

OPERATING PLAN
AGREED BY EASO AND THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Valletta Harbour and Nicosia
December 2020

The Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter 'EASO')

and

The Minister of Interior and the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Cyprus (hereinafter 'Member State')

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office¹ (hereinafter referred to as 'EASO Founding Regulation'), and in particular Articles 2, 8, 10 and 13 to 23 thereof,

Hereby agree on the Operating Plan (hereinafter 'the Plan') for the provision of scientific, technical and operational assistance to the Republic of Cyprus from 1 January until 31 December 2021.

Any amendments or adaptations of this Plan shall be agreed between the Parties in writing.

EASO shall share a copy of the Plan with the Members of the EASO Management Board for information.

The Plan enters into force on the date after the Plan has been signed by all Parties.

Executive Director of the
European Asylum Support Office

Minister of Interior

Chief Registrar of the
Supreme Court

Nina Gregori

Nicos Nouris

Eirini Christodoulou

Date of signature

Date of signature

Date of signature

Valetta Harbour

Nicosia

Nicosia

¹ OJ L 132, 29.5.2010, p. 11-28.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Plan addresses the operational needs of Member States under particular pressure that have requested support from EASO. Such Plans give directions on the delivery of EASO's technical and operational assistance and the deployment of Asylum Support Teams.

This Plan is formally agreed with the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

2.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 General legal basis for the Plan as per EASO Founding Regulation

The EASO Founding Regulation, in particular Article 2(2) and (3), (4) and (5) thereof, foresees that shall provide effective operational support to Member States subject to particular pressure on their asylum systems, drawing upon all useful resources at its disposal, which may include the coordination of resources provided by the Member States, as well as technical assistance in regard to the policy and legislation of the EU in all areas having a direct or indirect impact on asylum.

The definition of particular pressure on the asylum and reception system is laid down in Article 8 of the EASO Founding Regulation.

EASO may support the Member State by coordinating action to help facilitate an initial analysis of asylum applications under examination by the competent national authorities (Article 10(a)), action designed to ensure that appropriate reception facilities can be made available by the Member States, in particular emergency accommodation, transport and medical assistance (Article 10(b), and other technical and operational assistance through the deployment of asylum support teams (Article 10(c)).

The operating arrangements of the deployment of the asylum support teams are governed by Chapter 3 of the EASO Founding Regulation, and more in particular Articles 13 to 23.

2.2. Legal framework applicable to the Plan

EASO activities performed in the context of the support and technical assistance as identified in the Plan herewith are in principle governed by EU law, complemented, where appropriate, by the national law of the host Member State. This includes, inter-alia, the safety and security of persons and assets participating in those EASO activities.

2.3. Lawfulness and Respect for Fundamental Rights

This Plan shall be implemented by the Parties in full compliance with the applicable law, as indicated in Section 2.2 of the Plan, and with full respects to human dignity. This includes, inter alia, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as the Convention Relating to the Status of refugees of 1951.

Any person contributing to EASO operational support activities and taking part in the implementation of Plan shall respect the applicable International law, European Union law and the national law of the Host Member State. They shall maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, professionalism, respect and promotion of fundamental rights and international protection.

They are to act responsibly and proportionally to current objectives. Whilst carrying out supporting functions, all personnel must not discriminate persons on grounds of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, age or sexual orientation. All persons are expected to treat every person with courtesy, respect and due consideration for the nature of any legitimate activity in which they are engaged. To perform their duties properly, they shall serve the public interest and refrain from any activities which could undermine or compromise their independence and the appropriate performance of their duties.

During the implementation of this Plan, all personnel must apply a zero-tolerance attitude with respect to the infringement of fundamental human rights.

This obligation is particularly important when dealing with persons who are in need of international protection. To that end, participants in EASO operational support under this Plan shall comply and act in accordance with the 'EASO Code of Conduct for persons participating in EASO operational support activities'.

EASO may temporarily suspend the implementation of the Plan in cases of severe violations of the applicable law, especially the Fundamental Rights.

2.4. Confidentiality, Public Access to Documents and Data Protection

Without prejudice to the public right of access to documents, as laid down in Regulation (EC) 1049/2001² and the EASO implementing rules on access to documents,³ all versions of this document shall be made available to the competent authorities in each EU Member State, as well as the associate countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This Plan shall be made publicly available once it has been signed by EASO and the Host Member State.

EASO and the Host Member State shall consult each other on any requests for public access to documents relating to this Plan (for instance concerning its evaluation) and treat such requests in accordance with Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 or the respective national law, whichever is applicable.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. The current plan also takes into account the General Data Protection Regulation as updated in May 2018⁴ with a Corrigendum to the 2016/679 Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (Data Protection Directive), which is applicable to stakeholders at national level.

Whenever personal data is processed by the EASO within the activities agreed in the current Plan, EASO will act as data processor on behalf of the competent authorities of the Host Member State, following the applicable EU and national laws and regulations, as well as the instructions received from the Host Member State as the data controller.

In order to perform their tasks in accordance with this Plan, participants to activities under this Plan are only allowed to access the data bases mentioned below, under points 5.6 Conditions of Deployment and 5.7 Organisational and Operational Pre-Conditions.

EASO will implement the necessary technical and organisational measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of the personal data it processes taking into account possible additional instructions received from the Host Member State. This is to prevent any unauthorised disclosure of or access to this information.

The Host Member State authorities agree that any personal data obtained in the course of the implementation of the Plan and by any EASO personnel working on behalf of the Member State

² Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001, regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

³ Decision No. 6 of the Management Board of EASO of 20 September 2011 laying down practical arrangements regarding public access to the documents of EASO

⁴ Corrigendum, OJ L 127, 23.5.2018, p. 2 ((EU) 2016/679)

authorities can be processed in the EASO IT systems, including cloud-based systems, exclusively under the instructions of the Member State and until an alternative system exists that can substitute the processing system used by EASO.

The Host Member State also agrees to indicate a contact point in view of its role as a data controller for any data processed by EASO on behalf of the Host Member State.

3.0. OPERATIONAL SITUATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The organisational structure and human resourcing of the asylum and reception systems in Cyprus struggle to meet the increasing asylum pressure. This contributes to the limited absorption capacity of the backlog of applications for international protection, both at first as well as second instance determination. In parallel, the absence of a comprehensive and integrated reception strategy in Cyprus remains a challenge that impacts the functioning of the reception and registration practices and leads to *ad-hoc* decisions and workflows. To address these challenges in a comprehensive and sustainable manner, Cyprus has developed in 2019, jointly with the Commission and EU agencies (EASO, Europol, and Frontex), an action plan which also sets the framework for EU support to Cyprus on migration management.

In the first ten months of 2020, 6,195 applications for international protection were lodged in Cyprus, down by almost half (-46%) compared to the respective period in 2019. However, this drop was a result of the countermeasures to the COVID-19 outbreak which were introduced in mid-March and imposed, among other restrictions, the suspension of most registration activities.⁵

During the same period, EASO supported 71% of all registrations for international protection in Cyprus, the majority of which (64%) concerned irregular entries crossing the Green Line.

In an effort to improve its migration and asylum system, as of 2021 all migrants who entered the Country irregularly will be referred to the First Reception Centre in Pournara including for the registration of the asylum application, and when relevant, the full assessment of the asylum application at the new Asylum Examination Centre adjacent to 'Pournara' First Reception Centre. A "Safe Zone" for vulnerable applicants (specific area should be assigned to persons with special needs and vulnerable applicants) will also become operational in 2021.

In order to ensure sustainability of the EASO support in the asylum registration phase, it would be crucial for the Aliens and Immigration Service to the Police (AISP) to capitalise on the existing collaboration and best practices, and strengthen the ownership of the process of accessing to the asylum procedure, in line with CEAS standards.

Based on the existing needs as highlighted by the needs assessment, the proposed focus in the cooperation between EASO and the national counterparts in **registration and access to asylum procedure** will be i) the operationalisation of registration activities in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre, ii) in enhancing quality in relation to vulnerability screening, information provision, and standardised workflows, and iii) in strengthening the relationship and capacities of the AISP to ensure a long-term impact.

The number of pending cases in Cyprus continued to rise amounting to more than 19,580 applicants at the end of October (18,795 in January 2020)⁶ and in parallel, the age of the backlog also rose. The vast

⁵ Eurostat data "Asylum and first time asylum applicants– monthly data (rounded)

https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctzm&lang=en

⁶ Eurostat data "Persons subject of asylum applications pending at the end of the month – monthly data (rounded)

https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asypenctzm&lang=en

majority of the unresolved applications were pending at first instance. The lower level of applications due to the suspension of all registration activities for 3 months averted the further increase of the backlog.

With regards to the examination of the applications, notwithstanding the significant increase in interviews, individual productivity and the parallel increase on recommendations submission, the level of recommendations actually closed remained low and did not result in a reduction in the backlog.

Therefore, the proposed line of cooperation with regards to **the first instance determination** will be focusing on i) backlog reduction, ii) digitalisation and file management, iii) overall support to enhance the quality of work (through COI, Dublin procedure, vulnerability assessment, and quality assurance), and finally iv) the operationalisation of the Asylum Examination Centre adjacent to 'Pournara' First Reception Centre.

Despite the lack of an integrated reception model in Cyprus, EASO, in close collaboration with the Asylum Service, supported the enhancement of the reception conditions of the Kofinou reception centre (e.g. counselling, vulnerability identification, assessment and referral, community support) and the improvement of the reception mechanism, particularly with regards to social work activities.

As mentioned, the main need and focus of our work with regards to **reception** will be in supporting CAS in the elaboration and implementation of a functional Reception Model for Cyprus including the articulation of a national reception strategy in line with the joint action plan for migration data collection and monitoring, support with management capacity and development of relevant SOPs and workflows among others. In addition, the priorities are the operationalisation of a Safe Zone in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre (dedicated area for persons with special needs and vulnerable groups) along with the continuation of social work and reception support in Kofinou, including referrals following the exit from 'Pournara', with an increased focus on quality and capacity building.

Regarding **second instance determination**, EASO's recent support in research through seconding Research Officers has been rather fundamental despite the very recent establishment of a presence at the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC). The progress achieved has been limited given that the backlog has been on the increase and it might further increase because of recent law amendments and the unprocessed workload of the Refugee Reviewing Authority whose definitive closure is imminent (end of 2020). Based on this, EASO is planning to increase support, assisting in expanding the structure and assuring tailored technical assistance (case management system, targeted trainings and country briefings among others) with the twin aim to consolidate the structure *and* process in the IPAC and to reduce the backlog.

To date, Cyprus has implemented legislative reforms to establish a list of safe countries of origin and recently amended its constitution and key legislative instruments in order to reduce time limits to submit an appeal against a decision by the Asylum Service before the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC). The Country also revised its policy on subsequent applications which are now determined by the Asylum Service and on alternatives to detention. This may result in an additional number of cases to be examined at first and second instance.

Overall, improved data management, analysis and reporting remain crucial to ensure consistency, transparency and monitoring of the asylum process and a shift to a digital system would minimise the chance for data inconsistencies and the time allocated to fact-checking, ultimately ensuring high data quality.

EASO has been providing operational support to Cyprus since 2014 through Special Support Plans, which were subsequently amended in 2015, 2016, and 2017. In response to the increased pressure that Cyprus experienced in 2018, EASO expanded its support to Cyprus with a new Operational and

Technical Assistance Plan: the first Operational and Technical Assistance Plan for 2019 was signed in December 2018 with a period of performance of one year.

The 2020 Operational and Technical Assistance Plan reinforced the presence of EASO's Asylum Support Teams in 8 locations in the country (namely Nicosia Asylum Service, Nicosia IPAC, Nicosia Aliens and Immigration Police, Pournara centre, Kofinou reception centre, Aliens and Immigration Police Larnaca, Aliens and Immigration Police Limassol, and Aliens and Immigration Police Paphos), supporting registration, reception services and processing of asylum applications in first and second instance. EASO also helped to improve reception thanks to its presence in Kofinou and strengthened its presence in the newly established 'Pournara' First Reception Centre in Kokkinotrimithia in view of supporting an improved asylum registration. During 2020, EASO contributed to facilitating access to procedures for vulnerable groups in collaboration with the Asylum Service, and contributed jointly with the Commission to the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for first reception and relocation.

On 19 September 2019, EASO and Cyprus signed a Hosting Arrangement to guarantee the necessary legal and material conditions for installing and running an EASO operational office in 2020. The Seat Agreement which was ratified by the House of Representatives and came into effect on 17 August 2020 aims to ensure proper management of EASO's operations in the host country.

With AMIF funding and in cooperation with the European Commission, EASO and other stakeholders the Asylum Service relocated 30 persons, 14 unaccompanied minors and 16 persons belonging to single parent families to Finland, implementing the jointly developed SOPs.

EASO's Centre for Operational Support introduced special emergency measures and adjusted its workflow scheme due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to ensure continuity of business in implementing the 2020 Operational and Technical Assistance. However, despite of the measures introduced by EASO to ensure a certain level of business continuity, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the deliverables related to all measures of the Operational and Technical Assistance Plan.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Implementation Period

The implementation period of this Plan is from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2021.

4.2 Non-substantial changes during implementation

The Plan aims to provide effective and flexible support to the identified needs of the Host Member State. Therefore, the foreseen activities are implemented in consideration of the changing circumstances which may occur in the international protection and reception systems in the Member States, or on the ground, as well as in the context of the availability of financial resources and experts. The implementation of measures and tasks foreseen in the Plan may be subject to non-substantial changes that may be accommodated within the objectives of a measure, so long as they do not affect the overall budget, do not require an amendment to or adaptation of the Plan, and that the Host Member State is timely informed in writing.

4.3. Amendments to the Plan

Any changes that prove to require an amendment to or adaptation of the Plan, shall gain written agreement of both the Executive Director of EASO and the Republic of Cyprus in line with Article 18(2) of the EASO Founding Regulation.

5.0. COORDINATION STRUCTURE

This chapter of the Plan describes the various conditions for and aspects of support to the authorities of the Host Member State in the field of international protection and reception.

EASO will provide technical support to experts participating in this Plan with the aim of ensuring that all deliverables make good use of the expertise and information already available to EASO. All rights in any writings or other work produced by Asylum Support Teams shall be the property of EASO and/or the European Union, where such writings or work relate to activities undertaken in the context of this Plan. EASO and/or the Union acquires irrevocably ownership of the results and of all intellectual property rights, such as copyright and any other intellectual or industrial property rights, on the materials produced specifically for EASO under the Plan and incorporated in such works, without prejudice, however, to the specific rules concerning pre-existing rights on pre-existing materials or other detailed rules contained in Framework Contracts concluded by EASO for purposes related to the implementation of this Plan. Selected deliverables developed under this Plan may be published.

5.1 Main National Partners

The Host Member State's main partners involved in this Plan are the following.

Organisation	Responsibilities
Asylum Service, Ministry of the Interior	<p>The Asylum Service is responsible for the first instance determination of asylum applications, including the examination of the Dublin III Regulation criteria. In case an application is rejected by the Asylum Service (even if subsidiary protection is granted), the applicant has the right to lodge an appeal against this decision, before the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC), which must examine both points of law and substance.</p> <p>The decisions are based on the Refugee Law 2000 (6(I)/2000) and its subsequent amendments.</p> <p>The Asylum Service is also responsible, by the Refugee Law, for the operation of reception and accommodation centres for asylum seekers, as well as for coordinating all other competent authorities on asylum issues.</p>
Aliens and Immigration Service to the Police, Ministry of the Interior	<p>The Aliens and Immigration Service to the Police (AISP) is primarily responsible for receiving and registering applications for international protection on behalf of the Asylum Service (including fingerprinting for EURODAC and Dublin purposes). The AISP is also responsible for implementing detention and deportation orders issued by the Director of the Civil Registry and Migration Department.</p>
Civil Registry and Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior	<p>Civil Registry and Migration Department is the result of the consolidation of the Migration, Registration and Election Services, which were part of the Ministry of Interior and it is competent for civil registry and migration related matters, such as issuance of residence permits to third country nationals who are holders of an</p>

Organisation	Responsibilities
	international protection status, handling applications for family reunification and issuing of entry and residence permits.
Social Welfare Services, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance	The Social Welfare Services (SWS) carry the responsibility for the provision of social welfare services to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. Where the applicant is an unaccompanied minor, the Director of the SWS acts as the guardian of the minor during the asylum procedure and takes all measures necessary under the Refugee Laws and the Regulations under it on the minor's behalf and on his best interest including in respect of the asylum procedure.
Ministry of Health	According to the Refugee Law, applicants for international protection are entitled to any pharmaceutical treatment free of charge at public hospitals and health centres, when the applicant does not have sufficient funds. Obligatory medical screening examinations are also taking place at public hospitals upon the submission of the application for international protection.
International Protection Administrative Court	The International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC) began operating as of 18 June 2019, and appeals were submitted before the court as of July 2019. IPAC is competent for examining appeals relating to provisions of the Refugee Law. Appeals have a suspensive effect, and both facts and points of law are examined. With a constitutional amendment, in September 2020 the time limit to appeal before the International Protection Administrative Court was reduced from 75 to 15 days.
Supreme Court	The Supreme Court of Cyprus is the highest court of the Republic. All appeal decisions taken by IPAC can be further appealed before the Supreme Court. At this level, they will not have a suspensive effect and only points of law are examined.

5.2 Composition of Asylum Support Teams

The Asylum Support Teams may consist of the following categories of resources:

- (a) Member States experts, i.e. experts made available through contributions to the Asylum Intervention Pool by EU Member States via national expert pools on the basis of defined profiles, in accordance with Article 15 of the EASO Founding Regulation;
- (b) Associate Countries experts, i.e. experts made available through contributions to the Asylum Intervention Pool by associate countries referred to in Article 49 of the EASO Founding Regulation, with which the European Union has an arrangement in place on the modalities of its participation in EASO's work. Currently such arrangements have been concluded with the Kingdom of Norway, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Swiss Confederation, and the Republic of Iceland;
- (c) Individual experts, i.e. experts made available through contributions to the Asylum Intervention Pool by EU Member States via national expert pools on the basis of defined profiles, in accordance with Article 15 of the EASO Founding Regulation, but whereby the Member State does not have an employment relationship with the individual expert;

(d) EASO staff members, i.e. statutory staff employed by the Agency (temporary and contract staff) subject to the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union;⁷

(e) Seconded National Experts (SNEs), i.e. experts employed by a national, regional or local public administration of an EU Member State or an associate country or by a public inter-governmental organisation and seconded to the Agency⁸ for the provision of support to its operational activities;

(f) Experts on contract, i.e. individuals providing services in relation to the Plan upon conclusion of a public contract between the Agency and the legal entity with which these individuals have an employment and/or contractual relationship, including temporary agency workers.

The implementation of the Plan shall be based on the common understanding that the provision of resources, other than EASO (statutory) staff, to be deployed for the purposes described above can under no circumstances lead *per se* to the establishment of an employment relationship between EASO and the members of the Asylum Support Teams, nor, in the case of embedded experts on contract, between these experts and the national authorities to which they may be assigned as per the embedded model described below. Throughout the duration of the deployment of the Asylum Support Teams in the activities undertaken in the context of the present Plan, the employer of the Asylum Support Teams members is and remains their employer.

5.3 The embedded model

The notion of the 'embedded model' represents an integrated approach to the implementation of the Plan, applicable exclusively with regard to experts on contract. In accordance with this model, experts on contract who are supplied by their employer (e.g. temporary-work agency) to be deployed as Asylum Support Team members, are embedded within the structure of the respective national authorities to ensure utmost efficiency, quality and sustainability of the anticipated results. In practice, those experts on contract are seconded by EASO to national authorities of the Host Member State and therefore perform their assignment(s) on the premises of the relevant national authorities (e.g. the National Asylum Service).

In such cases, a coordination mechanism shall be agreed by Parties to oversee both the overall implementation of the Plan at national level and its implementation at local level (i.e. in the respective location of the host Member State) or for the respective measure foreseen in the Plan, including with regard to the allocation and the administration of resources. For this purpose, detailed administrative and reporting workflows and procedures related to the provision and management of 'embedded' resources and reflecting respective roles and responsibilities shall be established and agreed upon in writing between EASO and the host Member State. In setting up the aforementioned coordination mechanism, the following rules must be complied with as a minimum:

(a) EASO shall duly advise the employers of the experts on contract of their envisaged secondment to the national authorities of the host Member State before such secondment takes place;

(b) The national authority shall clearly acknowledge that they endorse the obligations and responsibilities pertaining to them as hosting authority vis-à-vis the experts on contract seconded to them;

(c) The national authority is responsible for ensuring proper working conditions for the expert on contract, and is responsible for the health, safety and security during work. EASO may not be held

⁷ As laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68, OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p.1.

⁸ By virtue of Decision No 01 of the Management Board of EASO of 25 November 2010 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts (SNE) to the European Asylum Support Office (ref. number: EASO/MB/2010/03).

liable for any breach in the Health and Safety rules that might occur in the premises of the national authorities and/or under the supervision of the national authorities.

Secondment of temporary agency workers to the Cyprus national authorities

Temporary Agency Work (TAW) Law of 2012 (n. 174/2012) (hereafter, the “TAW Law”) transposed Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work.

In respect of the temporary agency workers seconded by EASO (as part of an Asylum Support Team) to the national authorities, embedded within the structure of the respective national authorities, the following responsibilities of the user undertaking, as laid down in the TAW Law, are transferred to the respective national authorities:

- The temporary agency workers shall be under the management and supervision of the national authorities in terms of daily tasks, organization of work, implementation of objectives, etc. for the attainment of agreed Plan deliverables;
- The national authorities shall comply with all the health and safety obligations set forth by the law for its own employees (Article 18(2) TAW Law), and are responsible for all the prevention and protection obligations relating to the specific working place where the working activity is performed. In this respect, the general legal framework with regard to health and safety in the workplace in Cyprus is provided by Law No. (89(I)/1996);
- In case of accidents at work or illness due to the national authorities’ breach of health and safety obligations, the national authorities will be considered liable.

5.4 Civil and criminal liability of members of the Asylum Support Team

Articles 21 and 22 of the EASO Founding Regulation will be applicable to all the members of the Asylum Support Team operating in the Host Member State.

Where Articles 21 and 22 of the EASO Founding Regulation shall apply directly to Member State experts, they shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the other categories of resources made available for the Asylum Support Team as referenced in Section 5.2. of the Plan.

5.5 Acceptance of Deliverables

EASO shall ensure quality control of agreed deliverables. Where applicable, steps shall be taken to document the Host Member State’s formal acceptance of deliverables.

5.6 Conditions for Deployment

General rules and conditions for Asylum Support Teams’ deployment as well as special instructions for Asylum Support Team members (including databases that they are authorised to consult and the equipment that they may carry in the Host Member State and practical information concerning location of deployment and related workflows) are published on the following platforms, which the experts/Asylum Support Team members are obliged to consult:

- EASO Asylum Intervention Pool’s National Contact Point platform (EASO AIP NCP);
- EASO Asylum Intervention Pool System (EAIPS);
- EASO country-specific online platforms. These platforms are made available to members of ASTs upon their deployment, allowing for preparation for deployment (in case of MS national experts) and daily implementation of their tasks;
- Relevant thematic pages of the EASO IDS concerning the asylum and reception system of the Host Member State, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background. The host Member State shall contribute to information concerning the

asylum and reception system of the Host Member State, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background.

The Host Member State and EASO will provide experts with information on the general state of play with regard to the procedure for international protection and reception system in the Host Member State and specific information about the state of play of the deliverables as necessary for the specific measures on a continuous basis. Specific Asylum Support Team deployment details are provided under each measure, where applicable.

5.7 Organisational and Operational Pre-Conditions

Every effort shall be made by the different parties to provide a suitable working place for the expert(s) participating in the activities to implement the Plan.

EASO will provide the technical equipment required for the work of the Asylum Support Teams and will reimburse costs incurred by persons participating in the activities, according to the applicable EASO rules.

The Host Member State shall grant appropriate access rights for the Asylum Support Team members to all relevant databases and commits to provide the Asylum Support Teams with the required information and data in the context of this Plan.

The Host Member State and EASO shall designate an overall Plan Coordinator, as well as a specific Measure Coordinator for each measure stipulated in the Plan.

As far as operationally feasible, and where relevant, the working files shall be made available by the Host Member State in English (unless otherwise agreed).

Minimum working and security conditions are considered as organisational pre-conditions.

The Host Member State shall provide EASO with information on the implementation of the Plan through timely input to the Early warning and Preparedness System and the delivery of tailored information on the execution of measures agreed in the Plan.

A joint Steering group will be established by EASO and CAS to oversee the implementation of the Measures within the Operating Plan. TORs will be agreed and adopted prior to implementation of this Operating Plan.

5.8 Communication

The Executive Director shall designate the Union Contact Point under Article 20 of the EASO Regulation, who acts as an interface between EASO, the Host Member State, and the Asylum Support Team members. The Union Contact Point provides assistance, on behalf of EASO, on all issues relating to the conditions of deployment of the Asylum Support Teams, monitors the correct implementation of the Plan, and reports to EASO on all aspects of Asylum Support Teams' deployment.

Further, at the end of their deployment, Asylum Support Team members will provide a Final Report to EASO using the template available on the EAIPS platform. Feedback from the deployed Asylum Support Team members shall be gathered on the completion of their deployment and prior to reimbursement of expenses.

During the implementation of this Plan, experts as well as other personnel deployed as part of Asylum Support Teams will be briefed regularly on current situational and operational developments to address challenges and identify improvements.

Particular attention shall be paid to the need to continuously develop, improve, and make available EASO support tools. Should such need be identified or changed during the plan implementation, it shall be communicated to EASO for further consideration.

The Host Member State and the Union Contact Point will manage the exchange of information concerning the tasks under the Plan.

EASO will maintain close cooperation and communication with the relevant stakeholders. EASO will also provide information to its partners (i.e. the European Commission, concerned EU Agencies, and international organisations) about the operational activities, as appropriate and in line with EASO transparency and communication policies. The timing and content of communication with the media shall be agreed upon between EASO and the Host Member State.

Where relevant the two parties will facilitate media coverage to ensure a wider dissemination and visibility of results.

5.9 Incident reporting

Participants in EASO activities who have reason to believe that a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred or is about to occur, are obliged to report the matter to the Executive Director of EASO and to the Host Member State Coordinator for the Plan via the appropriate channel: operations@easo.europa.eu.

Any incidents that may occur during the deployment of an expert in the Asylum Support Teams shall be reported through the same channel.

5.10 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

EASO is implementing a structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methodology allowing evidence-based measurement of progress, corrective action-taking and reflective reviews.

In terms of monitoring, EASO is making use of a number of tools developed in order to collect input from the implementation of the Plan and to guarantee feedback in real time.

Periodic or mid-term and final evaluations can be carried out in order to take stock of lessons learned and good practices. The evaluation(s) will be delivered within the European Commission's methodological guidelines for evaluations. They may be performed externally through engagement of evaluation specialist(s) or by EASO internally.

Monitoring and evaluation findings, as applicable, shall be shared with the Host Member State and communicated to the EASO governance structure (e.g. Management Board members and National Contact Points).

6.0 SECURITY

EASO should apply the security principles of the Commission's security rules. Commission Decision 443/2013 on the security in the Commission defines, that security shall be based on the principles of legality, transparency, proportionality, and accountability.

The safety and security of persons participating in EASO activities under the plan are under the overall legal framework of the host Member State and shall be provided by the respective authorities legally responsible and accountable for the public order and security on the territory of that Member State.

EASO will endeavor to support the identification of required security measures and the implementation of those that are under its remit, both legally and functionally, in close cooperation with the MS security responsible.

To that end:

- Standard security and safety requirements, identified herewith, should apply as a general rule;
- Specific security and safety requirements for the specific plan, shall be identified jointly by EASO and the host Member State security responsible;
- The safety and security measures shall be identified jointly on a basis of field assessment visits.

6.1 Standard security requirements

The standard security requirements are rather pertaining to elements to be present in the implementation of the plan, not to minimum security standards:

- Both the host Member state on one side and EASO on the other shall appoint a named security responsible, acting as a single point of contact for security matters for the operation, both at central and local level.
- The host Member State should ensure that the working conditions for the performance of the activities under the Plan are compliant with the national occupational health and safety norms and regulations;
- A pre-deployment briefing programme, drafted in close cooperation with the respective national authorities, focusing both on general security rules and awareness, as well as on specific security aspects for each deployment will be provided. With regards of the decentralised nature of deployments, using e-learning and other distance-based training techniques should be considered.
- Emergency (evacuation) plan. Certain operational environments require that staff shall have a clear guidance and training on how to evacuate quickly in case of emergencies. In a more general context, there could be a need to evacuate from the operational area as well. A security responsible should maintain updated information on the availability of evacuation plans and routes.
- Communication tools. As considered relevant by the EASO Security sector, EASO operational staff should have access to independent radio communication equipment. If possible to the equipment should be interoperable with the local law enforcement in charge of the security of the operation.
- Security of information-sensitive non-classified and classified information should be protected adequately. EASO security responsible should be involved in supporting the proper classification of relevant information.
- Security of IT and communication equipment. EASO IT equipment is adequately prepared to protect the information level it has been foreseen to process.
- Personal security behavior should be included in the pre-deployment training, led by operational teams, and performed for the experts during the first days of arrival to the operational area. This may refer to the EASO code of conduct as well.
- Reporting security incidents from the operational area to the EASO HQ is essential to ensure an overview of the overall security management is maintained.

6.2 Specific security requirements

Specific security and safety requirements for the implementation of the Plan shall be defined on the basis of a pre-deployment security assessment visit with the aim of identification of specific potential risks, identification of mitigation measures and communication of those measures to the MS and involved stakeholders, prior to the deployment.

6.3 Suspension of operational activities on security and safety grounds

EASO reserves the right to suspend operational activities on the basis of current risk assessment, while keeping informed the host Member State on the findings and identified mitigating measures required for resumption.

7.0 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

7.1 Cooperation with the European Commission

All activities under this Plan will be closely coordinated with the Host Member State and in close cooperation with the European Commission. When relevant, EASO will participate in coordination meetings throughout the duration of the Plan, involving national authorities, the Commission and other EU agencies active on the ground.

7.2 Cooperation with UNHCR

In accordance with Article 50 of the EASO Regulation, EASO aims at a coherent and complementary continuation of the fruitful cooperation with UNHCR. The Union Contact Point will liaise with the UNHCR office in the Host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the Host Member State under the current Plan.

7.3 Cooperation with IOM

In accordance with Article 52 of the EASO Regulation, in July 2019 EASO signed a working arrangement with IOM to establish a cooperation framework covering the relevant areas of common work and interest setting objectives and principles of such cooperation. Therefore, the Union Contact Point will liaise with the IOM office in the Host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the Host Member State under the current Plan and in accordance with the working arrangement.

8.0 MEASURES

Measure CY1: Improved quality of the asylum registration system and access to the asylum procedure in Cyprus - particularly in Pournara First Reception Centre, on irregular entries and in line with the jointly developed SOPs applicable to the centre.

Measure Outcome

The access to asylum procedure and the asylum registration system is compliant with CEAS and is implemented as per agreed SOPs, particularly in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre.

Measure Indicators and Targets

Indicator 1.1: Capacity of Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police to manage the asylum registration system and access to asylum system, mainly for irregular entries, is strengthened and gradual ownership of the process is achieved.

Target 1.1.1: 70% of all asylum registrations for irregular entries are processed by EASO in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre by the end of year

Target 1.1.2: A strategy providing for sustainable national ownership of the asylum registration process is developed by the end of 2021

Indicator 1.2: Applications for international protection are registered, according to SOPs focusing on vulnerability screening, Dublin questionnaire completion and interpretation services availability

Target 1.2.1: Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for asylum registration will be harmonised

Target 1.2.2: Asylum registrations are conducted according to harmonised SOPs in EASO supported locations	
Responsible Authorities	Ministry of interior, Asylum Service, Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police (AISP)
Preconditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workstations and equipment available in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre and in the AISP Stations - Agreement on the implementation of standardised workflows/SOPs - Regular data exchange to improve follow-up and monitoring - Agreement on capacity building activities in place to AISP personnel to ensure the institutional sustainability of access to asylum and registration, following CEAS standards.
Outputs	<p>Output 1. Asylum registrations with a focus on irregular entries conducted</p> <p>Output 2. Agreed SOPs and harmonised workflow implemented</p> <p>Output 3. Tools for early identification and referral of vulnerable applicants rolled out</p> <p>Output 4. Information provision sessions on the full asylum procedure are delivered timely in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre</p> <p>Output 5. Quality assurance tool for ensuring quality registration developed</p> <p>Output 6. Capacity building activities to the Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police provided</p> <p>Output 7. Remote working modalities tested and established</p>
Description of the actions	<p>As of 2021, the 'Pournara' First Reception Centre should be fully operational as the main hub for all irregular entries in the country in line with the already applicable SOPs. This will be the primary focus for EASO's work in access to asylum and asylum registration procedure. EASO in addition will maintain the necessary flexibility to support the national authorities where new or increased needs arise.</p> <p>EASO aims to strengthen its coordination and working relations with the Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police (AISP), ensuring that harmonised registration SOPs are agreed and implemented in a timely and coherent manner in 'Pournara' and throughout the AISP offices in the country.</p> <p>Additional efforts will be undertaken in order to replicate and strengthen best practices in relation to quality standards, flow management and information provision in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre and other locations where EASO will be operating. Increased focus will be devoted to vulnerability screening in terms of the access to asylum procedure phase in order to ensure a timely and adequate response to vulnerable applicants' needs.</p> <p>Moreover, in order to improve our working practices (i.e. remote interpretation) and our capacity to adapt to an unpredictable environment (i.e. COVID-19 pandemic), specific modalities to allow for remote working will be developed, tested and implemented.</p>

<p>Inputs</p>	<p><i>Deployments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 MS Expert for flow management for ‘Pournara’ First Reception Centre • 1 Asylum Registration Team Leader focusing on irregular entries • 9 Asylum Registration Assistants focusing on irregular entries • 2 Info Providers for ‘Pournara’ First Reception Centre • 3 Vulnerability Officers for ‘Pournara’ First Reception Centre • 1 Quality Officer (50%) • 1 Training Support Officer (25%) • 1 Security Support Officer for information provision • 13 Interpreters (depending on inflow nationalities needs) <p><i>Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training and workshops for new Registration Assistants • Training for new Registration Assistants on the EASO module on Registrations of applicants for international protection • Training for new Registration Assistants and Vulnerability officers on Communication and Provision of Information to asylum seekers • Training for Registration Assistants on the identification of potential Dublin cases • Training for interpreters on the EASO Interpreting in the Asylum Context • EASO may offer additional training on the basis of needs and availability of resources <p><i>Equipment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment, material and operational support, including works, services, communication/promotional materials, infrastructure items, IT equipment, office supplies and printing provided where required for the joint EASO and national authorities’ activities.
<p>Measure CY2: Cyprus strengthens the implementation of CEAS reception conditions within the framework of an integrated reception model</p> <p>Measure Outcome: Reception conditions are in line with CEAS standards and form an integral part of a comprehensive national reception strategy in line with the jointly agreed action plan on migration management</p> <p>Measure Indicators and Targets</p> <p>Indicator 2.1: In close consultation with the Commission, an integrated comprehensive national reception strategy is developed and agreed with CAS including a strategy for harmonised data collection</p> <p>Target 2.1: A national reception strategy is adopted by authorities by end of Q2 2021</p> <p>Indicator 2.2: Kofinou best practices (i.e. social work, info provision, reception support) are consolidated and implemented across the reception system, where relevant.</p> <p>Target 2.2: EASO best practices have reached 100% of targeted residents (assigned to EASO) of Kofinou and in other reception locations where relevant.</p>	
<p>Responsible authorities</p>	<p>Ministry of Interior (Asylum Service); Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance; Ministry of Health</p>

Preconditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety and security of working environment is provided - Caring and medical personnel available for residents - Regular and comprehensive data exchange on reception - Regular coordination meetings at a central and field level
Outputs	<p>Output 1. Enhanced capacity for structure, establishment and management of a national reception strategy and system</p> <p>Output 2. Establishment of a central mechanism (and related information services) for access to reception services and facilities</p> <p>Output 3. Structured and integrated data collection and reporting system on reception</p> <p>Output 4. Effective central and local coordination and referral mechanisms with stakeholders developed and in place</p> <p>Output 5. Effective monitoring of reception conditions based on European Standards (EASO monitoring tool)</p> <p>Output 6. Consolidated and improved social work based and reception support activities with increased focus on quality and capacity building</p> <p>Output 7. Systemised information provision on access to the asylum system and reception services provided across the reception centres</p> <p>Output 8. Prioritisation of needs of vulnerable applicants across the reception system</p> <p>Output 9. Established a fully functional Safe Zone where vulnerable persons could be accommodated during the first registration procedure in the 'Pournara' First Reception Centre</p>
Description of the actions	<p>Kofinou Reception Centre has been supported by an EASO team of social workers, reception support officers (including MS Experts), interpreters, and a reception coordination officer since early 2019.</p> <p>Throughout 2020, this engagement has led to significant improvements on the quality of the reception conditions at the centre, especially on individual case management, information provision mainly targeting new arrivals, vulnerability identification and referral and, overall, on the reception support provided.</p> <p>Based on existing good practices, in 2021 consolidation and expansion of the current reception support in 'Kofinou' Reception Centre will be prioritised along with the development of an overarching and integrated comprehensive National Reception strategy, in close consultation with CAS, the concerned ministry and the Commission, engaging all actors involved in reception.</p> <p>The methodology adopted in Kofinou, will be applied also at the Safe Zone for vulnerable groups in 'Pournara' First Reception Centre which should also be fully operational as of Q1 of 2021.</p> <p>Additionally, further efforts will be devoted to the strengthening and implementation of the overall reception coordination mechanisms, at and between central and local level, among different stakeholders engaged in reception activities, with the aim of consolidating and harmonising workflows and establishing SOPs in the reception system.</p>

Inputs	<p><i>Deployment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 MS Experts/Consultants for CAS central level for reception strategy • 2 MS Experts • 2 Team Leaders • 6 Social Workers • 6 Reception Support Officers • 1 Quality Officer (50%) • 1 Training Support Officer (100%) • 1 Operations Assistant • 1 IT Support Officer • 2 Security Support Officers • 10 Interpreters <p><i>Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training for new staff • Training (Reception module, Communication and provision of information to asylum seekers, Reception of Vulnerable Persons) for dedicated staff, according to training needs • Training for interpreters in the EASO module on Interpreting in the Asylum Context • EASO may offer additional training on the basis of needs and availability of resources <p><i>Equipment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment, material and operational support, including works, services, communication/promotional materials, infrastructure items, IT equipment, office supplies and printing provided where required for the joint EASO and national authorities' activities
<p>Measure CY3: Support the asylum system to efficiently and effectively process first instance applications</p> <p>Measure Outcome: Efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the first instance asylum processing is improved to reduce the backlog</p> <p>Measure Indicators and Targets</p> <p>Indicator 3.1: Reduction of first instance backlog</p> <p>Target 3.1: 5,000 recommendations drafted</p> <p>Indicator 3.2: Established first line and second line harmonised quality support in first instance</p> <p>Target 3.2: Both lines are established by end of the year and embedded in CAS</p> <p>Indicator 3.3: First instance files sent by CAS to EASO are digitalised</p> <p>Target 3.3: 30% by Q2 2021/100% by Q4 2021</p>	
Responsible Authorities	Ministry of Interior, Asylum Service
Preconditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absorption capacity within CAS for the increased support for backlog reduction - Regular and comprehensive data exchange - Regular and structured file management/flow on agreed timelines and nationalities - Regular bi-weekly coordination meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of E-oasis as digitalised system connecting relevant national stakeholders
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Output 1. Improved individual productivity of conducted interviews, drafted recommendations and decisions</p> <p>Output 2. Revised workflows and development of SOPs with a focus on remote workflows</p> <p>Output 3. Operationalisation of the Asylum Examination Centre adjacent to ‘Pournara’ First Reception Centre</p> <p>Output 4. Strengthening the COI function at CAS</p> <p>Output 5. Assessment of needs and support to a CAS Dublin team</p> <p>Output 6. Integration of a vulnerability team in CAS and harmonisation of a workflow for the prioritisation of vulnerable applicants</p> <p>Output 7. Strengthened quality team and related quality activities in CAS</p> <p>Output 8. Improved file management, with a focus on digitalisation and support to a functional archiving system</p>
<p>Description of the actions</p>	<p>At the end of October 2020, the number of pending applications at all instances in Cyprus stood at 19,580 the vast majority of which were pending at first instance. The median duration of the procedure from lodging to interview ranges between one month and two years - regardless of applicants’ vulnerability status. During the course of 2020, EASO individual caseworker productivity in interviews and recommendations submitted increased by 440% and 270% respectively.</p> <p>In 2021, EASO aims at sustaining the achieved productivity levels and reducing the backlog of pending applications. This will be achieved by improving efficiency, effectiveness, and quality throughout the asylum process. In this regard, the following actions are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allocate sufficient human resources to build capacity in both EASO and CAS; b) Revise workflows and develop SOPs, as well as strengthen CAS quality unit, to increase productivity of interviews and recommendations, focussing on remote working modalities; c) Supporting the operationalisation of the Asylum Examination Centre adjacent to the ‘Pournara’ First Reception Centre; e) support the shift to digital asylum processing and filing. <p>In 2021, it is planned to increase EASO working space capacity thanks to the new EASO office in Nicosia, which will combine an operational office with 25 interview rooms for the processing of asylum interviews, and a Country Office for coordination and support of the operations. EASO caseworkers will increase from 26 to up to 60 by mid-2021, provided that the work they deliver can be absorbed by CAS in terms of the volume of asylum decisions that are required. This temporary increase of caseworkers is a necessary pre-condition in order to reduce the existing backlog at first instance. It should ideally be matched by an increase of the caseworkers in CAS with a long-term perspective of a sustainable national capacity to timely process asylum applications.</p>

	<p>Finally, EASO plans to further build capacity in the Asylum Service by embedding seconded personnel and expertise in quality, vulnerability, Dublin and COI. Additionally, EASO will fully support the digitalisation of the asylum system, file and archive management.</p> <p>EASO and CAS will also engage in discussions for setting up a temporary archive to facilitate the digitalisation of files.</p>
<p>Inputs</p>	<p><i>Deployment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 MS Experts (Caseworkers) • 4 MS Experts (Team Leaders) • 1 MS Expert (COI Researcher) • 1 MS Expert (Dublin) • 4 Project Support Assistants • 60 Caseworkers (30 by February, 60 by May) • 12 Team Leaders by May • 3 Team Leaders to be seconded to CAS • 2 Dublin Officers • 4 Quality Officers, of which 2 seconded to CAS • 2 COI Researchers • 4 Vulnerability Officers, of which 2 seconded to CAS • 2 Vulnerability Assistants seconded to CAS • 2 Training Support Officers (150%) • 2 Flow Managers by May • 2 IT Support Officers, of which 1 seconded to CAS • Up to 15 Data Entry Assistants • 1 Legal Officer, seconded to CAS • 5 Security Support Officers • 60 Interpreters (20 in January, 40 by April, 60 by July) <p><i>Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction training and workshops for caseworkers Training caseworkers (core modules) for new EASO and CAS Caseworkers • Training (Interviewing Vulnerable Persons, Exclusion, Managers etc.) for dedicated staff, according to training needs • Coaching sessions for experiences caseworkers and team leaders • Participation of CAS personnel in train-the-trainer sessions, in order to build the national pool of trainers • Thematic sessions on vulnerability • Training for interpreters on the EASO module on Interpreting in the Asylum Context EASO may offer additional training on the basis of needs and availability of resources <p><i>Equipment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment, material and operational support, including works, services, communication/promotional materials, infrastructure items, IT equipment, office supplies and printing provided where required for the joint EASO and national authorities' activities

Measure CY4: Increased capacity for the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC)

Measure Outcome: The International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC) is strengthened in its functioning capacity and backlog is reduced

Measure Indicators and Targets

Indicator 4.1: Increased number of files prepared for second instance decisions

Target 4.1: 900 files prepared

Indicator 4.2: Improved functioning of the IPAC

Target 4.2: Clear SOPs and workflows are in place

Responsible Authorities

The International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC), Supreme Court

Preconditions

- Workstations and IT equipment for seconded personnel available at IPAC
- Implementation of the working instructions
- Systematic data sharing is agreed
- Additional judges recruited prior to deployment of personnel

Outputs

- Output 1. The IPAC is sufficiently built in capacity to ensure effective backlog management and reduction
- Output 2. IPAC case management system is enhanced
- Output 3. A systematic data collection mechanism is established
- Output 4. The technical capacity of the IPAC is strengthened through peer-to-peer and training activity
- Output 5. Improved file management, with a focus on digitalisation

Description of the actions

EASO's actions to IPAC will mainly focus on reinforcing its structure with Asylum Support Teams deployed to support the work of the judges and strengthen its capacities to effectively and efficiently process second instance cases with the aim of reducing the existing backlog. Along with national efforts to increase the Court's effectiveness (from 3 to 10 Judges in 2021, suitable working spaces), EASO will increase its support in legal research, clerical aid to judges and data collection and analysis.

More specifically, the secondment of research officers intends to provide technical support to the reduction of backlog by the Court, and, hence, to improve the timeframe in which decisions are taken. It also intends to improve quality of file preparation as well as consistency of the initial analysis of the appeals ensured through a dedicated support on COI research, in full respect of the principle of judicial independence.

In addition to that, it is necessary to invest in enhancing the case management system and procedural rules with the peer-to-peer support of international experts with a legal and case management background.

In relation to capacity building, research officers, judicial and administrative staff of the Court will benefit from training organised with the support of the EASO Training and Professional Development Centre and the EASO Asylum Knowledge Centre.

	<p>The increase of EASO support comes at a crucial time for the functioning of the Court considering the amendments of the Refugee Law, the slight but progressive increase of the backlog (1,134 cases in August 2020, from approximately 750 in December 2019) and the closure of the Refugee Reviewing Authority and the lack of clarity regarding the reallocation of its pending cases.</p>
<p>Inputs</p>	<p><i>Deployment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 MS Expert (EASO Courts and Tribunal Network for peer-to-peer support) • 1 MS Expert/Consultant (case management) • 1 Team Leader for Research Officers • 10 Research Officers • Additional 5 Research Officers by mid-year • 1 Statistics Assistant • 5 Assistants (e.g. registrar, clerk) • 1 Training Support Officer (25%) <p><i>Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for new seconded Research Officers • Thematic judicial trainings, including COI country briefings, for the IPAC staff and the Research Officers