



8th EASO Consultative Forum

Discussion Papers for the Workshops

Workshop 1: Provision of information to applicants for international protection in the context of reception

Workshop leads: EASO and the Fundamental Rights Agency

Background and aim of the workshop

Upon a request by civil society partners, over the course of 2018, EASO organized a series of events with a focus on information provision activities in the context of asylum. These activities culminated in the publication of a Briefing Paper on Information Provision in the Context of Asylum, which reflects insights collected through sustained dialogue with civil society organizations. This Briefing Paper presented a cross sectional analysis of asylum-related information activities implemented by civil society organisations, covering topics such as the different types of information provision activities, types of media used, models of cooperation between interested actors, challenges, good practices, and lessons learned. The question of evaluation of information services emerged out of these discussions, aiming at addressing the contextual specificities of the field of asylum. An initial dialogue on the topic provided some basic directions on key evaluation questions of interest, as well as possible indicators. The long-term goal of this dialectic process is the development of a set of directions on evaluation of information provision activities, amongst others, by drawing insights from professionals with operational experience in the area of information provision.

Through parallel, facilitated dialogues, the workshop aims at taking the discussion on the evaluation of provision activities a step further by engaging participants in an exchange of ideas on key areas of evaluation. The discussion will touch upon the issues of evaluation questions and indicators, an assessment of data collection methodologies for the purposes of evaluation, and challenges and ethical concerns involved in the evaluation of information provision activities. Insights generated will feed into the development and publication of a set of directions tailored specifically to the evaluation needs of information provision services in the area of asylum. This will offer some targeted guidance on evaluation of information provision in the context of asylum that will enable professionals in the area to identify and make use of the evaluation process that best fits their needs.

Structure of the workshop

In this workshop, after a brief presentation on program evaluation by the organizers and an explanation of the process, participants, in three small groups, will engage in a collaborative dialogue to exchange experience-based insights in regards to monitoring and evaluation of information provision activities. The discussion will revolve around three trigger questions meant to instigate:

1. Identification of indicators to be used in the evaluation of information provision activities;



2. Discussion on appropriate data collection methodologies for the evaluation of information provision activities (advantages and disadvantages); and
3. Discussion on challenges and ethical concerns that may be involved in the evaluation of information provision activities.

Key questions to be discussed

Group 1

- *In previous discussions with Civil Society partners, six general criteria were identified, against which information provision activities can be evaluated, namely: relevance, effectiveness; efficiency; impact; sustainability; coherence. Based on your experience in information provision, could you think of specific indicators, in the context of information provision, that can be used to assess the extent to which the above criteria are met?*

Group 2

- *What data collection methodologies seem more appropriate to you, given the profile of your clients, for evaluating information provision activities? Could you identify advantages and disadvantages of different possible methodologies?*

Group 3

- *What challenges and ethical concerns do you think are involved in the evaluation of information provision activities? Could you identify possible ways to address those challenges?*

Workshop 2: Reception of Children

Workshop leads: EASO, NIDOS, Mediterranean Hope, Save the Children

Background and aim of the workshop

During the last years, the number of asylum seeking children arriving in the European Union has increased in a dramatic way. In 2017, approximately 32 715 unaccompanied children applied for international protection in the EU+. As they are at greater risk than adults of abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking or other forms of violence, children in migration require heightened protection, including appropriate reception conditions and special care.

As a result of these factors, Member States authorities, including child protection systems, are facing serious challenges. They have increasingly found themselves under pressure when confronted with the need to provide qualified staff, to address specific needs, including adequate housing as well as additional resources for education. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) can play a critical role in providing expertise and tailored support to national authorities on child protection. Selected members of CSO also participate in the Advisory Group of the Vulnerability Experts Network hosted by EASO. The synergy among different actors within the area of reception will allow coordinated and effective actions to address the needs and gaps that children face once they reach Europe. The workshop



discussions will enable active participation of CSO in order to enhance and shape reception conditions for children in Europe.

Structure of the workshop

Following an introduction that will be provided by EASO, the workshop will be articulated around discussions in smaller groups on the following topics:

1. Reception of accompanied children
2. Reception and care arrangements for unaccompanied children
3. Reception of children with specific needs

Each group will be assigned one topic and will have the possibility to discuss it for 20 minutes. After that, the groups will move to the discussion of the following topic for another 20 minutes. Finally, the third topic will be explored for the last 20 minutes. At the end of the sessions, all participants will have the possibility to share their contribution on the different topics in plenary setting amongst workshop participants.

Key questions to be discussed

- *What are the good practices on reception of children and coordinating the care response?*
- *What type of policies and practices are required by various actors?*
- *What can be the role of CSO in the reception of children?*
- *What is the added value of CSO in relation to national authorities?*
- *How CSO may provide support to children, families and caregivers?*
- *How the link between EASO and CSO could be strengthened?*
- *How can CSO contribute to EASO activities?*
- *How could EASO support CSO on reception of children?*
- *What additional suggestions and recommendations would CSO have to EASO?*

Workshop 3: Emergency Reception Provision

Workshop leads: EASO and Migration Policy Institute

Background and aim of the workshop

Before the onset of the so-called migration crisis in 2015, the European Migration Network (EMN) conducted a pan-European study on the state of reception in the EU Member States and Norway.¹ How was reception for asylum seekers organised in each of these States was a key question, as was the investigation into how the competent authorities duly prepared for fluctuations in in- and

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn_second_focussedstudy2013_organisation_of_reception_facilities_final_version_28feb2014.pdf

outflows over time. A key finding at the time was the limited number of EU Member States that had drawn up a contingency plan and hence had engaged in a reflective exercise of how to run a reception system that is able to respond to the inherent changes in migration flows. Another stark finding was the limited monitoring of existing capacity and use of techniques, such as forecasting, to further adapt demand with availability.

The experiences of 2015-2016 necessitated an exponential learning curve in this part of asylum systems across Europe. The aim of this workshop is to map part of this learning curve and, in particular, the role that civil society organisations (CSOs) have played in this and reflect on what can be done in the coming period to consolidate this.

Structure of the workshop

Introductory statements will be provided by:

- EASO: Geert Knockaert – Reception officer: on “EASO guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception”
- MPI Europe – Dr. Hanne Beirens – Acting Director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe – What are the lessons learnt from national asylum systems in terms of how to better organise reception? Drawing on the MPIE-BST project “Making asylum systems work in Europe”

Workshop participants will then be invited to debate three main themes and questions in smaller groups, as presented below. The Workshop will end with a joint discussion on the key takeaways from each of the sub-groups, in order to report this back to EASO.

Key questions to be discussed

Theme 1:

- How are CSOs **currently involved** in contingency planning at the national and supranational level (i.e. type of involvement and thematic input)?
- **What further steps** could be undertaken by: i) CSOs; ii) National authorities; and iii) EASO, to secure that the knowhow of CSOs are drawn upon in the contingency planning process and, ultimately, result in a reception system that is robust and up to standards?

Theme 2:

- What **types of knowledge** on contingency planning and emergency reception provision **have to be consolidated** to ensure reception systems that are able to tackle future fluctuations of inflows of asylum seekers and migrants? What knowledge can we not afford to lose? For example, **this may comprise:**
- Different types of buffer capacity for reception systems and the related
 - Agreements, MoUs, etc. (governance and the ease with which that buffer capacity can be triggered or activated);

- Adaptations to the infrastructure, designated as buffer capacity, in advance of the actual use of the space (e.g. Wi-Fi connection) (ease with which the buffer capacity can be deployed);
 - Material that is shared across localities (investment that is required to maintain buffer capacity);
 - Etc.
 - Strategies for upscaling and downscaling staff, for example:
 - Rapid recruitment strategies (e.g. database, short-term contracts)
 - Creativity in the type of staff that can be deployed (e.g. persons with a proven ability to manage large groups of persons and the services/amenities they need);
 - Differentiated training schemes and associated staff responsibilities (e.g. short-term training to slot newcomers into the organisation and allocating more experienced staff to more challenging tasks)
 - Support teams that can be mobilised in case certain regions/reception facilities lack the staff and/or knowhow to address the pressure (within Member States, but also across);
 - Cooperation agreements between relevant stakeholders (e.g. cross-border cooperation between CSOs and IGOs)
 - Continuous monitoring of reception capacity, for example:
 - Monitoring system (e.g. technical and methodological setup);
 - Task forces that meet/communicate regularly to keep the system updated and decide on next steps;
 - Direct line with key decision-makers on extra capacity and/or budget if system indicates the maximum capacity is about to be reached (in a particular region);
- And **who is responsible** for that knowledge consolidation and dissemination?

Theme 3:

The current **Reception Conditions Directive** recognises that a sudden, high influx of asylum seekers can exert pressure on the national reception system and therefore **allows for a temporary deviation of reception standards**. However, the sense of “emergency” rose quite rapidly in the 2015-2016 period and then continued for a prolonged period of time. The proposed revised Reception Conditions Directive seeks to restrain the use of this principle. In addition, it would oblige Member States to report to EASO when they do intend to activate it and hereby pave the way for a potential intervention of the EASO.

- **How should EASO monitor the performance of reception systems in relation to their ability to be able to deal with changing inflows and prevent the early onset of an “emergency situation”?**



Workshop 4: Coordination between different stakeholders involved in reception – how to structurally embed civil society in Member States’ reception systems?

Workshop leads: EASO and to be confirmed

Background and aim of the workshop

Reception Authorities often work in close cooperation with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Cooperation is a complex process and comes in many different shapes and sizes depending on various dimensions, such as the cooperation’s purpose, the level of coordination and institutionalization it requires, and the responsibilities and accountability of the partners involved.

Starting from two practical experiences in management (Germany) and monitoring (Italy) of reception facilities, this workshop aims at identifying guidelines on how CSOs can be structurally embedded in Member States’ reception systems. These include practical mechanisms, strategies and procedures between Reception Authorities and CSOs at different levels of cooperation, including:

- Operational: exchange of information and ways of collaboration
- Tactical: consultation and implementing activities
- Strategic: decision making processes, monitoring, reporting mechanisms

Structure of the workshop

The workshop will take place in plenary format with introductions provided by EASO followed by a presentation of a civil society partner who have experience in the management and monitoring of reception centres. Following the introductory presentations, a lively Q&A session will take place on the basis of several key questions as presented below.

Key questions to be discussed

- *How did you manage coordination with the Reception Authorities Operational (exchange of information, collaboration, discussion), tactical (consultation, implementation of activities) or on more strategic level (decision making processes, monitoring and reporting)?*
- *From your experience, what are the key learnings (good or bad) about coordination with the Reception Authorities?*
- *What do you see as main challenges in the coordination with the Reception Authorities?*
- *Would you see a role for EASO as an EU agency in supporting the coordination between Reception Authorities and CSOs on the management and monitoring of reception (i.e. collection and sharing of good practices, training, capacity building)?*



Workshop 5: Reception and Society

Workshop leads: EASO, Eurocities, City of Athens, City of Ghent, Reception Centre Ghent, City of Milan – SPRAR and Cooperative Farsi Prossimo

Background and aim of the workshop

Pre-Integration activities are often organized in close cooperation with local administrations and civil society organisations, and aim to avoid that the time spent in reception is wasted in terms of integration within the host society. This includes topics such as language, employment, education and vocational training or housing. This “Integration from day one” approach has become a powerful trend across Europe.

This workshop aims to explore the role of reception authorities regarding the management and development of activities, with an overall view of promoting the integration of residents within local community networks and initiatives.

Structure of the workshop

Following an introduction provided by EASO, a panel composed of representatives from Eurocities, City of Athens, City of Ghent, and the City of Milan will present policies and practices related to the governance of integration highlighting how reception authorities, civil society organisations and local authorities work hand in hand within their respective role to foster better integration outcomes at local level for beneficiaries of international protection.

After introductory statements, a lively debate will be moderated by EASO in plenary setting.

Key questions to be discussed

- *What are the key learnings (good or bad) for your city from the past few years, in terms of reception of beneficiaries of international protection and link to the local communities?*
- *How would you define your relationship with your national reception authority at the moment?*
- *What is in your sense missing in terms of national support for better integration of beneficiaries of international protection in your city?*
- *What do you see as main challenges for your city in the coming years?*
- *Would you see a role for EASO as an EU agency in supporting you, in terms of capture of good practices, training, capacity building?*