



European Asylum Support Office

# EASO annual activity report 2012

## Part II ANNEXES

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European Asylum Support Office

# EASO annual activity report 2012

## Part II ANNEXES

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## 5. Annexes

### 5.1. EASO progress report 2012

ACTIVITY	QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2	QUARTER 3	QUARTER 4
<b>(1) PERMANENT SUPPORT</b> (a) EASO training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EASO training strategy</li> <li>– EASO training sessions</li> <li>– EASO training modules updated</li> <li>– other</li> </ul> (b) Quality processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Quality expert meetings</li> <li>– Quality review of materials delivered by EASO asylum support teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 training sessions in Luxembourg</li> <li>– 2 train-the-trainer sessions in Malta</li> <li>– 2 training modules updated</li> <li>– E-platform evaluation launched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EASO training strategy adopted</li> <li>– 6 train-the-trainer sessions in Malta</li> <li>– Training NCP meeting</li> <li>– Terms of reference for EASO training NCPs adopted</li> <li>– 3 training modules updated</li> <li>– Development of EASO training cockpit launched</li> <li>– Transfer of EAC servers to EASO initiated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1 train-the-trainer session in Greece</li> <li>– 2 train-the-trainer sessions in Malta</li> <li>– 3 training modules updated</li> <li>– E-platform evaluation finalised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EASO training plan 2013 and EASO updating plan for training modules 2013</li> <li>– 4 train-the-trainer sessions</li> <li>– EASO annual didactic seminar</li> <li>– Training NCP meeting</li> <li>– Updated version of terms of reference for EASO training and expert pool</li> <li>– Annual meeting with training reference group</li> <li>– 2 training modules updated</li> <li>– Initiation of CEAS module development</li> <li>– Transfer of EAC servers to EASO</li> <li>– Launch of a curriculum for members of courts and tribunals</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of EASO quality assessment methodology initiated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advisory meetings on EASO quality activities</li> <li>– Development of EASO quality assessment methodology</li> <li>– Collecting data on projects and initiatives related to quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of EASO research tool for the quality assessment (quality matrix)</li> <li>– Launch of EASO's quality assessment approach and tools with Member States</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY	QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2	QUARTER 3	QUARTER 4
(c) Country of Origin Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– COI task force meeting (Jan.)</li> <li>– 4 meetings of COI working party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Publication of EASO COI report on Afghanistan part 1 (June)</li> <li>– Publication of COI report on methodology (June)</li> <li>– COI task force meeting (May)</li> <li>– 3 meetings of COI working party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– COI task force meeting (Sep.)</li> <li>– 3 meetings COI working party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Publication of EASO COI report on Afghanistan part 2 (Nov.)</li> <li>– 2 meetings of COI portal working party</li> <li>– 1 meeting of COI knowledge management working party</li> </ul>
(d) EASO list of available languages (LAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Management Board decision on the framework for EASO 'list of interpreters'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– FPI <sup>(1)</sup> NCP meeting (May)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishment of EASO LAL</li> </ul>	
(e) EASO practical cooperation meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Plenary Eurasil hand-over meeting (Mar.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Syria workshop (June)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Syria workshop (Aug.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conference on 'Afghanistan: COI and beyond' (Oct.)</li> </ul>
(f) Unaccompanied minors (UM) expert meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Launch of EASO questionnaire and consultation with civil society on age assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EASO contribution to the Commission mid-term report action plan on UM (2010–14)</li> <li>– EASO introductory session on UM and age assessment (May)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 EASO expert meetings on UM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 EASO expert meetings on UM</li> <li>– Drafting of the EASO age assessment handbook commences</li> <li>– EASO and Commission development of questionnaire and work on family tracing begins</li> </ul>
<b>(2) SPECIAL SUPPORT</b>				
(a) Tailor-made support and capacity building				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Special support for Sweden launched</li> <li>– Special support request from Italy</li> </ul>
(b) Relocation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fact-finding and presentation of report on relocation projects from Malta (June)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Informal joint EASO– Commission meeting with the relevant Maltese authorities on outlook for Eurema II</li> <li>– Presentation of the report in JHA Council (Oct.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Presentation of the report at the conference of the European Migration Network in France (Nov.)</li> </ul>

<sup>(1)</sup> Focal points for interpretation matters.



<b>(3) EMERGENCY SUPPORT</b>				
(a) AIP: – Evaluation AIP – AIP meeting		– AIP NCP meeting – Evaluation and proposals to amend AIP profiles ('AIP 20') (May) – Management Board decision on 'AIP 20' (June)	– Request for nominations for 'AIP 20' (Jul.)	– Setting up 'AIP 20' (Oct.–Nov.)
(b) Implementing operating plan for Greece	– 10 Asylum Support Teams active in Greece	– 15 Asylum Support Teams active in Greece	– 10 Asylum Support Teams active in Greece	– 14 Asylum Support Teams active in Greece
<b>(4) INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS SUPPORT</b>				
(a) EASO annual report		– EASO annual report and activity report published (June)	– Civil society invited to send comments on annual report (Jul.)	– Break-out sessions in Consultative Forum on annual report
(b) Early warning and Preparedness System: – presentations on analysis – trends, regional outlook	– Presentations in EASO Management Board	– Presentations in EASO Management Board, JHA Council, IGC Nurnberg, GDISC	– Presentations in EASO Management Board and informal JHA Council, Frontex	– Presentations in EASO Management Board, quarterly report – Western Balkans and Syria ad hoc reports – Joint paper on an EPS with the Commission as per Article 33 of the Dublin regulation
<b>(5) THIRD COUNTRY SUPPORT</b>				
(a) Resettlement			– EASO resettlement seminar (Oct.)	
(b) External dimension	– Participation in EU–Tunisia mobility partnership meeting in Tunis (Mar.)		– Participation in the Budapest process	– Participation in the Budapest process – Participation in the launch of European Commission–Jordan negotiations for mobility partnership (Dec.)

<b>(6) EASO ORGANISATION</b>							
(a) Recruit up to 61 staff in EASO	– 15 staff recruited	– 6 staff recruited	– 7 staff recruited	– 7 staff recruited	– 7 staff recruited	– 7 staff recruited	– 7 staff recruited
(b) Implement EASO budget 2012				– Financial independence			– Budget implementation Commitment appropriations: 78 % – Payment appropriations: 67 %
(c) EASO Management Board	– EASO Management Board (Feb.)	– EASO Management Board (June)	– EASO Management Board (Sep.)	– EASO Management Board (Sep.)	– EASO Management Board (Nov.)		
(d) Move to the EASO definitive premises in Valletta Harbour		– Finalisation of grant extension for completing the works	– Move to definitive premises (Sep.)	– Move to definitive premises (Sep.)	– Finalisation works in definitive premises (ground floor) (Dec.– Jan. 2013)		
(e) EASO communication strategy		– EASO communication strategy (June)					
(f) EASO website/web portal			– Launch of temporary EASO website (Sep.)	– Launch of temporary EASO website (Sep.)	– Launch of definitive EASO website		
(g) Establish strong cooperation relations with partners and stakeholders of EASO	– EASO hearing at European Parliament (LIBE Committee) (Jan.) – EASO joins the heads of JHA agencies' network and the JHA agencies' contact group (Feb.) – Advisory Committee of the Frontex Consultative Forum (Mar.)	– Advisory Committee of the Frontex Consultative Forum (Apr.) – 1st round of negotiations with the associated countries (May) – JHA agencies' contact group meeting (June) – Participation in EMN national contact points meeting (June)	– Senior management consultations between UNHCR and EASO (Jul.) – Working arrangement between Frontex and EASO signed (Sep.) – 2nd round of negotiations with the associated countries (Sep.) – EASO joins the Interagency Legal Network (IALN) (Sep.)	– Senior management consultations between UNHCR and EASO (Jul.) – Working arrangement between Frontex and EASO signed (Sep.) – 2nd round of negotiations with the associated countries (Sep.) – EASO joins the Interagency Legal Network (IALN) (Sep.)	– 1st Frontex Consultative Forum meeting (Oct.) – JHA agencies' contact group meeting (Oct.) – 3rd round of negotiations with the associated countries (Oct.) – EASO hearing at European Parliament (LIBE Committee) (Nov.) – Start of negotiations on a working arrangement between EASO and UNHCR and between EASO and FRA – JHA agencies' meeting (Dec.)		
(h) Consultative Forum Consultative Forum consultations with civil society	– Consultations on inter alia UM, training – Meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum advisory group (Mar.)	– Consultations on inter alia training, EASO working programme	– Consultations on inter alia quality, resettlement, annual report – Meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum advisory group (Sep.) – Consultative Forum operational plan presented to advisory group (Sep.)	– Consultations on inter alia quality, resettlement, annual report – Meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum advisory group (Sep.) – Consultative Forum operational plan presented to advisory group (Sep.)	– Second EASO Consultative Forum plenary meeting (Nov.) – Consultations on inter alia resettlement, COI, training, EPS, annual report, work programme, quality and UM		

## 5.2. Implementation of EASO actions under the Stockholm programme

In 2010, the European Union's Stockholm programme was adopted with an action plan for the 3 years from 2010–12 <sup>(2)</sup>.

The Stockholm action plan clearly stipulates four priorities to be carried out by EASO:

1. development of methods to better identify those who are in need of international protection in mixed flows and to cooperate with Frontex wherever possible;
2. further development of a common educational platform for national asylum officials, building on the European Asylum Curriculum, in particular;
3. development of a common methodology with a view to reducing disparities of asylum decisions;
4. evaluation and development of procedures for facilitation of the secondment of officials in order to help those Member States facing particular pressures of asylum seekers flows.

The level of implementation by 2012 is given per priority defined for EASO.

### **(1) Development of methods to better identify those who are in need of international protection in mixed flows and to cooperate with Frontex wherever possible**

1. Methods of better identifying those who are in need of international protection in mixed flows, together with Frontex, lie in joint operational support activities to EU Member States and joint training on nationality establishment. Following a request from Greece, Frontex and EASO are currently cooperating in a first joint operation in Greece via the development of common training on nationality establishment for the staff of the first reception service and the asylum service. This pilot training is part of the Operating Plan Greece Phase II and was to take place on 29 and 30 April 2013 in Athens (more regional locations to follow). Furthermore, the experience gathered through the EASO–Frontex cooperation will be used as input for other joint operations and for developing methods of better identifying those who are in need of international protection in mixed flows.
2. A first joint EASO–Frontex meeting was held in 2012 in order to develop guidelines for operational co-operation in case of a sudden arrival of mixed flows in Member States. A meeting is planned to identify the opportunities in and explore the possibilities for establishing common or mixed teams from the pools with border management and asylum experts (in accordance with Article 3 of the EASO–Frontex working arrangement of 26 September 2012).

### **(2) Further develop a common educational platform for national asylum officials, building in particular the European Asylum Curriculum**

According to its training strategy, EASO already has developed a common educational platform for national asylum officials with a training curriculum of 13 modules. In 2013, a new training module on management will be finalised. All the training modules are regularly updated, and the quality is ensured by the involvement of a reference group (UNHCR, European Commission, ECRE, Odysseus, IARLJ).

The module 'EU Asylum Law and Policy' is to be replaced in 2013 by a new module on the CEAS. The training cockpit has been conceptualised to allow a clear view and help Member States in their implementation of the curriculum (training of their staff).

EASO training is a continuous process of providing an educational platform to EU Member States as well as a permanent process of updating content and tools to deliver the maximum quality.

<sup>(2)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 'Delivering an area of freedom, security and justice for Europe's citizens: Action plan implementing the Stockholm programme', COM(2010) 171 final.

### **(3) Development of a common methodology with a view to reducing disparities of asylum decisions**

Reducing disparities in asylum decisions also means taking a closer look behind the figures.

- Disparities in recognition rates can only be considered for similar flows. For example, aggregating a 95 % acceptance rate from Syria and a 95 % rejection rate from a similarly sized flow from Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gives a total of 50 % recognition, but hides the real protection extended to asylum seekers.
- Furthermore, the legal regimes used to accord international or national protection may be different between Member States or changed over time by the same Member States in regard to the same flow (e.g. the current case of Syria). Due to the lack of a common methodology, these regime changes occur in a different way across the EU.
- Finally, ‘unofficial’ practices and policies may be in use and change the interpretation that should be made of the official figures; for instance leaving claims pending — in effect deciding not to decide — or rejecting claims while knowing that returns are impossible.

EASO will analyse the data of EU Member States using quantitative and qualitative indicators in order to identify what kind of disparities are actually present before suggesting methodologies for minimising them. In this regard, EASO held a meeting with Member States on Syria in March 2013 together with the European Commission, with the aim of understanding disparities of treatment of asylum cases from Syria. This is a first step in reducing the overall disparity in asylum decisions. During the meeting, Member States were asked how they could improve homogeneity when facing crises such as the Syrian one, including what regimes should be used in which circumstances in the source country, what signals could be used to indicate when the regimes used should be changed, and what determines the change in acceptance rate over time.

Training also contributes to the development of a common methodology on reducing disparities of asylum decisions, because all asylum caseworkers are trained with the same curriculum and common understanding. This has also been noticed by EU Member States; for instance, Finland remarked that its asylum decision-making is more in line with the CEAS since its staff have been trained via the EASO training sessions and curriculum.

The quality matrix gives and will continue to give a clearer view of the situation in Member States on the various aspects of the CEAS. It will identify needs and present ways to support Member States. With regard to a common methodology with a view to reducing disparities of asylum decisions, best practices and specific common approaches will be presented and discussed amongst all Member States. A first thematic will be the ‘personal interview’, with a meeting in March 2013, to be followed by other thematic meetings. The list of existing initiatives has already been completed and distributed.

### **(4) Evaluation and development of procedures for facilitation of the secondment of officials in order to help those Member States facing particular pressures of asylum seekers flows**

The Asylum Support Teams, with experts from Member States deployed in Member States under particular pressure due to a high asylum influx, are working well and the impact is noticed.

An assessment of the Asylum Support Teams was presented at the EASO Management Board meeting in November 2012, following a National Contact Point meeting. A direct result of the positive evaluation was the addition of more profiles to the Asylum Intervention Pool in order to match more precisely the identified needs.

In addition, the Asylum Support Teams are continuously evaluated by both the host Member State and the experts themselves. This approach will ensure a smooth functioning in cooperation with all the participants. The support will also be evaluated in order to identify best practices and possible hurdles to be overcome. With the evaluation of all participants, special and emergency support aims at delivering support of the highest quality.

### 5.3. EASO publications in 2012

During 2012, EASO published the following documents.

Publication	Languages in which the document was published
EASO annual report on the situation of asylum in the EU and on the activities of the European Asylum Support Office for 2011	All official EU languages
EASO brochure	English, French, German
EASO work programme 2013	All official EU languages
10 editions of the EASO newsletter	English
EASO communication strategy	English
EASO training strategy	English
EASO Country of Origin Information report, 'Afghanistan, Taliban strategies — Recruitment'	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish
EASO Country of Origin information report, 'Afghanistan, Insurgent strategies: intimidation and targeted violence against Afghans'	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish
EASO Country of Origin report methodology	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish
EASO fact finding report on intra-EU relocation activities from Malta	English

### 5.4. EASO annual report on access to documents

#### Introduction

Public sector information may be a significant economic, political and social resource by adding value to the decision-making processes and facilitating the developments of organisations, individuals and society.

Openness and availability of EU information enables citizens to participate more closely in the EU decision-making process. By being transparent, EU institutions and bodies are more effective and more accountable to the citizen. Transparency also contributes to strengthening the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental rights.

In this context, access to documents is a right recognised in Article 15(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In order to grant the right to access to documents and promote good governance, EASO conducts its work as openly as possible.

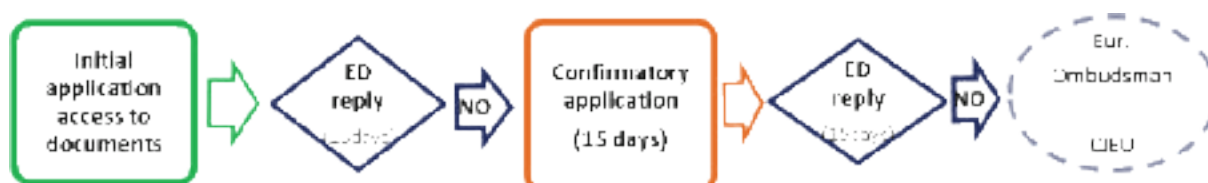
Article 17(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents foresees that each institution shall publish annually a report for the preceding year including the number of cases in which the institution refused to grant access to documents. The aforementioned regulation applies to EASO, according to Article 42 of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing EASO.

Furthermore, Decision No 6 of the Management Board of EASO of 20 September 2011 laid down practical arrangements on public access to EASO documents. This decision stipulates that EASO shall annex the report on access to documents to its annual report (Article 17).

## EASO's procedure on access to documents

Any person may exercise the right to access to documents held by EASO by making a request in writing. If the document originates in a third party or is co-authored by a third party, EASO consults the third party concerned. The Executive Director of EASO replies to initial applications within 15 working days. Refusals to grant access to the requested documents can only be based on specific exceptions. If access to the document is not granted, the requesting person may lodge a confirmatory application within 15 working days. The Executive Director of EASO replies to confirmatory applications within 15 working days. If access is refused following a confirmatory application, the requesting person may bring an action in the Court of Justice of the European Union and/or file a complaint with the European Ombudsman.

The following chart describes the EASO processes on access to documents.



## Key developments on access to documents in 2012

In 2012, the first full year of operations, EASO adopted its [communication strategy](#), confirming its commitment to promote openness and transparency, communicating its activities by a consistent flow of information.

EASO also launched its website (<http://www.easo.europa.eu>), which serves as a platform for facilitating access to EASO documents.

During the reference period, EASO decided on initial and confirmatory requests as detailed hereunder.

### ***Initial applications on access to documents in 2012***

During 2012, EASO received 13 initial requests to access nine documents. Access was refused to two documents, on the basis of the protection of privacy and integrity of the individual and on the basis of the protection of EASO's decision-making process (Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 and Article 3 of Management Board Decision No 6).

### ***Confirmatory applications on access to documents in 2012***

During 2012, one confirmatory request was presented to access one document. The reply to this request confirmed the application of the exception related to the protection of EASO's decision-making process.

### ***Complaints lodged to the European Ombudsman or actions brought in the CJEU***

In 2012, no actions were brought in the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and no complaints were filed with the European Ombudsman regarding EASO's decisions on access to documents.

## 5.5. EASO's final annual accounts for 2012

In the roadmap on the follow-up to the common approach on EU decentralised agencies, one of the initiatives, initiative No 32, states that agencies will produce a single annual report. A non-paper of the Commission services of January 2013 proposes streamlining the reporting obligations of decentralised agencies by providing a consolidated annual activity report including comprehensive information on budgetary and financial management.

EASO fully agrees with and supports this general approach to the reporting obligations of decentralised agencies. Therefore, EASO will not produce a different report with regard to the implementation of the budget and budgetary and financial management, but will take over the suggestion to integrate the report by EASO's Accounting Officer into its annual activity report.

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