



## Input by civil society to the EASO Annual Report 2016

EASO has started production of the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2016, in line with Article 12 (1) of the EASO Regulation. The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of important asylum-related developments at EU and national level, and the functioning of all key aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The report will be finalised by collecting information from EU+ countries, civil-society stakeholders, UNHCR and other relevant sources on main developments in asylum policies and practices of EU+ countries in 2016.

Previous reports can be consulted on EASO's website: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/annual-report>

We would kindly like to ask you to provide your **observations**, preferably bullet points to facilitate further processing of your input - **on developments in asylum law or practice in 2016 (and early 2017) in the areas listed below, reflecting the usual structure of the report**. Observations may concern national practices of specific EU+ countries or the EU as a whole.

The EASO Annual Report will not describe the national asylum systems in detail but present key developments in 2016, including **improvements and new/remaining concerns**. The topics listed below reflect the structure of chapter 4 of the EASO report on the 'Functioning of the CEAS'. We kindly ask all contributors to provide brief summaries only on those topics/issues that have seen important **improvements/deterioration as well as new concerns or where previous relevant concerns remained in 2016**.

Please bear in mind that the EASO Annual Report is a public document. Therefore, your input should be, whenever possible, supported with references to written sources to ensure transparency. That can be done by providing links to any documents such as position papers, important press releases, studies, comments, input to the other reports, public statements to government programs, etc.

While EASO endeavours to cover all relevant developments and strives to include as many references as possible, the final content of the EASO Annual Report remains bound by its terms of reference and volume. Therefore, while all contributions are gratefully received and recognised, EASO may edit contributions for length and clarity and use the submissions to best serve the objective of the Annual Report: to improve the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the CEAS.

Please provide your input by filling in this document (with attachments if required) and emailing it to [oids@easo.europa.eu](mailto:oids@easo.europa.eu) **AND** [consultative-forum@easo.europa.eu](mailto:consultative-forum@easo.europa.eu) **by 20 February 2017**.

Within the areas, please highlight the following **type of information**:

- NEW positive developments; improvements and NEW or remaining matters of concern;
- Changes in policies or practices; transposition of legislation; institutional changes; relevant national jurisprudence.
- Please use the topics listed below as a guide to providing input for each section. **DONOT** provide information unrelated to relevant new developments.

Name of the contributing stakeholder: ACTION AID HELLAS

Contact details:

### 1) Access to territory and procedure

### 2) Access to information and legal assistance

Taking into consideration our communication with approximately .....asylum seekers interviewed for our research 'Separated: The challenges of relocation and family reunification for refugees arriving in Greece' we found that most asylum seekers were not informed at all or were misinformed about the procedures of applying for asylum, family unification or relocation. They kept repeating to us a number of questions concerning the procedures, they were not informed about the different options they had and the relevant time framework.

### 3) Providing interpretation services

### 4) Dublin procedure

The procedure of family unification is rather slow and the number of employees working on the Dublin Unit of the Asylum Services is not sufficient. Applicants have to wait for long periods that can last even more than eight months in order to be reunited with family members in other EU member states.

Also, the Dublin III family unification has a very strict definition of family and as a result family members with links of dependence have to live separately in different member states. (please see the link of our report and recommendations <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/separated-challenges-relocation-and-family-reunification-refugees-arriving-greece>)

About the Dublin III procedures of return to the first member state of entrance in the EU we think that it is positive that asylum seekers from other member states are not returned to Greece taking into consideration the current asylum system which has to serve a significantly bigger amount of people than those that was initially designed for. The case MSS v. Greece and Belgium (ECHR) should continue to have an effect and Dublin returns to Greece should not take place. The Dublin mechanism should be revised via a new fair distribution mechanism of asylum applicants to the EU member states.

### 5) Specific procedures (border, accelerated, admissibility)

### 6) Reception of applicant for international protection:

The current situation of reception conditions mostly in the hotspots in the islands and the mainland demands immediate action on behalf of all the relevant actors. The accommodation services are completely inefficient and could result to strong physical damage for the asylum seekers living in the sites and more particularly the most vulnerable.

### 7) Detention:

The detention conditions are inhuman taking into consideration that numbers of people are detained in small cells with lack of hygiene and the long periods of detention that can last even up to 18 months.

### 8) Procedures at First instance:

The access in the first instance procedures is problematic. Procedures are changing in a weekly basis (ex. Procedure for those above 25% percent recognition in the islands). The procedure of setting appointments via skype has caused many problems due to the few hours that the system is open and the number of people trying to get through. There is need for sufficient channels of access to the asylum procedures particularly for the most vulnerable.

**9) Procedures at Second Instance:**

Only 13 committees were set up, seven of them have just started functioning. There is need for setting up more committees in order to avoid further backlog of cases and having a normal flow of issuing decisions.

**10) Availability and use of Country of Origin Information:**

**11) Vulnerable applicants:**

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**12) Content of protection – situation of beneficiaries of protection**

**13) Return of former applicants for international protection**

**14) Resettlement and relocation**

The relocation scheme in the EU has not taken into consideration the human needs and the reality of the people it is addressing to and this is one of the reasons of its failure. The notion of family is very strictly given and as a result siblings, family members with connection ties have to be sent to different member states. As a result many prefer not to be relocated so as not to be separated. Also, the relocation scheme should be open for more nationalities such as Iraqis. While, all member states should be obliged to participate and accept in the territories relocated asylum seekers.

**15) Other relevant developments**