



Action Plan following the 6th EASO Consultative Forum

1. Background/context: EASO Cooperation with civil society

In line with Art. 51 of the EASO Founding Regulation, EASO is committed to maintain a close dialogue with civil society organisations (CSOs) with a view to enhancing mutually beneficial synergies. Many different organisations operate in the field of asylum and their respective expertise, experience and insight is of much added-value to the Agency's work. The Consultative Forum was set up as a mechanism to enhance the exchange and sharing of knowledge between EASO and relevant stakeholders from civil society.

EASO recalls that cooperation with CSOs takes place on a regular basis throughout the year in various different forms, e.g. multilateral and bilateral information exchanges, thematic (information) meetings¹, open consultations on key EASO reports, targeted consultations with specialised CSOs through their participation in EASO expert meetings, seminars, workshops, involvement in the development of EASO training material, EASO Practical Tools etc. A plenary meeting is organised on an annual basis.

2. The 6th plenary EASO Consultative Forum Meeting

In 2016, the plenary meeting was held on 28th and 29th November in Athens, attracting a record number of over 200 participants.²

The plenary meeting served multiple aims. By bringing together many different types of stakeholders active in the field of asylum, it served to identify and strengthen synergies as well as to promote multi and cross-dimensional information flows (from institutional level to civil society and vice-versa as well as across civil society representatives). Moreover, the Consultative Forum also specifically aimed to:

- Take stock of relevant developments in the field of asylum in 2016 (e.g. relocation/hotspots, legislative proposals tabled by the Commission for the reform of the CEAS);
- Identify constraints and challenges in the development of the CEAS;
- Seek solutions to constraints and challenges, in particular by providing relevant suggestions for action by EASO within the remit of its mandate.

3. Aims and rationale of the Follow-up Action Plan to the 6th Consultative Forum Meeting

This Action Plan answers to the latter aim and sets out specific actions to be implemented by EASO as identified by participants during the Forum. The codification of these actions in this plan reinforces EASO's commitment to implement these, ensuring appropriate follow-up to the Consultative Forum with a view to increase transparency and accountability.

4. Development and selection of action points

The specific actions stipulated in this plan were identified on the basis of all contributions made during the Forum, in particular on the results of:

¹ For example, in 2016, thematic meetings on relocation and the hotspots were organised in Sicily (March 2016) and Lisbon (September 2016). See for more information: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/2016-consultative-forum>

² See for more information: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/2016-consultative-forum>



- The participatory workshops (agenda point 3 of the Consultative Forum);
- The open agenda session (agenda point 4 of the Consultative Forum during which participants discussed topics related to the CEAS, which they prioritized).

Main topics discussed during these sessions included, a.o., relocation and the hotspot approach, intra-EU solidarity, the provision of information, analysis and communication, training, country of origin information (COI), vulnerable persons (including gender, cultural awareness, mental health needs etc.), the external dimension, EASO's expanded role and competencies under the EUAA, including a possible revised structure for the Consultative Forum etc. Such topics were discussed from all different angles with suggestions for action made to different actors (e.g. the Commission, EASO, Member States including local authorities).

A complete overview of suggestions for action is included in the Annex to the 6th EASO Consultative Forum report. As explained, however, by EASO's Executive Director during the Forum, "not all input, proposals and ideas can be translated into action by EASO; only those that are within EASO's mandate and which are feasible within the strict boundaries of EASO's rules and procedures". The selection of actions involved a careful review of whether i) EASO was designated as actor to implement the action; ii) EASO was best placed to implement the action; iii) the action falls within EASO's mandate (in line with the EASO Regulation, its mission, competencies and tasks); iv) the action would have sufficient impact on EASO's overall objectives; v) the action was considered feasible to implement in practice (in terms of human/financial resources); vi) there was internal commitment for its implementation.

Following internal consultation, EASO has prioritised several concrete, targeted and feasible actions.

5. Action points

The table on the next page provides an overview of the actions to be implemented. The table is structured according to overall objectives of the actions, theme/type of EASO activities and indicates also the specific department/unit responsible within EASO for the implementation of the action. The last column lists indicators that can be used for the monitoring of the implementation of the actions. A monitoring report on the implementation of the Action is scheduled for November 2017.

Overall, the actions selected address the following main objectives:

- Reinforce CSOs engagement across various different EASO activities (e.g. COI, information & analysis, operations, external dimension, training, practical tools, courts and tribunals, vulnerable groups etc.);
- Strengthen EASO's feedback system to CSOs;
- Improve communication on migration by better utilising different methods;
- Strengthen Member States' capacity to attend to the needs of vulnerable persons by better promoting EASO tools and practical guidelines;
- Further strengthen the quality of asylum processes by stepping up training on intercultural communication



Table 1: Selection of actions to be implemented by EASO as identified by participants during the 6th EASO Consultative Forum

Overall objective	Theme/type of activity	Action	Department/unit responsible within EASO	Indicators
1.Reinforce CSOs engagement in various different EASO activities (e.g. COI, operations, external dimension, training, practical tools, etc.)	COI	Continue to invite and further strengthen the participation of specialised CSOs (academia, research institutes, selected international organisations and NGOs) as external experts in relevant COI meetings	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	Evidence of CSOs' systematic engagement in various EASO activities as listed
		Continue to invite CSOs as participants to COI-related meetings and conferences	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	
		Organise, on a regular basis, informal consultations with CSOs specialised in the field of COI research	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	
		Consider, when deemed necessary, outsourcing COI research (drafting, quality reviewing, expert contribution) to specialised CSOs	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	
		Consult, as appropriate, specialised CSOs (i.e. those with specific expertise in COI) when updating the EASO COI methodology	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	
	Information & Analysis	Ensure an effective consultation process with CSOs on the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum	DOP, Info & Analysis Unit	
	Operations	Encourage a more effective two-way dialogue with CSOs on EASO operations, (e.g. via local meetings – EASO officials to participate more frequently in these)	DOP, Operations Unit	
	External dimension	Involvement of CSOs in capacity building activities relevant to their mandates in priority third countries (mainly North Africa and Western Balkans plus 'compacts' countries) as a tool to achieve improved asylum systems, compatible with EU standards.	DOP, Operations Unit	
		Consult CSOs during needs assessments/field missions in order to have a broader picture of the situation of asylum and international protection in third countries (to enhance EASO's impact in supporting the development of EU compatible asylum systems)	DOP, Operations Unit	



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	Training	Continue to regularly consult specialised CSOs in the development/upgrade/update of training modules and other training material	DAS, Training Unit	
		Facilitate the participation of CSOs in EASO trainings by allowing CSOs to participate in training sessions, if sufficient places are available and for those modules relevant to civil society actors (e.g. gender)	DAS, Training Unit	
	Asylum processes	Continue to regularly consult specialised CSOs in the development of EASO Practical Tools	DAS, Asylum Support Unit	
	Courts and tribunals	Continue to regularly consult specialised CSOs in the development of EASO Professional Development material	DAS, Asylum Support Unit	
	Vulnerable groups	Continue to involve specialised CSOs in the development/upgrade/update of training material on vulnerable groups and practical tools whilst also facilitating their participation in relevant conferences, workshops, and meetings organised by EASO	DAS, Asylum Support Unit	
	Consultative Forum	Organise external consultations with a sample of CSOs (interviews and possibly a validation workshop) for the development of a proposal for the establishment of the new EASO Consultative Forum as called for under the EUAA.	Executive Office, Executive Support	
2.Strengthen the feedback system to CSOs	All	Ensure that appropriate feedback is given to CSOs as to how input from CSOs on different EASO activities was taken up	All	Evidence of systematic feedback provided on CSOs input across different EASO activities
3.Improve communication on	Communications	Increase the use of social media as a channel to directly communicate to a wide group of asylum seekers/refugees	Executive Office, Communication	Evidence of different methods of



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migration by better utilising different methods			and Stakeholders Unit	communication (social media, involvement of local diaspora) being utilised in practice
		Explore possibilities to involve the local diaspora in the dissemination of information, to enhance the credibility of information	Executive Office, Communication and Stakeholders Unit (CSU)	
4. Strengthen Member States' capacity to attend to the needs of vulnerable persons by better promoting relevant EASO tools and guides	Vulnerable groups	Further promote the use of EASO practical guides and tools for vulnerable persons (e.g. IPSN, practical guide on age assessment, family tracing, best interests assessment for the purpose of relocation, etc.)	DAS, Asylum Support Unit and CSU	Extent to which the promotion of EASO tools and practical guides for vulnerable persons was realised
5. Strengthen the quality of asylum processes by stepping up training on intercultural communication	Training	Draw attention to and further elaborate on intercultural awareness skills during induction trainings to EASO deployed staff	DAS, Training Unit	Extent to which intercultural awareness skills were included in training material/modules and extent to which such trainings were implemented
		Include intercultural awareness skills in training material/module for interpreters and implement dedicated training sessions to interpreters which include such skills	DAS, Training Unit	