



# European Asylum Support Office

## Our mission:

As an important actor of European solidarity, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) plays a key role in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), fostering greater cooperation with and between Member States and providing the necessary support in order to translate into practice the core values of the CEAS, equity and fairness, and to ensure that individual asylum cases are dealt with in a coherent way by all Member States.



# About us

EASO is an agency of the European Union set up by Regulation (EU) 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The agency:

- provides operational support to Member States with specific needs and to Member States whose asylum and reception systems are under particular pressure;
- contributes to the implementation of the EU relocation programme;
- acts as a centre of expertise on asylum;
- contributes to the development of the CEAS by facilitating, coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation among Member States on the many aspects of asylum;
- helps Member States fulfil their European and international obligations to give protection to people in need;
- provides practical and technical support to Member States and the European Commission;
- provides evidence-based input for EU policymaking and legislation in all areas having a direct or indirect impact on asylum.

## In order to achieve its goals, EASO's tasks include:

- providing country of origin information (COI) on key countries, relevant for the asylum decision-makers in the field of asylum;
- providing the latest asylum trends data as well as in-depth asylum data, an outlook with an analysis of asylum trends and push–pull factors, plus risk scenarios;
- developing and providing training in order to support the enhancement of quality and harmonisation in the area of asylum;
- contributing to the new 'Hotspot' approach;
- coordinating the relocation measures agreed at EU level;
- providing operational support by deploying EU+ countries' experts in the form of asylum support teams (ASTs) or by providing other support as required;
- developing the use of operational tools including manuals, informational and practical tools, reporting templates and feedback system.

Support is our mission



# EASO's focus points

EASO's focus points consist of:

## Permanent support

supporting and stimulating the common quality of the asylum process through common training, common asylum training material, common quality and common COI;

## Special and emergency support

organising solidarity for Member States subject to particular pressures by providing temporary support and assistance to repair or rebuild asylum and reception systems, including tailor-made assistance, capacity building, specific support and special quality control tools;

## Support to the hotspots

coordinating all activities under the EASO 'Hotspot' operating plans, initiating, promoting and facilitating the synchronised efforts of Member States to support the registration, relocation and further processing of applications for international protection in the operational host Member States;

## Information and analysis support

sharing and merging information and data, analyses and assessments at EU level, including EU-wide trend analyses and assessments;

## Third-country (i.e. non-member country) support

supporting the external dimension of the CEAS, supporting partnerships with third countries to reach common solutions, including by capacity building and regional protection programmes, and coordinating Member States' actions on resettlement.

## Cooperation with EU agencies

EASO works closely with other EU agencies, in particular with other EU agencies in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. Moreover, EASO signed working arrangements with Frontex on 26 September 2012, with the Fundamental Rights Agency on 11 June 2013 and with eu-LISA on 4 November 2014. Since 2016, EASO also has a liaison officer at Frontex.

## Cooperation with UNHCR

Cooperation between EASO and UNHCR covers various areas like training, quality processes, trends and analysis, unaccompanied minors, resettlement, operational support, communications and third-country support. EASO signed a working arrangement with UNHCR on 13 December 2013.

# Basic facts about EASO

**Headquarters:** Valetta, Malta

**Staff:** over 150

**Main tasks:** supporting Member States whose asylum systems are under particular pressure and assisting Member States in the implementation of the CEAS

**Budget for 2017:** EUR 69 million

## Our impact

Since 2011, EASO has been a key actor in the EU's efforts committed to implementing the CEAS.

## Discover the quick facts about our impact

Over **16 000** participants in EASO's training modules

Over **8 000** participants in EASO's meetings

Over **9 000** COI documents available on the common COI portal

Over **1 000** deployed experts

Supported the Relocation of thousands from Italy and Greece

Interviewed and registered thousands of asylum seekers in the Hotspots

Find more in-depth information in our annual reports on our website:

<https://www.easo.europa.eu/about-us/what-we-do/work-programmes-and-annual-activity-reports>



EASO operational support in Italy

# Early warning and preparedness system

EASO has set up the early warning and preparedness system (EPS), a data-collection mechanism that aims to collect information on all key aspects of the CEAS in as real time as possible. Currently the EPS covers all stages of the asylum process (with the exception of appeal), including first instance determination, access to procedure, reception, return and Dublin.

The aim of this data collection is to supply information and analysis to all relevant stakeholders in regular and tailored ad hoc [analytical products](#) in order to provide an up-to-date situational picture on asylum in the EU+ and support Member States' preparedness.

EASO's analytical products merge statistical data contributed by all 30 EU+ countries with qualitative information. Such qualitative information includes insight into national asylum systems and changes in national legislation and policies that may impact on asylum migration decisions (made accessible to Member States via the [information and documentation system](#)) as well as push and enable factors prevalent in countries of origin and transit.

EASO has also set up a multiannual [research programme](#), in cooperation with civil society and academia, to better understand the push-pull factors of asylum-related migration as well as to develop forward-looking scenarios for asylum inflows to EU+ countries.

## Country of origin information

COI refers to information on the countries that asylum seekers originate from and which is relevant for decision-makers in the field of asylum. The quality and accuracy of COI can thus play a determining role in achieving the aim of the CEAS whereby similar cases should receive similar outcomes across the EU.

In the field of COI, EASO:

- gathers targeted, relevant, reliable, accurate and up-to-date COI in a transparent and impartial manner according to a published methodology;
- establishes specialist COI networks composed of national COI experts on key countries of origin at EU level (currently 10 such networks exist);
- drafts, via a network approach in cooperation with Member States COI experts, [joint COI reports](#);
- organises country-specific practical cooperation workshops inviting experts from the region;
- manages and further develops the publicly accessible EASO COI Portal which provides a common entry point to EU-produced COI and offers additional resources for Member States and other stakeholders.



Latest asylum trends

EASO produces reports relevant for the decision-makers in the field of asylum



# EASO training and quality

## EASO training

EASO provides training and develops training materials in support of the promotion of quality and harmonisation in the area of asylum, as such contributing to the implementation of the CEAS. The cornerstone of EASO training activities is the EASO training curriculum, a common vocational training system designed mainly for case officers and other asylum officials throughout the EU. The curriculum covers the entire field of international protection by means of interactive modules. A blended learning methodology, combining e-learning and face-to-face sessions, provides for both a theoretical and a practical approach to training. The EASO training curriculum is implemented according to a train-the-trainer methodology to support the development of skills, knowledge and competencies of trainers, who upon completion of a training module are able to train personnel in national administrations, creating a multiplier effect.

The EASO training modules counted over **16 000 participants** in the EU+ and beyond between 2012 and 2016.

## EASO cooperation with courts and tribunals

EASO provides two-fold support to members of courts and tribunals. In cooperation with courts and tribunals, including judicial training institutions, judicial associations and other relevant actors, EASO is working towards creating a professional development series aimed at providing courts and tribunal members with a full overview of the CEAS. In addition, EASO also organises professional development workshops, which provide an opportunity for members of courts and tribunals to deepen their knowledge of European asylum law and, ultimately, to transfer this information to colleagues in the respective Member States. EASO also provides tailored support to the judiciary in Member States under particular pressure as well as ad hoc support in response to requests received from courts and tribunals.



EASO training

## EASO supports asylum processes

In accordance with its overall aim of supporting Member States in achieving common standards within the CEAS, EASO organises practical cooperation activities focusing on the implementation of the main elements of the CEAS. Such activities can be organised within the framework of thematic networks facilitated by EASO such as, for example, the network of Dublin units or of reception authorities.

As part of these activities, the mapping of Member States' current practices and policies plays a key role as it lays the ground for the organisation of thematic meetings and the production of reports, as well as the development of practical tools of guidance documents. These are designed to support the daily work of case officers, border guards, reception officers and other relevant target groups. Moreover, the mapping contributes to the collection of information with regards to the implementation of the different instruments of the CEAS in the national context, thus forming a baseline for quality management activities in Member States.

## EASO activities on vulnerable groups

EASO provides support and develops practical cooperation among Member States and other relevant experts on issues relating to vulnerable applicants, including children, victims of trafficking, persons subjected to torture and other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, persons at risk because of their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, and persons with special needs. EASO mainstreams aspects related to vulnerable groups in all EASO activities, supports policy coherence in this field, develops tools designed to support Member States in the implementation of the CEAS within the context of vulnerable applicants and organises expert meetings on topics related to vulnerable groups.

More details: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/training-quality>



EASO supports unaccompanied minors

# EASO support in the hotspots

## How does EASO support the Hotspots?

EASO concludes operating plans with the host Member State. These plans aim at initiating, promoting and facilitating the synchronised efforts of Member States to support the registration and further processing of applications for international protection in the operational host Member States, where activities of EASO Asylum Support Teams will take place.

Although supported by EASO, the host Member States authorities remain responsible for all asylum-related operational activities in the defined operational areas, including registration of applications for international protection, examination and decision taken in the asylum files.

EASO ensures the coordination between the participating experts in the ASTs and the technical means deployed by the agency in the framework of the EASO Hotspot operating plan.

The participating Member States will support the EASO Hotspot operating plan's objectives and activities by deploying, coordinating and supporting their experts to the defined locations.

For more information on EASO's Hotspot operating plans, please visit: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/archive-of-operations>





## EASO and Relocation

EASO supports Member States that are faced with specific and disproportionate pressures with activities related to relocation of international protection applicants within the EU. Currently, EASO is supporting Italy and Greece with the implementation of the EU relocation scheme in line with the European Agenda on Migration. EASO has a number of activities and responsibilities in the relocation process and provides specific support to facilitate the implementation of the relocation programme by:

- deploying and coordinating special support teams and asylum support teams (ASTs), composed of Member States experts, to Italy and Greece;
- facilitating direct cooperation and exchange of information between national contact points of the Member States of relocation and Italy and Greece — monitoring of the overall relocation process;
- developing tools in support of specific steps in the relocation procedure and particularly in the information provision and the vulnerability assessment;
- implementing a relocation communication package, including information leaflets in non-EU languages, a mobile app and relocation videos.



#relocation

# EASO activities in Italy

EASO has been supporting Italy with the provision of technical and operational assistance since 2013.

Operational support to Italy in the context of hotspots and relocation was launched mid-September 2015.

EASO experts in Italy provide operational support in the following three main areas.

- Provision of relevant information to potential applicants for relocation of eligible nationalities. Those activities are conducted in all operational hotspots in Italy.
- Moreover, EASO mobile teams for information provision are deployed in Rome and Catania to swiftly cover relevant locations and points of disembarkation.
- Handling registrations of applicants for international protection, in view of the relocation procedure, in a number of regional hubs and by a roving team.
- Handling outgoing Dublin take-charge requests for relocation cases. Those activities are conducted in the Dublin Unit in Rome.



EASO's expert providing relevant information to potential applicants for relocation

# EASO activities in Greece

EASO has been supporting Greece, with the deployment of EASO ASTs to assist with the asylum procedures, since 2011.

Since 2015, EASO provides support to Greece, in the context of hotspot and relocation, by performing a number of tasks:

- identifying potential applicants for international protection and providing active information about the international protection system in Greece and the relocation procedure in general; in addition, giving advice on nationality assessment and possible exclusion issues to caseworkers registering relocation candidates;
- processing outgoing Dublin take-charge requests, including relocation cases;
- detecting possible document fraud.

Besides EASO's work on relocation, EASO teams in the hotspots work on the operational implementation of the **EU–Turkey Statement**. Since March 2016, EASO has been supporting the Greek Asylum Service with regard to the Greek eligibility and admissibility procedures. To this end, EASO has deployed experts who conduct interviews to ensure systematic individual assessment of the admissibility of each application for international protection in Greece.



EASO's deployed experts providing support in Greece



# EASO and the external dimension of the CEAS

EASO has an important role to play in the external dimension of the CEAS, by strengthening asylum and reception capacity in third countries in order to better protect asylum seekers, in the cooperation with third countries in matters connected with EASO's mandate and activities, and in facilitating the resettlement of refugees from third countries to the EU.

EASO's work on the external dimension of the CEAS is being implemented in the framework of the **EASO External Action Strategy** adopted by the Management Board of EASO in November 2013. All this is done in close cooperation with the European Commission within the framework of the EU external relations policy, including the European Agenda on Migration and the Valletta Summit action plan. Other partners and stakeholders in our work are EU delegations, partner third countries and Member States, as well as Frontex, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Support in the external dimension is given both bilaterally and through regional programmes. The geographical focus is at present the Western Balkans region, Turkey and North Africa.

Activities include capacity building, advice, training, provision of seminars/workshops, operationalisation of practical tools, study visits, technical assistance and on-the-job training, etc.

## Valletta Summit follow-up

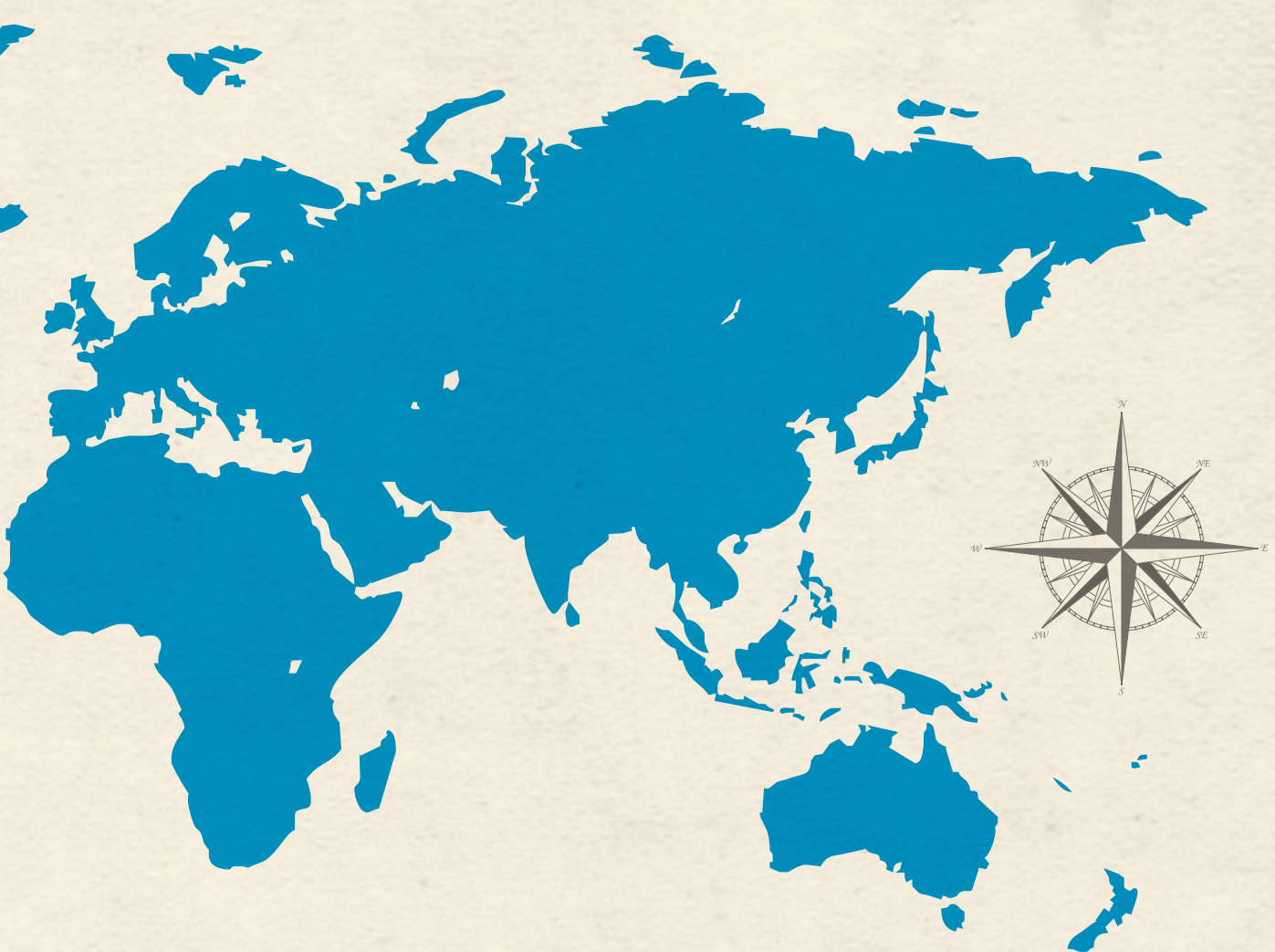
To follow up on the Valletta Summit action plan of November 2015, EASO supports third countries by, in particular, providing training and improving the quality of the asylum process in countries of origin, transit and destination.

More details: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/external-dimension>



## EASO and resettlement

EASO aims at strengthening the EU role in the area of resettlement with a view to meeting the international protection needs of refugees in third countries and showing solidarity with their host countries. EASO facilitates the resettlement by Member States of refugees from third countries to the EU in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM. EASO further develops existing methodologies and tools to strengthen Member States' ability to resettle refugees and contribute to the evaluation and further development of the joint EU resettlement programme.



# The administrative and management structure

## The Executive Director:

Executive Director José Carreira was appointed by the Management Board in 2016 and is in charge of the day-to-day management of the agency.

The Executive Director is independent in the performance of their tasks and is the legal representative of EASO. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of the work programme and the decisions of the Management Board. The Executive Director is supported by three departments, namely:

- Department of Asylum Support;
- Department of Operations;
- Department of Administration.

There are several units under each department.

**The Management Board** is the agency's planning and monitoring authority. It is composed of representatives of the Member States and associate countries, the European Commission and a representative of UNHCR.

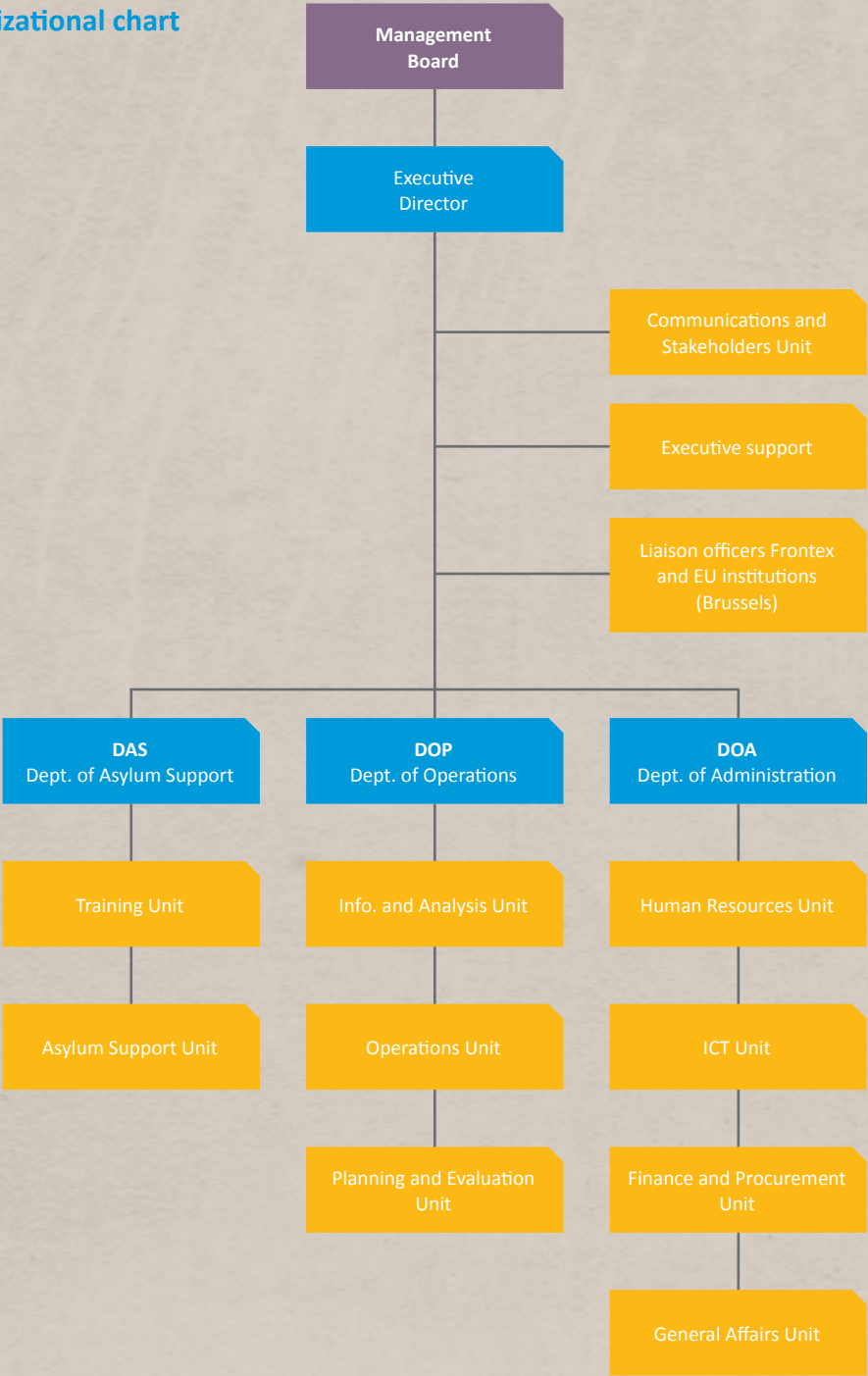
**The consultative forum** was established in 2011 to strengthen dialogue and pooling of knowledge between EASO and civil society. It is open to relevant civil society organisations and competent bodies (such as international organisations, academia and the judiciary) operating in the field of asylum policy at local, regional, national, European or international level.

**EASO practical cooperation** is a concept applied to expert meetings, conferences and networks organised by EASO. EASO's practical cooperation activities follow a common methodology and are intended to improve and maximise convergence on approaches to and assessment of the protection needs of asylum seekers as well as other practical aspects of the CEAS.



EASO's Management Board

EASO's organizational chart



# Focus on civil society: EASO consultative forum

The EASO consultative forum has been established to strengthen dialogue and pooling of knowledge between EASO and relevant civil society operating in the field of asylum policy at local, regional, national, European or international level. Civil society can offer great and diversified expertise in the field of asylum and reception, which can be synergetic to the work of EASO.

EASO continuously engages with actors from civil society in its core business, inviting experts and representatives to attend thematic meetings and seminars and to contribute to the development of tools and materials as well as exploring ways for an increased involvement of civil society in EASO's operational activities.

EASO has strengthened its feedback system by developing more sound responsiveness towards organisations responding

to the consultations, by providing information bilaterally and multilaterally to civil society organisations approaching EASO and by being alert and receptive to search, analyse and take into account information and inputs provided by civil society with a view to identify opportunities to build practical cooperation.

In addition to the plenary meeting of the EASO consultative forum, ad hoc and thematic meetings targeting civil society are organised in order to encourage the use of participatory methodology. The structure and working methods of the EASO consultative forum are subject to revision under the new proposal of regulation.

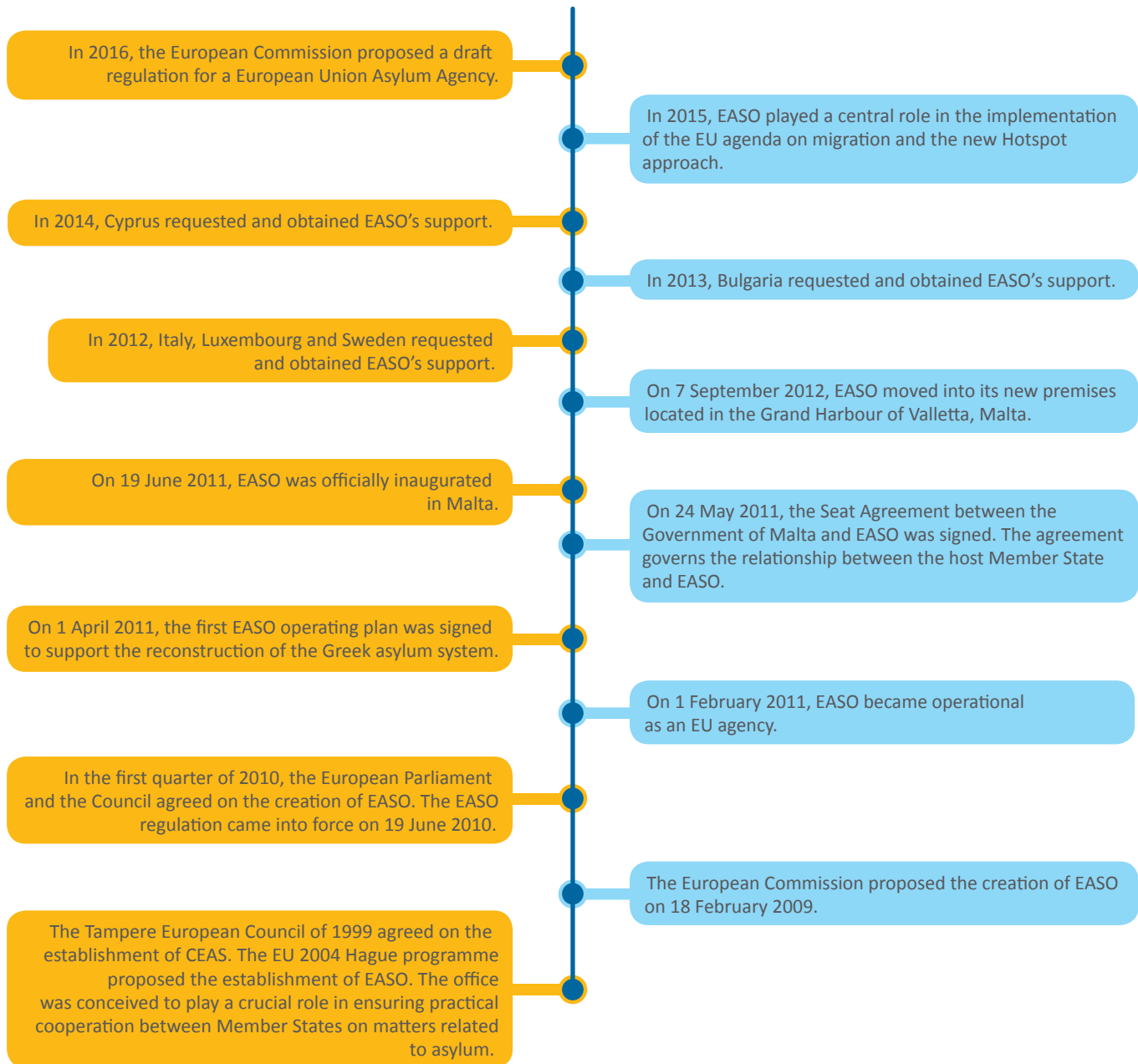
For more information on the EASO consultative forum, please contact [Consultative-Forum@easo.europa.eu](mailto:Consultative-Forum@easo.europa.eu)



EASO Consultative Forum – authentic dialogue matters for EASO



# EASO's history



## In focus: what's next for EASO?

The reform of the CEAS, as proposed by the European Commission, would establish a fully efficient, fair and humane asylum policy which would function effectively both in times of normal migratory pressure and in times of high migratory pressure. This reform is also meant to ensure a fair allocation of asylum applications among Member States and to provide for a common set of rules at EU level to simplify and shorten the asylum procedure, discourage secondary movements and increase the prospect of integration.

In 2016 the European Commission launched a package of legislative proposals to reform the CEAS, intended to be an institutional answer to the migratory wave that Europe has had to face, taking into account that in 2015 almost 1.4 million applications for international protection were made in the EU+ — the highest number since the beginning of EU-level data collection began in 2008.

### **One of these legislative proposals refers to establishing a European Union Asylum Agency**

The European Commission proposed to transform the existing EASO into a fully fledged European Union agency for asylum with an enhanced mandate and considerably expanded tasks to address any structural weaknesses that arise in the application of the EU's asylum system.

# How to find out more about EASO

EASO uses a wide range of communication channels, including our multilingual website, social media like Facebook and Twitter, conferences and workshops.

## Website

Our website is an excellent source of information on migration-related issues: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/>

## Monthly newsletter

Our free monthly email newsletter keeps you up to date with all the latest developments, news and upcoming events: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/newsletter>

## Social media

Follow us on:



<https://www.facebook.com/easo.eu>

<https://www.facebook.com/EU-Relocation-Programme-1573986209595538/?fref=ts>



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<https://www.youtube.com/user/EASOChannel>

## Publications

EASO's publications can be downloaded free of charge from our website.

Browse our publications here: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/news-events/featured-publications>

## Communications and Stakeholders Unit

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The latest press releases can be found at: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/news-events/press-releases>

