documents have contributed to the common assessment of the situation at stake</p> <p>CG documents have contributed to convergence in international protection decisions</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to networks</p>

	<p>international protection claims be observed across EU+ countries?</p> <p>To what extent can the observed changes be attributed to the use of CG?</p> <p>Are there examples to illustrate a change in assessment before and after the publishing of a CG document? Is there any statistical data supporting this?</p> <p>Are there noticeable changes in the rate of use after January 2022 (entry into force of the EUAA Regulation and its Article 11(3))?</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of differences in the numbers of granted/denied asylum applications against the timeline of publishing of CG documents</p>		
<p>Efficiency</p>				
<p>6. To what extent have the resources invested by EUAA in COI and CG production been proportionate to the results, in terms of actual use of the products by the primary target groups?</p>	<p>How were the (human and financial) resources of EUAA used for the production of COI and CG products?</p> <p>To what extent were the resources invested to produce COI and CG products proportionate to their observed degree of use?</p> <p>Can differences be observed between COI and CG products? If so, what caused these differences?</p> <p>Were there any inefficiencies (internal or external factors) in the production process? If so, how could these be minimised?</p> <p>What lessons can be learned for the future in terms of the resources to</p>	<p>Production costs of the COI and CG products (human and financial resources invested)</p> <p>Evidence on the degree of use of the products (<i>based on relevance / effectiveness questions</i>)</p> <p>Evidence / examples of inefficiencies in production and use of COI and CG products</p> <p>Evidence / examples of ways in which efficiency could be improved in the future</p>	<p>The resources invested in the production of EUAA COI and CG products were proportionate to the results</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>

	be invested into producing the products?			
7. Has the EUAA invested sufficient time and resources in ensuring wide dissemination of COI and CG products?	<p>How were the (human and financial) resources of EUAA used for the dissemination of COI and CG products?</p> <p>To what extent were the resources invested to disseminate the COI and CG products proportionate to their observed degree of use?</p> <p>Were sufficient resources invested or would a higher investment (time and resources) have led to a higher use of the COI and CG products?</p> <p>What lessons can be learned for the future in terms of the resources to be invested into disseminating the products?</p>	<p>Dissemination costs of the COI and CG products (human and financial resources invested)</p> <p>Evidence on the degree of use of the products (<i>based on relevance / effectiveness questions</i>)</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the sufficiency of the resources invested into dissemination of the products</p>	<p>The resources invested in ensuring wide dissemination of the of EUAA COI and CG products have been sufficient</p>	<p><i>Results from operationalised evaluation questions on effectiveness</i></p> <p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
8. To what extent have COI and CG products enabled national administrations, in particular those producing their own national COI and CG, to save time and resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing (for COI) and policymaking and providing guidance to national case officers (for CG)? Have the time and resources invested by Member States	<p>To what extent do EU+ countries produce their own COI and/or CG documents? Which countries?</p> <p>To what extent and how have EUAA COI documents produced time savings for officials involved in the examination of international protection applications?</p> <p>To what extent and how have EUAA CG documents produced time savings for policymakers when providing guidance to case officers?</p> <p>To what extent does the availability of EUAA COI and/or CG documents</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of EU+ countries' own national COI and CG production and use</p> <p>Evidence / examples of relevant practitioners using EUAA products rather than those available at national level</p> <p>Evidence / examples of efficiency gains (notably time savings) from using EUAA products for users</p>	<p>There is evidence that EUAA COI and CG products improved the efficiency of procedures for EU+ countries</p> <p>The time and resources invested by EU+ countries in using the EUAA products is considered worthwhile (cost-effective)</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>

<p>in these processes been cost-effective to them?</p>	<p>relieve relevant users from having to consult information from other sources to decide on an application?</p> <p>Are there differences across products and/or countries? What explains these differences (e.g., availability of products at national level)?</p> <p>To what extent has the time and resources invested in accessing and using EUAA COI and CG documents been worthwhile (cost-effective) for EU+ countries?</p>	<p>Stakeholder views on the cost-effectiveness of the use of EUAA COI and CG products</p>		
<p>9. To what extent have COI and CG networks enabled to avoid duplication of work and to create synergies between Member States?⁸³</p>	<p>To what extent and how have the relevant Networks enabled avoidance of duplication of work in relation to COI and CG development?</p> <p>To what extent and how have the relevant Networks enabled the creation of synergies between Member States in relation to COI and CG use?</p> <p>Has the participation in COI and CG Networks been cost-effective for officials from EU+ countries?</p>	<p>Evidence / examples of synergies created through participation in EUAA Networks</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which participation in EUAA Networks has helped them avoid duplication in work</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which participation in EUAA Networks has created synergies across Member States</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the cost-effectiveness of participating in EUAA Networks</p>	<p>There is evidence that the COI and CG Networks have enabled avoidance duplication of work and have created synergies between Member States</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p>

⁸³ This question is also relevant for the evaluation of coherence and EU added value.

Relevance				
<p>10. To what extent have COI and CG products met the needs of the different target groups, especially case officers, policymakers, and judges (in terms of relevance, quality of content, usability, timeliness, etc.)?</p>	<p>To what extent and why are the products relevant to their users?</p> <p>Were there any gaps / needs of users that were not met by the EUAA products? Which ones and what caused these gaps?</p> <p>If there were gaps, what explains those gaps? (e.g., linked to the development process, outreach and uptake activities, differences in needs per country,...)</p> <p>Are there differences across countries and reports? What factors explain these differences?</p> <p>To what extent are COI and CG documents easily accessible, reader friendly and easy to use?</p> <p>To what extent does the time gap between the emergence of new situation emerges in a country of origin of asylum applicants and the updating of the relevant COI and CG documents impact on their use by the relevant users?</p> <p>To what extent does the time gap between a COI being updated and the corresponding CG document being adapted have an impact on their use by the relevant users?</p> <p>What changes or improvements, if any, should the EUAA consider to</p>	<p>Evidence on the degree of use of the products (<i>based on questions under effectiveness</i>)</p> <p>Statistics and contextual information to evidence needs, e.g., number of applications and decisions, by country of origin</p> <p>Evidence / examples of needs being identified and subsequently covered through the COI and CG products</p> <p>Evidence / examples of gaps or needs not covered</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the relevance of the EUAA products available to them</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	<p>A broad range of users (in different countries) consider the products relevant to their needs</p> <p>No significant / valid gaps are identified</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>

	fully meet the needs of the target groups?			
11. To what extent have COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG been used by other groups outside the CG framework?	<p>Are COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG used in the context of non-asylum related cases? To what extent?</p> <p>If yes, how are these COI products used?</p> <p>What reasons explain reliance on these products for a use other than the originally intended?</p>	Evidence of use of COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG by other users outside of the CG framework	COI products developed specifically for the purposes of CG are used by other users outside of the CG framework	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
12. To what extent have responses to COI queries met the needs and expectations of the querying Member States?	<p>Were there any queries submitted to the EUAA by the relevant target groups? From which countries and at which frequency?</p> <p>Did the EUAA's responses to queries meet the needs of querying Member States (in terms of clarity, quality, timeliness)?</p> <p>To what extent and how did other EU+ countries make use of the query responses?</p> <p>What lessons can be learned for the EUAA to improve its query responses to better meet the needs of EU+ authorities?</p>	<p>Statistics and contextual information to evidence needs, e.g., number of queries submitted per querying Member State</p> <p>Member States views on the relevance of the responses to the COI queries</p> <p>Evidence / examples of gaps or needs not covered</p> <p>Evidence on the degree of use of query responses per Member State</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	<p>Responses to COI queries have met the needs and expectations of the querying Member State</p> <p>Other Member States (apart from querying Member State) have made use of the responses to the COI queries</p>	<p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
Coherence				
13. To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with other interventions aiming at harmonising	How and to what extent do EUAA products complement in terms of	Evidence / examples of coherence and complementarity between COI and CG documents, and	COI and CG products are consistent with other EU / EUAA interventions aiming at harmonising	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p>

<p>examination of international protection claims across the EU (e.g., EUAA practical guides and guidance, the EUAA COI methodology)?</p>	<p>objectives and approaches existing EU / EUAA guidance?</p> <p>Are there points of tension in terms of potentially contradictory objectives and approaches with existing EU / EUAA guidance?</p> <p>Are there examples of good practices / lessons learned to improve coherence / complementarity?</p>	<p>other EU / EUAA guidance aimed at harmonising the examination process</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the coherence of COI and CG products (or lack thereof) and other EU / EUAA guidance</p> <p>Lessons learned to improve coherence and complementarity in the future</p>	<p>examination of international protection claims across the EU</p>	<p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
<p>14. To what extent are COI and CG products consistent with, or otherwise contribute to the elaboration of similar products existing at the national level?</p>	<p>Are the EUAA COI and CG products consistent with related documents available at national level?</p> <p>How and to what extent do EUAA COI and CG products complement related documents available at national level?</p> <p>Do the EUAA products fill any specific gaps (e.g., on given countries of origin, given topics, given situations)? Which ones and in which countries?</p> <p>How does this compare across products / across countries and what are the reasons for perceived differences?</p> <p>To what extent do the EUAA COI and CG products led to the elaboration of similar products at national level?</p> <p>What factors explain differences in the degree to which EUAA products</p>	<p>Extent to which EU+ countries have and use their own national COI and CG documents (<i>linked to questions under efficiency</i>)</p> <p>Evidence / examples / stakeholder views on the degree to which EUAA products fill a certain gap at national level</p> <p>Evidence / examples of EUAA products contributing to the elaboration of similar products at national level</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences between products and countries and reasons why</p>	<p>There is evidence of consistency between the COI and CG products and similar existing products developed at national level</p> <p>There is evidence that EUAA products have contributed to the elaboration of similar products at the national level</p>	<p>Exploratory interviews with EUAA staff and EU+ representatives</p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>

	contribute to the elaboration of similar products at national level?			
EU added value				
15. What is the additional value resulting from COI and CG products, compared to what could be achieved by Member States individually and collectively?	<p>What are the benefits of the products that stem from them being developed at EU level? <i>(based on other evaluation questions)</i></p> <p>What would have been different if the EUAA products did not exist?</p> <p>Could convergence in the assessment of international protection claims be achieved among EU Member States without EUAA's intervention?⁸⁴</p> <p>How does the EU added value compare across products and/or countries?</p> <p>What could the EUAA do to increase the EU added value of its COI and CG products?</p>	<p><i>Results from all other evaluation questions (notably on effectiveness, efficiency, relevance)</i></p> <p>Evidence / stakeholder views on the added value of the products</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	<p>There is evidence that (certain) EUAA products have EU added value in that they were able to achieve things that would likely not have been achieved in the absence of EU intervention</p>	<p><i>Results from all other evaluation questions</i></p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Consultations with target groups</p>
16. What is the added value of the EUAA CG documents in relation to UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines ?	<p>How and to what extent do EUAA CG documents complement in terms of objectives, approaches and content the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines?</p> <p>What are the benefits of coordinating the development of CG by the EUAA?</p>	<p>Results from all other evaluation questions (notably on effectiveness, efficiency, relevance)</p> <p>Evidence / stakeholder views on the added value of the development process</p>	<p>There is evidence that the development process being coordinated by the EUAA adds value over the UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines</p>	<p><i>Results from all other evaluation questions related to the development process</i></p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey to users</p> <p>Survey to networks</p>

⁸⁴ This was listed as a main evaluation question (question 17) but we suggested to include it as a sub-question here instead.

	What would have been different if the products were not developed through the coordination of the EUAA?	Evidence / stakeholder views on the perception of the EUAA resulting from the existence / use of (certain) EUAA products		Consultations with target groups
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Annex 5 Survey questionnaire

Introduction

What is the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)?

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is the agency of the European Union (EU) which is responsible for making sure that the EU rules related to asylum and reception as part of the so-called Common European Asylum System or CEAS are adequately implemented. The EUAA began its work in January 2022, replacing the former European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

As part of its mission to contribute to the adequate and consistent implementation of the EU rules on asylum, the EUAA has developed and published products to inform and support decision and/or policymaking processes in the field of international protection, notably, Country of Origin Information (COI) and Country Guidance documents (CG). EUAA COI provides information about the socioeconomic, legal, political, human rights, security, conflict and humanitarian situation in third countries at a given time. Country-specific guidance and policy documents (CG) present the joint assessment of Member States regarding the standards of qualification for international protection against the background of the situation in the relevant country of origin. They provide a legal interpretation and evaluation of the situation in a given country.

Visit the EUAA website for more information on the EUAA's COI and CG documents.

How will your answers make a difference?

Your answers will contribute to the external, independent **evaluation of the use, usefulness and impact of EUAA COI and CG documents**. By responding to the survey, you will help us identify areas for improvement.

The questionnaire should not take more than 10-20 minutes to complete. You can start answering the survey and come back to it at a later stage to finalise if you wish.

The survey will be open for responses until July 30, 2023. The information you provide in this survey will be reported on in aggregate only and individual identification will not be possible. A privacy statement can be found [here](#).

In case of any questions or technical difficulties, please contact COI-CG-Evaluation@ramboll.com

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond - we highly appreciate your feedback!

Section 1. Profiling questions

What type of body do you work at? [shown to all]

- (1) Government (e.g. Ministry of Interior)
- (2) National determining authority
- (3) Civil society organisation (national or European level)
- (4) Judiciary
- (5) Independent legal practitioner
- (6) European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)

- (7) Academia/research

What best describes your function in international protection procedures? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to all]

- (1) COI or CG Researcher
(7) Head of COI unit
(2) Case officer, responsible for interviewing or hearing of applicants for international protection
(8) Case officer, responsible for examining/making decisions on applications for international protection
(3) Judge
(4) Legal representation in individual cases
(9) Legal advice on related legal and policy issues
(5) Policymaking and/or the development of guidance on specific countries of origin, broadly
(6) Policy advocacy related to specific countries of origin, broadly

Are you a member of an EUAA network? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to all EXCEPT Legal practitioners, Judges, Case officers]

- (1) Yes, I am a member of the COI Strategic Network
(2) Yes, I am a member of one or more than one COI Specialist Network
(3) Yes, I am a member of the CGNet for general and strategic matters
(4) Yes, I am a member of the CGNet for a specific country or countries
(5) Yes, I am a member of the Consultative Forum
(6) No, I am not a member of any of the above-mentioned EUAA networks

If you are a member of another EUAA network which is not listed above, please specify. [shown to all]

Please specify which COI Specialist Network(s) you are a member of [shown to those who respond (2) in Q5]

- (1) COI specialist network on Afghanistan
(2) COI specialist network on West Africa
(3) COI specialist network on Eritrea
(4) COI specialist network on Ethiopia
(5) COI specialist network on Iraq
(8) COI specialist network on Pakistan
(9) COI specialist network on COI specialist network on Russia, Ukraine, and CIS
(10) COI specialist network on Somalia
(11) COI specialist network on Syria
(12) COI specialist network on COI specialist network on Latin America
(13) Other

Please specify which countries you engage on in the CGNet [shown to those who respond (3) or (4) in Q5]

- (1) Afghanistan
(2) Iraq
(3) Nigeria
(4) Somalia
(5) Syria

Which country do you work in? [shown to all]

- (1) Austria
- (2) Belgium
- (3) Bulgaria
- (4) Croatia
- (5) Cyprus
- (6) Czech Republic
- (7) Denmark
- (8) Estonia
- (9) Finland
- (10) France
- (11) Germany
- (12) Greece
- (13) Hungary
- (14) Ireland
- (15) Italy
- (16) Latvia
- (17) Liechtenstein
- (18) Lithuania
- (19) Luxembourg
- (20) Malta
- (21) Netherlands
- (22) Norway
- (23) Poland
- (24) Portugal
- (25) Romania
- (26) Slovakia
- (27) Slovenia
- (28) Spain
- (29) Sweden
- (30) Switzerland
- (31) Other (please specify) _____

Does your country produce its own COI documents? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

What are the reasons for not producing own COI documents? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to those who respond (2) in Q9]

- (1) Products developed by other countries and/or organisations, including the EUAA are used to cover our needs
- (2) Lack of resources (financial, human, time)
- (3) Lack of expertise
- (4) Other (please specify) _____
- (5) Do not know

**Please indicate whether and how often you consult the following sources to find COI.
[shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]**

	Very frequently	Somewhat frequently	Not so frequently	Never	I am not aware of it / not applicable to my work
EUAA website	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI Portal	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Ecoi.net (ACCORD database)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Refworld or other UNHCR sources	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
National COI database in my own country (please specify below)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
COI published by other EU+ States (please specify below)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
COI published by third countries (please specify below)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
COI published by NGOs (please specify below)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
COI published by international organisations (please specify below)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Academic sources	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Internet searches	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Own research	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
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If applicable, please specify here the specific sources you use for finding COI

Does your country produce its own national country-specific guidance documents? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

What are the reasons for not producing national guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to those who respond (2) in Q13]

- (1) EUAA country guidance performs this function
- (2) Lack of resources (financial, human, time)
- (3) Lack of expertise
- (4) No CG in national legal tradition
- (5) Other (please specify) _____
- (6) Do not know

Which sources do you consult the most to find guidance on the assessment of the situation in the main countries of origin and on the qualification of related applications for international protection? [shown to Case officers, Legal practitioners, Policymakers, Advocacy]

	Very frequently	Somewhat frequently	Not so frequently	Never	I am not aware of it / not applicable to my work
EUAA website for country guidance documents consulted online	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Downloaded versions of EUAA country guidance or its versions available in national platforms	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Internal platforms of my national authority for national guidance	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Public websites of national authorities for national guidance	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Refworld or other UNHCR websites	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Internet searches	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Please specify here the specific sources you use to find guidance documents

Which of these EUAA products are you aware of and would like to answer questions about? [shown to all]

- (1) EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) documents [respondents jump to Section 2]
- (2) EUAA Country Guidance (CG) documents [respondents jump to Section 3]
- (3) Both [respondents see Section 2 and Section 3 and Section 4]
- (4) None of the above [respondents jump to Section 6]

Section 2. Questions pertaining to EUAA COI [not for policymakers/advocacy]

Are you aware of the existence of EUAA COI products about the following countries? Please select the ones you are aware of. (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

- (1) Afghanistan
- (2) Cote d'Ivoire
- (3) Eritrea
- (4) Ethiopia
- (5) Iraq
- (6) Mali
- (7) Nigeria
- (8) Pakistan
- (9) Russian Federation

- (10) Somalia
- (11) Syria
- (12) Venezuela
- (13) None of the above

Please indicate which of the following EUAA COI documents you are aware of / have used before. [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, and only including reports on countries selected in Q19]

	I am aware of the product, and I have used it before	I am aware of the product, but I have not used it before	I am not aware of this product
Afghanistan - Targeting of Individuals	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 - Security situation	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2019, 2022) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2020) - Criminal law, customary justice and informal dispute resolution	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2020) - Anti-government elements (AGEs)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2020) - State structures and security forces	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Cote d'Ivoire (2019) – Country focus	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Eritrea (2019, 2022) – Conditions regarding the civilian branch of the national service, including for women	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Ethiopia (2021, 2022) - Security situation in Tigray	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Ethiopia (2019) - National service, exit, and return	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

Iraq (2019,2022) - Targeting of individuals	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq (2019) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq (2019) - Internal mobility	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq – Reports on specific groups	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Mali (2022) - Female genital mutilation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Mali (2018) - Country focus	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018, 2021, 2022) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2021) - Trafficking in human beings	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018) - Actors of protection	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Pakistan (2020, 2022) - Situation of Afghan refugees	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Pakistan (2018-2021) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Russian Federation (2018) - Situation of Chechens	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○

Somalia (2021) - Targeted profiles	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Somalia (2021) - Actors	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2019-2022) - Security situation	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020-2022) - Socio-economic situation	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020, 2022) - Targeting of individuals	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2021) - Situation of returnees	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020-2021) - Military service	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020) - Internally dispersed persons, returnees and internal mobility	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020) - Situation of women	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Syria (2020) - Exercise of authority in recaptured areas	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Venezuela (2020) - Country focus	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

To what extent do the following reasons influence your country’s choice of producing national level COI compared to using EUAA COI? [shown to COI network members who indicate own COI is produced in their country]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know
To fill gaps in information in terms of country coverage	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

To fill gaps in information in terms of themes / topics covered	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
To have COI in the national language	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
To have COI that is more adapted to the national/local context	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

If applicable, please specify which other factors influence the decision to continue to produce national level COI.

How did you find out about the EUAA’s COI products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

- (1) From a manager/supervisor
- (2) From a colleague/peer within my organisation
- (3) From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation
- (4) From the EUAA website
- (5) From the EUAA Country Guidance documents
- (6) Via the EUAA Courts and Tribunals Network
- (7) Via a national or European judicial network (please specify) _____
- (8) Via the EUAA Consultative Forum
- (9) From the EUAA COI Portal
- (10) From EUAA social media channels
- (12) From an EUAA colleague providing operational support
- (13) From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation
- (14) Through an EUAA meeting/conference
- (15) Through a training
- (16) Through a workshop
- (17) Through own research
- (18) Other (please specify) _____

To what extent do you think the EUAA’s COI products are known by relevant practitioners in your country? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent

- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know

What type of efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI products to your national administrations and staff? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to COI network members]

- (1) Workshops
- (2) Seminars
- (3) Country briefings
- (4) Training
- (5) Email communication
- (6) Presentation in network meetings
- (7) Social media campaigns
- (8) Other (please specify) _____
- (9) None of the above

Please rate the effectiveness of the specific activities carried out by the EUAA to distribute and promote COI products. [shown to COI network members]

	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Not applicable
Workshop	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Seminar	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Country briefings	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Training	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Email communications	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Presentation in network meetings	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

If you wish, please clarify your answers.

Have you ever made use of EUAA COI queries? [shown to Researchers, Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

If possible, please specify on which countries of origin and/or topics?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding COI queries? [shown to Researchers, Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners, and ONLY if they respond (1) to Q28]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / no opinion
I am satisfied with the completeness of the query responses	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the quality of the query responses	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the timeliness of the query responses	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

If yes, please specify what more the EUAA should have done for COI dissemination.

To what extent have you used the EUAA’s COI documents for the following? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, with specific activations on given elements]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / not applicable
Gain background information about a country of origin [shown to all]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain updated information about the current security, human rights and political situation in a country [shown to all]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain information about vulnerable groups such as women, minorities and children [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain information about the socio-economic situation in the country [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Define and limit the scope of planned national COI production [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Help formulating research questions for national COI [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Provide an information source for drafting national COI [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Cross-check COI found through other research [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Identify, to the extent possible, the material facts relevant for specific/strategic cases on the national level [shown to Researchers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Identify, to the extent possible, the material facts which need to be investigated and prepare relevant questions [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Assess the credibility of an application [shown to Case officers, Judges]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Assess risk and protection needs [shown to Case officers, Judges]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Assess potential exclusion cases [shown to Case officers, Judges]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Confirm or question the factual information provided by an applicant [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Provide legal aid in the preparation of an application for international protection (or related filings) [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Corroborate evidence for the examination of the application by the determining authority [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Corroborate evidence for appeal [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Refer to transparent and publicly available information [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Refer to an EU-level source of information	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○

[shown to Legal practitioners]

Please specify any additional reason(s) for which you use COI documents in your work.

How frequently do you refer to the EUAA’s COI documents in your work? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding EUAA COI documents? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / no opinion
The EUAA’s COI documents are sufficiently easy to find	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the geographic coverage of the EUAA’s COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA’s COI documents are sufficiently easy to use	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the quality of the information provided in the EUAA’s COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

I am satisfied with the completeness of the content of the EUAA's COI documents	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the timeliness of updates to the EUAA's COI documents	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents allow me to find relevant information quickly	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents allow me to consult fewer sources	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
Using EUAA COI documents makes my work easier	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
Using EUAA COI documents makes my work faster	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish, please explain your answer and provide suggestions for improvement.

Are there any situations when you use the EUAA's COI documents instead of your own country's COI documents? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, ONLY those in countries that produce their own COI]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

Please explain when and why you use the EUAA’s COI documents and when you use your own country’s COI documents.

Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents for the development of your own country’s COI documents? [shown to COI researchers, Case officers, COI network members]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

To what extent do you integrate the EUAA COI documents into national COI documents? [shown to Researchers]

- (1) Fully
- (2) Partially
- (3) I only use EUAA COI for reference purposes
- (4) Not at all

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to all]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA COI documents are more complete than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents have a better geographic coverage than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more useful than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

EUAA COI documents are more complete than COI produced by international organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than COI produced by international organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more complete than COI produced by civil society organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than COI produced by civil society organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to COI network members]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA COI documents have facilitated convergent decision making in individual cases	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA COI complements (i.e. fills a gap in) my country's national COI	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA COI complements (i.e. fills a gap in) the COI	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

available through other sources						
The EUAA COI unnecessarily duplicates my country's national COI	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA COI unnecessarily duplicates the COI available through other sources	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

Please explain your answers.

Do you believe that having EU-level COI has added value for your work? [shown to Case officers, Judges]

- (1) Yes (please specify) _____
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

What could the EUAA do to increase the added value of its COI products? [shown to COI network members]

To what extent do you think the EUAA's COI documents are adequate with regards to their... [shown to COI network members]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / no opinion
Accessibility	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Format	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Relevance of content	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Level of detail	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Length	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Timeliness of production	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Timeliness of updates	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○

Did you or others in your organisation implement any activities to promote the use of EUAA COI within your administration? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) Workshops
- (2) Seminars
- (3) Email communications
- (4) Other (please specify) _____
- (5) None of the above, no promotion activities were carried out

Please rate the effectiveness of the promotion efforts conducted by you or others in your organisation for EUAA COI products. [shown to COI network members]

	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Not applicable
Workshop	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Seminar	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Email communications	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○
Other	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○

If there were other promotion efforts, please specify which ones and how effective they were.

To what extent do you think the following categories of targeted users in your country use EUAA COI documents? [shown to COI network members]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / no opinion
Case worker (interviewer)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Case worker (examiner/decision maker)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Supervisor/ management staff in determining authorities	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
COI researcher	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Policy officer or other personnel responsible for national guidance	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Legal representative at the national authorities	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Legal representative or other legal aid provider for the applicants	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Judge	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Other category/ies	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

If applicable, please specify which other category/ies of targeted users in your country use the EUAA COI documents.

To what extent do you think the following factors hinder the use of EUAA COI documents in your country? [shown to COI network members]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / not applicable
Language barriers	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Use of other (preferred) COI sources	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Relevance of EUAA COI content	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Geographic coverage of EUAA COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Accessibility of EUAA COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Are your national COI documents updated more frequently than the EUAA’s COI documents? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) Yes
- (2) It depends on the country of origin
- (3) No
- (4) Do not know

If applicable, please explain how and when your national COI documents are updated.

To what extent has the use of the EUAA COI products saved your administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing? [shown to COI network members, Policymakers]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) It required additional time and/or resources
- (6) Do not know / not applicable

Please explain your answer.

To what extent do you think your participation in EUAA networks on COI has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own COI)? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) It has significantly reduced workload for my administration
- (2) It has somewhat reduced workload for my administration
- (3) It has not had an effect on the workload in my administration
- (4) It has somewhat increased the workload of my administration
- (5) It has significantly increased the workload of my organisation
- (6) Do not know / no opinion

To what extent have EUAA COI documents contributed to convergence in international protection decisions across EU+ countries? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know

Do you believe convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA COI products? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know

Please explain your answers.

Do you believe the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know / no opinion

Please explain your answer.

To what extent are the EUAA’s COI products coherent with the scope and objectives of the relevant EUAA practical tools and guides? [shown to COI network members]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) I am not aware about the EUAA's practical guides and tools

Please explain your answers.

Section 3. Questions pertaining to EUAA CG documents

Which of the following CG products have you used before/are you aware of? [shown to all]

	I am aware of this product, and I have used it before	I am aware of this product, but I have never used it before	I am not aware of this product
Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2023)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2022)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2021)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2020)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2019)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Afghanistan (2018)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Iraq (2022)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Iraq (2021)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Iraq (2020)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Nigeria (2021)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Nigeria (2019)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Somalia (2022)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Syria (2023)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Syria (2022)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Syria (2021)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Country Guidance: Syria (2020)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

What have you used the EUAA country guidance documents for? [shown to all with specific activations for given questions]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / not applicable
Gain background knowledge about recent developments in the applicant’s country of origin [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the main actors of persecution or serious harm in the country [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the risk of persecution for particular groups [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on the potential nexus to a reason for persecution for particular groups [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on Article 15(a) QD [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on Article 15(b) QD [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date assessment of the security situation in relation to Article 15(c) QD [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on actors of protection in the country [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on internal	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

protection alternative [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]						
Get up-to-date analysis and guidance on exclusion [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Access a quick summary of relevant COI [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners, COI researchers]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Assess credibility [shown to Case officers, Judges]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Check first instance reasoning against European standards [shown to Case officers, Judges]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Obtain background information about a country of origin [shown to COI researchers]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Access risk analysis [shown to COI researchers]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Gain an understanding of the use of COI in the examination of applications for international protection [shown to COI researchers]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Prepare an application for international protection (or related filing) [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	
Corroborate evidence for the examination of the application by the determining authority	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○	(4) ○	(5) ○	

[shown to Legal practitioners]					
Corroborate evidence for appeal [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Build legal reasoning [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Refer to transparent and publicly available analysis and guidance [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Refer to an EU-level analysis [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Please specify any additional reason(s) for which you use CG documents in your work.

How did you find out about the EUAA’s CG products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

- (1) From a manager / supervisor
- (2) From a colleague/peer
- (3) From the EUAA website
- (4) From the EUAA COI products
- (5) From EUAA social media channels
- (6) From EUAA staff
- (7) From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation
- (8) Through an EUAA launching event for country guidance
- (9) Through another EUAA meeting/conference
- (10) Through a training
- (11) Through a workshop
- (12) Through own research
- (13) Other (please specify) _____

Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the CG documents? [shown to Case officers, Judges, Legal practitioners, Policymakers, Advocacy]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know / no opinion

If yes, please specify what more the EUAA should have done for CG dissemination.

For what reason(s) do you produce national guidance on countries covered by EUAA country guidance? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to network members, Policymakers, ONLY those who say their country produces own guidance in Q9]

- (1) To maintain national sovereignty over guidance
- (2) We need guidance on additional topics (please specify) _____
- (3) National legal tradition
- (4) None of the above, our national guidance is on other countries of origin and not those covered in EUAA guidance
- (5) Other (please specify) _____

How are EUAA CG documents taken into account in the development and/or update of your national guidance? [shown to Policymakers, ONLY those who say their country produces own guidance in Q9]

- (1) The analysis and guidance of the EUAA CG is fully reflected in the national guidance
- (2) The analysis and guidance of the EUAA CG is largely reflected in national guidance, with some differences in the assessment
- (3) It depends on the country of origin in question
- (4) We consult the EUAA country guidance, however, national guidance is not necessarily reviewed
- (5) We do not follow EUAA country guidance
- (6) Other (please specify) _____

To what extent are the countries of origin covered in the EUAA’s CG products relevant to your organisation? [shown to all]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / no opinion
Afghanistan	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Iraq	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Nigeria	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Somalia	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Syria	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Please explain your answer.

How frequently do you refer to EU-level CG documents in your work? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never (please explain why) _____
- (5) Not applicable (please explain why) _____

To what extent do you use the guidance note versus the common analysis parts of the CG in practice? [shown to shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, EXCLUDING those who say they never use the CG, i.e. answer (4) in Q77]

- (1) Mainly use guidance note
- (2) Mainly use common analysis
- (3) Use both

To what extent do you think EUAA CG documents are adequate with regards to the following aspects? [shown to Policymakers, Advocacy, COI network members]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / no opinion
Accessibility	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Format	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Relevance of content	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Appropriate use of COI	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Level of detail	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Length of product	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Timeliness of initial production	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Timeliness of updates	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
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What could be done to improve the overall adequacy of the EUAA CG documents?

To what extent do the following factors hinder the use of EUAA CG in your national context? [shown to Policymakers]

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / not applicable
Relevance to national needs/context	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Non-alignment with national guidance	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Redundancy due to existence of national guidance	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Length of EUAA CG document	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG document level of difficulty for use	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Quality of EUAA CG documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
There are no hindering factors	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Are your national country-specific guidance documents updated more frequently than the EUAA’s CG documents? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to Policymakers, ONLY those who indicate they produce own guidance in their country]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) It depends on the country of origin

If applicable, please explain how and when your national CG is updated

Which stakeholders are users of the EUAA CG documents in your national context? (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to Policymakers and Advocacy]

- (1) Policy-officers and those responsible for national guidance in the national determining authority
- (2) Other policymakers at the national level (e.g. within relevant ministries)
- (3) Case workers
- (4) Lawyers
- (5) Judges
- (6) Civil society organisations
- (7) Do not know

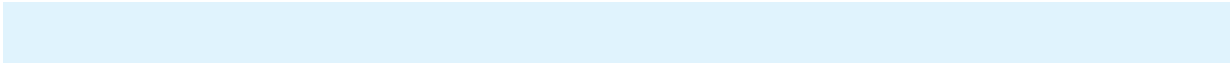
Are national decision-makers instructed to use the CG documents? [shown to Policymakers]

- (1) They are instructed to fully take them into account in the examination, without explicit reference in the individual decisions
- (2) They are instructed to fully use and reference them directly in individual decisions
- (3) They are instructed to use and reference them directly in individual decisions, however, with some exceptions concerning the assessment
- (4) They are instructed to take them into account, with some exceptions concerning the assessment, without explicit reference in the individual decisions
- (5) The CG documents are communicated to them, however, they are not specifically instructed on their use
- (6) They are instructed not to use the CG documents (e.g. to instead use only national guidance)
- (7) Not possible to say
- (8) Other (please specify) _____

To what extent do you agree with these statements? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members]

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / no opinion
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The EUAA CG are sufficiently easy to find	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA CG are sufficiently easy to use	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The guidance notes are useful in my national context	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The common analyses are useful in my national context	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The common analyses make appropriate use of COI	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the quality of the content of the EUAA CG	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the completeness of the content of EUAA CG	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the geographic coverage of EUAA CG	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the timeliness of EUAA CG updates	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
Using EUAA CG documents makes my work easier	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
Using EUAA CG documents makes my work faster	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>



Please explain your answers and provide suggestions for improvement.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, Advocacy]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA CG documents are more complete than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are of higher quality than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are more relevant than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are more useful than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents have a better geographic coverage than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents fit the needs of first instance determining authorities	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents fit the needs of second instance authorities	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to all EXCEPT COI network members, Advocacy]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA CG documents are more complete than those produced by international organisations (e.g., UNHCR)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are of higher quality than those produced by international organisations (e.g., UNHCR)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are more relevant than those produced by international organisations (e.g., UNHCR)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents are more useful than those produced by international organisations (e.g., UNHCR)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA CG documents have a better geographic coverage than those produced by international organisations (e.g., UNHCR)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you think your participation in the EUAA Country Guidance Network has been beneficial (in relation to workload, e.g. for the production of own guidance)? [shown ONLY to CGNet members, i.e. those who respond (3) or (4) in Q5]

- (1) It has significantly reduced workload for my organisation
- (2) It has somewhat reduced workload for my organisation
- (3) It has not had an effect on the workload in my organisation
- (4) It has somewhat increased the workload of my organisation
- (5) It has significantly increased the workload of my organisation

- (6) Do not know / no opinion

Please explain your answer.

**Do you believe the EUAA should facilitate the development of EU-level CG documents?
[shown to all]**

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know / no opinion

Please clarify your answer.

**Do you believe that having EU-level country guidance has added value for your work?
[shown to all]**

- (1) Yes (please specify) _____
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

To what extent has the use of EU-level CG products saved your organisation time and/or financial resources in terms of policymaking and decision making? [shown to Policymakers]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) It required additional time and resources

Please explain your answer.

To what extent have CG documents contributed to convergence in the assessment of international protection needs across EU+ countries? [shown to all]

- (1) To a great extent

- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know

Please explain your answer.

Do you believe convergence in the assessment of international protection claims could be achieved among Member States without the EUAA's CG products? [shown to all]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know

Please explain your answer.

Do you think there is sufficient civil society input in the development of EUAA country guidance documents? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes, the current level of input is sufficient
- (2) No, more CSO input and/or participation would be needed
- (3) Do not know / no opinion

Please explain your answer.

What could the EUAA do to increase the added value of its CG products? [shown to all]

Section 4. Questions on COI for policymakers & advocacy

Are you aware of the existence of EUAA COI products about the following countries? Please select the ones you are aware of. (You may select multiple options, if applicable) [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

- (1) Afghanistan
- (2) Cote d'Ivoire
- (3) Eritrea
- (4) Ethiopia
- (5) Iraq
- (6) Mali
- (7) Nigeria
- (8) Pakistan
- (9) Russian Federation
- (10) Somalia
- (11) Syria
- (12) Venezuela
- (13) None of the above

Please indicate which of the following EUAA COI documents you are aware of / have used before. [shown to policymakers & advocacy, ONLY including reports on countries selected in Q19]

	I am aware of the product, and I have used it before	I am aware of the product, but I have not used it before	I am not aware of this product
Afghanistan - Targeting of Individuals	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 - Security situation	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2019, 2022) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2020) - Criminal law, customary justice and informal dispute resolution	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Afghanistan (2020) - Anti-government elements (AGEs)	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

Afghanistan (2020) - State structures and security forces	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Cote d'Ivoire (2019) – Country focus	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Eritrea (2019, 2022) – Conditions regarding the civilian branch of the national service, including for women	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Ethiopia (2021, 2022) - Security situation in Tigray	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Ethiopia (2019) - National service, exit, and return	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq (2019,2022) - Targeting of individuals	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq (2019) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq (2019) - Internal mobility	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Iraq – Reports on specific groups	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Mali (2022) - Female genital mutilation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Mali (2018) - Country focus	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018, 2021, 2022) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2021) - Trafficking in human beings	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Nigeria (2018) - Actors of protection	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○

Pakistan (2020, 2022) - Situation of Afghan refugees	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Pakistan (2018-2021) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Russian Federation (2018) - Situation of Chechens	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Key socio-economic indicators	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Targeted profiles	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Somalia (2021) - Actors	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2019-2022) - Security situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2020-2022) - Socio-economic situation	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2020, 2022) - Targeting of individuals	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2021) - Situation of returnees	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2020-2021) - Military service	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2020) - Internally dispersed persons, returnees and internal mobility	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○
Syria (2020) - Situation of women	(1) ○	(2) ○	(3) ○

Syria (2020) - Exercise of authority in recaptured areas	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>
Venezuela (2020) - Country focus	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>

How did you find out about the EUAA’s COI products? (You may select up to 3 options, if applicable) [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

- (1) From a manager/supervisor
- (2) From a colleague/peer within my organisation
- (3) From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation
- (4) From the EUAA website
- (5) From the EUAA Country Guidance documents
- (6) Via the EUAA Courts and Tribunals Network
- (7) Via a national or European judicial network (please specify) _____
- (8) Via the EUAA Consultative Forum
- (9) From the EUAA COI Portal
- (10) From EUAA social media channels
- (12) From an EUAA colleague providing operational support
- (13) From a professional contact/peer outside of my organisation
- (14) Through an EUAA meeting/conference
- (15) Through a training
- (16) Through a workshop
- (17) Through own research
- (18) Other (please specify) _____

Do you think the EUAA could have done more to disseminate the COI documents? [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know

If yes, please specify what more the EUAA should have done for COI dissemination.

To what extent have you used the EUAA’s COI documents for the following? [shown to policymakers & advocacy, with specific activations on given elements]

To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / not applicable
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Gain background information about a country of origin [shown to both]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain updated information about the current security, human rights and political situation in a country [shown to both]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Develop country-specific guidance for caseworkers [shown to Policymakers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Develop advice/information notes for other ministries/national authorities [shown to Policymakers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain information for strategy and policy development [shown to Policymakers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>
Obtain information to develop tailored plans for the integration of EUAA COI into national COI and/or related practice [shown to Policymakers]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>

Please specify any additional reason(s) for which you use COI documents in your work.

How frequently do you refer to the EUAA’s COI documents in your work? [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding EUAA COI documents? [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / no opinion
The EUAA's COI documents are sufficiently easy to find	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the geographic coverage of the EUAA's COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
The EUAA's COI documents are sufficiently easy to use	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the quality of the information provided in the EUAA's COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the completeness of the content of the EUAA's COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the timeliness of updates to the EUAA's COI documents	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents allow me to find relevant information quickly	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents allow me to consult fewer sources	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

Using EUAA COI documents makes my work easier	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
Using EUAA COI documents makes my work faster	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish, please explain your answer and provide suggestions for improvement.

Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents instead of your own country’s COI documents? [shown to policymakers & advocacy, ONLY those in countries that produce their own COI]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

Please explain when and why you use the EUAA’s COI documents and when you use your own country’s COI documents.

Are there any situations when you use the EUAA’s COI documents for the development of your own country’s COI documents? [shown to Policymakers]

- (1) Frequently
- (2) Sometimes
- (3) Rarely
- (4) Never
- (5) Not applicable

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA COI documents are more complete than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents have a better geographic coverage than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more useful than national ones	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more complete than COI produced by international organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than COI produced by international organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more complete than COI produced by civil society organisations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents are more relevant than COI produced by	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

civil society organisations

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? [shown to Policymakers]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
EUAA COI documents have helped resolve differences in assessing specific situations	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
EUAA COI documents have facilitated convergent decision making in individual cases	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

Please explain your answers.

To what extent do you think participation in the EUAA Consultative Forum has facilitated your organisation’s use of the EUAA COI products? [shown only to CF members, i.e. those who answer (5) in Q5]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) Do not know / not applicable

Please explain your answer.

To what extent has the use of the EUAA COI products saved your administration time and/or financial resources in terms of information-collection and information-sharing? [shown to Policymakers]

- (1) To a great extent
- (2) To some extent
- (3) To a small extent
- (4) Not at all
- (5) It required additional time and/or resources
- (6) Do not know / not applicable

Please explain your answer.

Do you believe the EUAA should coordinate and facilitate the development of EU-level COI documents? [shown to policymakers & advocacy]

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Do not know / no opinion

Please explain your answer.

Section 5. Questions on COI & CG products

How has the introduction of an EU-level CG document on a specific country influenced your use of EUAA COI documents on that same country? [ONLY those answering both COI & CG related questions]

- (1) My use of the relevant EUAA COI has greatly increased
- (2) My use of the relevant EUAA COI has somewhat increased
- (3) My use of the relevant EUAA COI has neither increased nor decreased
- (4) My use of the relevant EUAA COI has somewhat decreased
- (5) My use of the relevant EUAA COI has greatly decreased
- (6) I stopped using EUAA COI for that country

Please explain your answer.

Section 6. Questions for those not aware about EUAA COI and CG products [ONLY shown to those who respond not knowing about COI or CG]

Please indicate whether you agree with the below statements [shown to all with specific activations on given questions]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know / not applicable
The country of origin information I use is of high quality	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I can find all the country of origin information I need	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I can find all the country of origin information I need to make asylum decisions [shown to Case officers, Legal practitioners]	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I can find all the country of origin I need in my own language	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I prefer to use country of origin information in my own language	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable using country of origin information in English	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>
I was not aware of EUAA country of origin information but intend to start consulting it	(1) <input type="radio"/>	(2) <input type="radio"/>	(3) <input type="radio"/>	(4) <input type="radio"/>	(5) <input type="radio"/>	(6) <input type="radio"/>

I do not use formal guidance documents [shown to Policymakers]	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
I do not use formal guidance documents when assessing individual cases [shown to Legal practitioners, Case officers]	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
The guidance information available to me is sufficient [shown to Policymakers]	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
The guidance information available to me is sufficient to help me make asylum decisions [shown to Case officers, Legal practitioners]	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
I can only use country guidance information well in my own language	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable using country guidance in English	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>
The national guidance information available to me is sufficient to help me prepare applications for international protection [shown to Legal practitioners]	(1)	<input type="radio"/>	(2)	<input type="radio"/>	(3)	<input type="radio"/>	(4)	<input type="radio"/>	(5)	<input type="radio"/>	(6)	<input type="radio"/>

Closing questions

On which of the below countries, if any, would you like to have more country of origin information? [shown to all]

- (1) Afghanistan
- (2) Cote d'Ivoire
- (3) Eritrea
- (4) Ethiopia
- (5) Iraq
- (6) Mali
- (7) Nigeria
- (8) Pakistan
- (9) Russian Federation
- (10) Somalia
- (11) Syria
- (12) Venezuela
- (13) None of the above
- (14) Other (please specify) _____

Are you willing to be contacted again for follow up questions or to schedule an interview in the context of this evaluation study? [shown to all]

- (1) Yes (if so, please enter your email address) _____
- (2) No

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this survey. Once you click 'finish' below, your answers will be saved and sent, and you will not be able to make changes anymore.

If you would like to download a copy / print your answers, please click here [\[insert button to print responses\]](#). If you have any other questions about the evaluation, please reach out to [\[insert functional mailbox\]](#).

Annex 6 Fieldwork interview guides

Guidance for interviewer

This interview guide provides structure to the interview. It includes high-level questions and indicates a number of follow-up questions to “dig deeper” on specific issues. Note that while we are interested in general findings about how useful and impactful the COI/CG products are, we also are interested in specific examples including differences across countries covered, types of products, year of publication and so on. Thus, each question follows a stepwise approach:

- First, ask the high-level question, estimate the level of interest and expertise of the interviewee for that topic.
- Second, if the interviewee is struggling to answer the question, you can use the “prompts”(if applicable) to help them in their answer. Be careful how you phrase this – we do not want to put words in their mouth!
- Third, if relevant, ‘dig deeper’ by asking the interviewee to provide examples or reasons why they answered the way they did. Feel free to ask clarification questions or ask for more explanation if necessary before moving on to the next question.

The interview guide is structured in two columns to facilitate note taking. Please write your answers directly in the second (empty) column, next to the question the answer relates to.

The interviews should last around 30-60 minutes but their length will depend on the number of interviewees present (in case of group interviews) and the degree to which an interviewee uses the products being evaluated. The goal is for all relevant questions to be covered, but not necessarily in a proportionate way. Questions can be skipped if the interviewee is not able to answer or wishes not to answer. On the other hand, if an interviewee wishes to expand on a given question at the expense of other questions, this is possible and the interviewer will adapt flexibly.

Interviewee (name, role, organisation)
Country
Focus (COI, CG or both)
Date
Interviewer

Introduction

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
Can you please briefly introduce yourself and your work / responsibilities?	√	√	√	√	√
How familiar are you with the content, purpose and scope of the EUAA COI / CG documents?	√	√	√	√	√

<p>Which EUAA COI / CG documents and/or production processes are you familiar with and could comment on in this interview?</p> <p><i>Please specify country and type of document in the case of COI (country-focus reports, reports on security situations, socio-economic situations, COI queries, etc..)</i></p>					
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Main interview questions

Awareness about EUAA COI / CG documents

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
<p>How did you find out about the EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p><i>Did you attend any training about them?</i></p> <p><i>Did you hear about them from colleagues, or from a supervisor?</i></p> <p><i>Is there another way you found out about them?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you feel sufficiently informed about the content, purpose and intended use of the EUAA COI / CG reports?</p> <p>If not, why not? What more could have been done to make you feel more informed?</p> <p>Concretely, what do you think would be the best way for you to be well informed about them?</p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p>Have you ever submitted a COI query to the EUAA?</p> <p>If so, was the response delivered in a timely and clear manner? Was the</p>	√	√	√	√	√

query response useful and of high quality?					
--	--	--	--	--	--

Use of EUAA COI / CG documents

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
<p>Do you make use of any of the EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>If so, which ones?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use some more than others? Which ones and why?</i></p> <p><i>If not, why not?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use your own national guidance or guidance provided by another organisation instead?</i></p> <p><i>Are they not relevant to your work?</i></p> <p><i>Any other reasons?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p><u>If they don't use them:</u> Are you aware of anyone else in your administration that makes use of the EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p><i>If so, what do they use them for?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p><u>If they use them:</u> What do you use them for?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>Do you use (and reference) them in first instance decisions?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use them for policy making or related advocacy?</i></p> <p><i>Which tasks does it/do they help you with in particular?</i></p> <p><i>At what stage of the procedure, do you use the documents (e.g during the preparation of the</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√

<p><i>interview, when conducting the interview, when assessing the application for international protection)?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use it/them consistently or only as a reference for specific information needs?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use it/them in your daily work as a source of evidence for decision-making processes?</i></p>					
<p>In your opinion, has the use of EUAA COI/CG documents help you reach fair and accurate decisions in asylum procedures?</p> <p><u>Prompts for COI:</u></p> <p><i>If so, how?</i></p> <p><i>If not, why not? What would need to change for the COI products to be more effective?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any clear differences in the effectiveness across countries or across types of COI products? Which differences and why?</i></p> <p><u>Prompts for CG:</u></p> <p><i>If not, why not?</i></p> <p><i>What would need to change for the CG products to be more effective?</i></p> <p><i>Have there been changes or trends in the assessment of issues covered in CG documents since using those in your national context that you find positive for international protection?</i></p>			√		
<p>In general, has the use of EUAA COI documents helped reach fair and accurate decisions in asylum procedures?</p> <p><u>Prompts for COI:</u></p>	√	√		√	

<p><i>If so, how?</i></p> <p><i>If not, why not? What would need to change for the COI products to be more effective?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any clear differences in the effectiveness across countries or across types of COI products? Which differences?</i></p> <p><u>Prompts for CG:</u></p> <p><i>Are there any differences in the effectiveness of certain parts/issue areas covered in the CG documents? If so, why (please provide examples)?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any differences in the effectiveness of certain CG products? If so, why (please provide examples)?</i></p>					
<p><u>If they use them:</u> Does using the EUAA COI / CG documents make your work easier or more efficient / quicker?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> <p><u>If yes:</u> What about the documents made your work more efficient? Can you estimate how much time it has saved you?</p>	√		√	√	√
<p>In your opinion, has the use of EUAA COI/CG documents supported your responsibilities as a policymaker?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p><i>If so, how?</i></p> <p><i>If not, why not? What would need to change for the COI products to be more effective?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any clear differences in the effectiveness across countries or across types of</i></p>		√			

COI products? Which differences and why?					
<p>If they use them: Have the EUAA CG documents produced time savings for policymakers when providing guidance to case officers?</p> <p>If so, could you provide an estimation of the time saved?</p>		√			

Coherence with other products

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
<p>Are there any inconsistencies between national guidance/practices and what is reflected in the EUAA COI / CG?</p> <p>If yes, please explain.</p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you think the EUAA COI / CG documents complement the guidance that has been developed by other actors and/or by your own administration?</p> <p>If yes, please explain and provide concrete examples.</p> <p>If not, do you have any suggestions to improve complementarity in the future?</p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you have any suggestions for improvement that could increase the use of EUAA CG products?</p> <p><i>Probes: Having CG products more regularly updated? A different format? More user-friendly?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√

Benefits / impacts of EUAA COI & CG products

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
Overall, what has been the main benefit to you or your administration as a whole of using the EUAA COI / CG documents?	√	√	√	√	√
Has the use of the EUAA COI reports ever helped resolve differences in views about a particular situation? Please provide examples.	√			√	
Has the use of the EUAA COI / CG helped you produce your own country guidance at national level? To what extent (followed verbatim/followed closely/informs national CG with some differences/significant differences)? Please provide examples.	√	√			
Have the EUAA COI / CG documents contributed to time and financial resource savings when producing COI / CG at national level? Why / Why not?		√			
<u>If they produce their own COI:</u> Have you used the EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology or any other guidance developed by the EUAA to produce your own COI reports? Which other guidance?		√	√		
Have you observed any changes in national policies or practices in the field of asylum that resulted	√	√	√	√	

<p>from the use of the EUAA COI/CG documents?</p> <p>If so, which changes? How did the EUAA COI/CG documents enable or facilitate these changes?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>					
<p>In your opinion, has the use of EUAA COI/CG documents contributed to convergence in the assessment and decisions on international protections claims?</p> <p>If, so how? Please provide examples</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>			√		

Application of EUAA COI / CG documents (relevance)

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
<p>Are you satisfied with the content of the COI / CG documents?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> <p>Is it relevant to your country's needs?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>Does it provide you with sufficient information to help informing decision-making?</i></p> <p><i>Is the information relevant to your daily work?</i></p> <p><i>Is it sufficiently clear?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything missing? What is missing?</i></p> <p><i>Is the content of the guidance updated in a timely manner?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√

Is the CG accessible on national level in terms of complexity?					
<p>Is the <u>current scope</u> (countries covered, themes covered) of COI and CG products adequate? Is anything missing?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p><i>What is your view on the breadth of countries covered in COI? Are any missing?</i></p> <p><i>What is your view on the breadth of topics covered (reports on security situations, country focus reports,...)? Are any missing?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any countries you have a particular need to have EUAA country guidance on? (which if any, and why)?</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√
<p>Are you satisfied with the format of the COI / CG documents?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p><i>What are your views on the length of the documents?</i></p> <p><i>Do you find it useful to have specific thematic reports (e.g. Security situation, Targeting, Country focus, Key socio-economic indicators, anti-government elements, Criminal law and customary justice, State structures and security forces)?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any parts of the CG document that</i></p>	√	√	√	√	√

are not useful for your work?					
Are you satisfied with the usability of the EUAA COI / CG documents? <i>Prompts:</i> <i>do you use a printed copy or the digital copy?</i> Why or why not?	√	√	√	√	√
Are the available translations of EUAA COI / CG products sufficient or would you like to have EUAA COI / CG documents translated into other languages? <i>Do you feel comfortable using the documents in English or would you prefer them to be translated?</i> Why?	√	√	√	√	√
Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the EUAA COI / CG documents? <i>Prompts:</i> <i>More guidance on how to use them? A different format? More user-friendly?</i>	√	√	√	√	√

Added value

Questions	Case officers	Policy makers	National COI and CG experts	Judges and legal practitioners	CSOs
What do you think the main added value or benefit of the EUAA COI and CG products as	√	√	√	√	√

compared to what MS could do alone?					
How does the EUAA's COI compare to COI available through other sources (countries' own, COI developed by international organisations)? How does it compare to the UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines ?	√	√	√	√	√
Do you think the documents created by the EUAA help achieve the EU's mission of implementing the Common European Asylum System (i.e. EU laws and rules related to asylum and reception) throughout the EU? Why or why not?	√	√	√	√	√
Do you have any suggestions to improve the added value of the COI and/or CG products relative to what is being produced at national level or by others?	√	√	√	√	√

Closing questions

Questions	Answers
Is there anything you would like to add?	

Annex 7 Horizontal interview guides

Interviewee (name, role, organisation)	
Country	
Focus (COI, CG or both)	
Date	
Interviewer	

Introduction

Questions	COI Network	CG Network	Third countries	IOs
Can you please briefly introduce yourself and your work, and how it relates to the EUAA's COI and/or CG products?	√	√	√	√
How familiar are you with the content, purpose and scope of the EUAA COI / CG documents? Which EUAA COI / CG documents are you familiar with and could comment on in this interview? <i>Please specify country and type of document in the case of COI (country focus reports, reports on security situations, socio-economic situations, COI queries, etc..)</i>	√	v	√	√
Does your country have a dedicated COI unit / department and/or produce its own COI? If so, could you please briefly describe the process and the involvement of staff in your administration? <u>Prompts:</u> <i>How often are COI reports produced?</i> <i>How many COI reports are produced per year?</i>	√			

How many people are involved in the production of national COI?				
Does your country produce its own national country guidance? Is it an internal or a public document (if public, please provide link)? How many national CG documents do you produce per year (new/updates)? Which unit is in charge of developing the national CG? What is the capacity of this unit (incl. size, No. of CG documents (new/updates) produced per year)?		√		

Main interview questions

EUAA COI / CG Production process

Questions	COI Network	CG network	Third countries	IOs
<p>To what extent were you/ was your administration involved in the production process and/or review of EUAA COI reports as part of your participation in the EUAA Networks?</p> <p>What are your thoughts on the process?</p> <p>If involved in more than one process, have there been differences in the production process of different products? Which?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>Which ones did you produce/support producing?</i></p> <p><i>Do you think that the process to identify relevant countries / themes is appropriate?</i></p> <p><i>Is the amount of time allocated to the production sufficient?</i></p> <p><i>Are COI reports updated regularly enough?</i></p> <p><i>Are the number of experts involved in the Drafting Teams enough?</i></p>	√			√

<p><i>Do you feel that you have a say during the development process of the EUAA COI /CG products?</i></p>				
<p>To what extent were you/was your administration involved in the production process and/or review of EUAA CG products as part of your participation in the EUAA Networks?</p> <p>What are your thoughts on the process?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>How many CG processes does your administration participate in?</i></p> <p><i>Does your administration participate in the CGNet meetings, in the Drafting Teams, or both? Why?</i></p> <p><i>Is your administration active in the process? If not, what are the reasons?</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel you have sufficient say (representation, input) in the process?</i></p>		√		√
<p>What are the costs (human resources, financial resources, time) linked to your involvement in the production and/or review of the EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p>What about the costs (human resources, financial resources and time) related to your overall participation in the EUAA networks?</p> <p>What do you see as the main benefits of your involvement in the production and/or review of the EUAA COI / CG documents and/or participation in the EUAA Networks?</p> <p><i>Prompts</i></p> <p><i>In terms of costs, has your daily work been impacted by your participation in the EUAA COI / CG network? If so, why?</i></p> <p><i>How often do you have EUAA COI / CG network meetings? How much time do you spend on EUAA</i></p>	√	√		√

<i>network-related activities/meetings?</i>				
In your opinion, have the human and financial resources invested in your national context in the development and/or review of COI / CG documents been proportionate to the results in terms of the degree of use of the documents by intended users? Why / Why not? Are there differences across COI / CG documents?	√	√	√	√
Has the development process (including the review) of COI / CG reports created synergies between your administration and other Member States? Can you provide examples?	√	√	√	√
What do you think about the coordination role of the Agency in the production process of the EUAA COI / CG documents? <i>Prompts:</i> <i>Is the guidance provided enough?</i> <i>Is the proposed timeline appropriate?</i> <i>Are the proposed sources of information adequate?</i> <i>Is there something that could have been done better?</i>	√	√		√
If COI is produced at national level: In your opinion, have the EUAA COI / CG documents contributed to time and/or resources savings when producing COI / CG at national level? Why / Why not? <i>Prompts:</i> <i>Has your participation in EUAA COI / CG networks and/or the use of EUAA COI / CG documents helped avoiding duplication of work in relation to the development of COI and CG documents at national level?</i>	√	√	√	

In your opinion, has your participation in the EUAA COI / CG network been worthwhile (cost-effective)? Why / Why not? <i>Prompts</i> <i>Do the benefits of participating in the network outweigh the costs?</i>	√	√		√
Do you have suggestions to improve the production of COI / CG products?	√	√	√	√

Dissemination

Questions	COI Network	CG Network	Third countries	IOs
How would you rate the awareness of the EUAA COI/CG products in your national context by relevant stakeholders (case workers, lawyers, judges, policy makers, CSOs)? (please, briefly explain) Are there differences in terms of awareness across COI / CG products?	√	√	√	√
What efforts were made by the EUAA to distribute and promote the COI/CG products to the national administrations and their staff? Were these efforts sufficient? If not, what more could have been done? <i>Prompts:</i> <i>How is it communicated to relevant EU+ authorities when new products are published?</i> <i>Is the dissemination done to Network members only or also relevant practitioners? How?</i> <i>What role do the Network meetings play in this regard?</i> <i>What role does the COI Portal play? Or the CG member area? Who is making use of these tools?</i>	√	√	√	
Which activities did you or other persons in your administration carry	√	√	√	

<p>out to promote the use of EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p>Do you think they were successful in increasing the use of EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p>By whom?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p>				
<p>Among the dissemination methods employed (e.g. thorough training or capacity building activities, social media, events, emails, etc), which method is the most effective when it comes to reaching out to users in your administration?</p>	√	√	√	√
<p>In your opinion, would a higher level of investment (time and financial and human resources) in the dissemination of the COI / CG led to a higher degree of use?</p> <p>Why / Why not?</p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you have suggestions to improve the dissemination of COI / CG products?</p>	√	√	√	√

Use and application of EUAA COI / CG reports

Questions	COI Network	CG Network	Third countries	IOs
<p>How aware are you of the degree to which the EUAA COI and CG products are being used in your country?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>Are the products known and well received in your country context?</i></p> <p><i>Do you collect data on the degree of their use in your country? If so, how?</i></p> <p><i>Which types of COI products are used more or less (country focus reports, reports on security situations, socio-economic situation reports, COI queries,)? Why?</i></p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Who are the main (intended) users of EUAA COI and CG products in your administration?</p>	√	√	√	√

<p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p>Who are the primary target users vs secondary target users?</p>				
<p>If use: To your knowledge, what are the main reasons for use of the EUAA COI products and/or CG products in your administration?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p>Lack of COI products at national level</p> <p>Need for convergence</p>	√		√	
<p>If no use: Can you please explain the main reasons for non-use of the COI / CG documents in the relevant administration in your country?</p> <p><u>Probes:</u> Are they too difficult to access? Too difficult or time consuming to use? Are they not relevant to your national context? Are there other similar tools available to you that are better? Any other reasons?</p>				
<p>How do the EUAA documents compare to national COI/CG guidance and/or COI/CG produced by other actors?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p>Are they complementary or are there inconsistencies?</p> <p>Do the EUAA COI / CG documents fill a specific gap on given countries of origin, given topics, given situations, etc?</p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you think the availability of COI and CG products, respectively, has led to convergence in asylum decisions across the EU+?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u></p> <p>If yes, how and why?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Are you satisfied with the content of the COI / CG documents?</p>	√	√	√	√

<p>Why or why not?</p> <p>Is there anything missing?</p> <p>Are there differences in the quality of the content of different documents (across countries)? Please provide examples.</p>				
<p>Is the current scope (countries covered, themes covered) of EUAA COI/CG products adequate? Is anything missing?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>What is your view on the breadth of countries covered in COI or CG? Are any missing?</i></p> <p><i>What is your view on the breadth of topics covered (reports on security situations, country focus reports,...)? Are any missing?</i></p> <p><i>Do you find it useful to have specific thematic reports (e.g. reports on security situations, socio-economic situation reports, COI queries)? Why?</i></p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Are you satisfied with the format of the COI / CG documents?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> <p>Are there differences across products?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>What are your views on the length of the documents?</i></p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Are you satisfied with the usability of the EUAA COI / CG documents?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> <p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <p><i>Do you use a printed copy or the digital copy?</i></p>	√	√	√	√
<p>Do you have any suggestions for improvement that could increase the use of EUAA COI products?</p> <p><i>Probes: COI reports more regularly updated? A different format? More user-friendly?</i></p>	√		√	√

Do you have any suggestions for improvement that could increase the use of EUAA CG products? <i>Probes: CG products more regularly updated? A different format? More user-friendly?</i>		√	√	√

Added value

Questions	COI Network	CG Network	Third countries	IOs
What do you think is the main added value or benefit of the EUAA COI and CG products compared to what MS could do alone?	√	√	√	√
How does the EUAA's COI compare to COI available through other sources (countries' own, COI developed by international organisations)? How do the EUAA CG documents compare to the UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines ?	√	√	√	√
Do you think the documents created by the EUAA help achieve the EU's mission of implementing the Common European Asylum System (i.e. EU laws and rules related to asylum and reception) throughout the EU? Why or why not?	√	√	√	√
Do you have any suggestions to improve the added value of the COI and/or CG products relative to what is being produced at national level or by others?	√	√	√	√

Closing questions (all interviewees)

Questions	Answers
Is there anything else you would like to add?	

Annex 8 Overview of fieldwork interviews

The tables below list the types of stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed as part of fieldwork consultation activities.

Belgium

Stakeholder category	Organisation
CSO	Caritas International Belgium
Judges and legal practitioners	Council for Alien Litigation
Judges and legal practitioners	Council for Alien Litigation
Judges and legal practitioners	DGV-Law
Policy makers	Cedoca
Case officers	CGRA
Case officers	CGRA
National COI and CG experts	CGRA

Bulgaria

Stakeholder category	Organisation
Judges and legal practitioners	Administrative Court Sofia
Judges and legal practitioners	Centre for legal aid – Voice in Bulgaria
Judges and legal practitioners	Foundation of Access to Rights - FAR
Judges and legal practitioners	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)
National COI and CG experts	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)

Germany

Stakeholder category	Organisation
Case officers	Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
Judges and legal practitioners	Administrative Court
Judges and legal practitioners	Administrative Court
Policy makers	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

Greece

Stakeholder category	Organisation
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Case officers	Attica Regional Asylum Office
Judges and legal practitioners	Appeals Authority
Judges and legal practitioners	Asylum Service's Register of free legal aid
Judges and legal practitioners	Appeals Authority
National COI and CG experts	Appeals Authority
National COI and CG experts	Greek COI Unit
Case officers	Pireaus Regional Asylum Office
Case officers	Amygdaleza Asylum Unit
Case officers	Alimos Regional Asylum Office

Finland

Stakeholder category	Organisation
CSO	Migration agency
National COI and CG experts	Migration agency
Judges and legal practitioners	Finnish Refugee Council
National COI and CG experts	University of Helsinki
CSO	The Finnish White Ribbon Union
CSO	Amnesty

France

Stakeholder category	Organisation
Judges and legal practitioners	Cour Nationale du Droit d'Asile
CSO	La Cimade
Case officers	OFPRA
National COI and CG experts	OFPRA
National COI and CG experts	OFPRA
National COI and CG experts	OFPRA

Italy

Stakeholder category	Organisation
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Judges and legal practitioners	Court of Trento
Judges and legal practitioners	Court of Cassation
Judges and legal practitioners	N/A
Judges and legal practitioners	Court of Florence
National COI and CG experts	N/A
Judges and legal practitioners	N/A
CSO	ASGI NGO Nazarena zorzella

Latvia

Stakeholder category	Organisation
Judges and legal practitioners	Administrative District Court
Case officers	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs
CSO	Shelter Safe House
CSO	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs
CSO	PROVIDUS
Judges and legal practitioners	ZAB "Krasts & Nikels"
Judges and legal practitioners	ZAB "Krasts & Nikels"
Judges and legal practitioners	Administrative district court
CSO	Human Rights Centre

Poland

Stakeholder category	Organisation
Case officers	Office for Foreigners
Case officers	Office for Foreigners
Case officer	Office for Foreigners
CSO	Association for Legal Intervention
CG expert	Office for Foreigners
COI researcher	Office for Foreigners
COI head of unit	Office for Foreigners

Sweden

Stakeholder category	Organisation
COI Researcher	Migrationsverket
COI Researcher	Migrationsverket
COI Researcher	Migrationsverket
Policy makers	Migrationsverket
Policy makers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Case officers	Migrationsverket
Judges and legal practitioners	Migration Administration Court in Malmö

Annex 9 Overview of horizontal interviews

The table below lists the types of stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed as part of horizontal consultation activities.

Country	Stakeholder category	Organisation
AT	CG Net	Federal administrative court in Vienna
AT	COI and CG Net	COI Unit
CH	COI	Secretariat of Migration
DK	CG Net (case officer)	First asylum division
DK	COI	Danish Immigration Service
HR	CG Net	COI Unit
ME	Third countries	COI department
N/A	IOs	European Commission
N/A	IOs	UNHCR
NO	COI	COI Unit
PT	CG Net	Servico de estrangeiros e fronteiras
PT	Case officers	Asylum department
RO	COI and CG Net	N/A
TK	Third countries	Ministry of international Affairs