



# European Asylum Support Office

**Newsletter - May 2015**

## Hon. Harlem Désir, French Secretary of State for European Affairs visits EASO



On 11 May 2015, Hon. Harlem Désir, French Secretary of State for European Affairs visited the European Asylum Support Office to discuss EASO's work vis-à-vis the development of the Common European Asylum System and its role in view of the ten point action plan on migration and the statement of the European Council of 23 April 2015. Moreover, at EASO, Hon. Minister Harlem Désir attended a working lunch with a number of important stakeholders working in the area of asylum and migration. Read more on page 4.

## Hon. George Vella, Maltese Foreign Affairs Minister visits EASO



On 29 May, the Maltese Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. George Vella visited the European Asylum Support Office to discuss its work, tools and activities and to analyse the situation of asylum in the EU. During his visit Hon. Vella met with EASO's Executive Director, Dr Robert K. Visser and with EASO staff. Read more on page 5.

### CONTENTS

Latest asylum trends and main countries of origin .....	2
Hon. Harlem Désir visits EASO .....	4
European Parliament delegation visits EASO .....	4
Hon. George Vella, visits EASO .....	5
COI & LGB Workshop .....	5
EASO and Greece sign special support plan.....	6
EASO External Dimension meetings .....	6
EASO carries out two activities under the ENPI project....	7
EASO starts preparations for its info day.....	8
EASO Participates in the ED4BG.....	8
EASO Training Curriculum .....	9
EASO Training NCP Meeting .....	9
EASO Expert meetings on vulnerable groups .....	9
EASO publishes updated report Western Balkans .....	11
5th EU intra agency football tournament .....	12
EASO Notices (including vacancies).....	13

## European Parliament delegation visits EASO

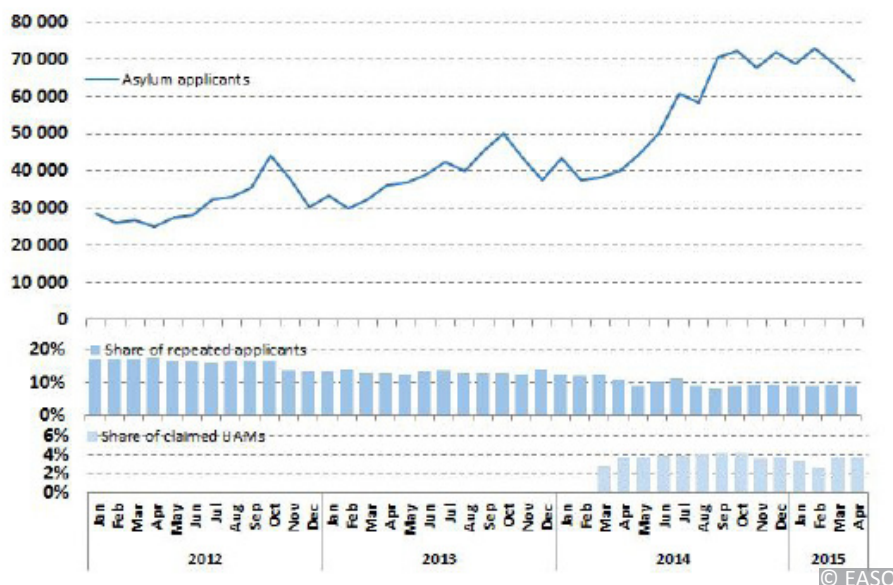


On 13 May 2015, a delegation made up of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, visited the European Asylum Support Office to discuss its work, tools and activities and a number of proposals related to the possible future enlargement of the role of EASO with a view to enable it to enhance its support to Member States' asylum and reception systems. Read more on page 4.

## Latest asylum trends and main countries of origin (April 2015)

### 1. Number of applicants for international protection in the EU+<sup>1</sup>

In April 2015, the total number of applicants recorded by EU+ countries (64 307) decreased by 7 % compared to March, but was 55 % above the level recorded in April 2014. The decline follows the drop in the number of Kosovar applicants for international protection, which fell for the second consecutive month and reached roughly 6 000, less than half the level recorded in March.



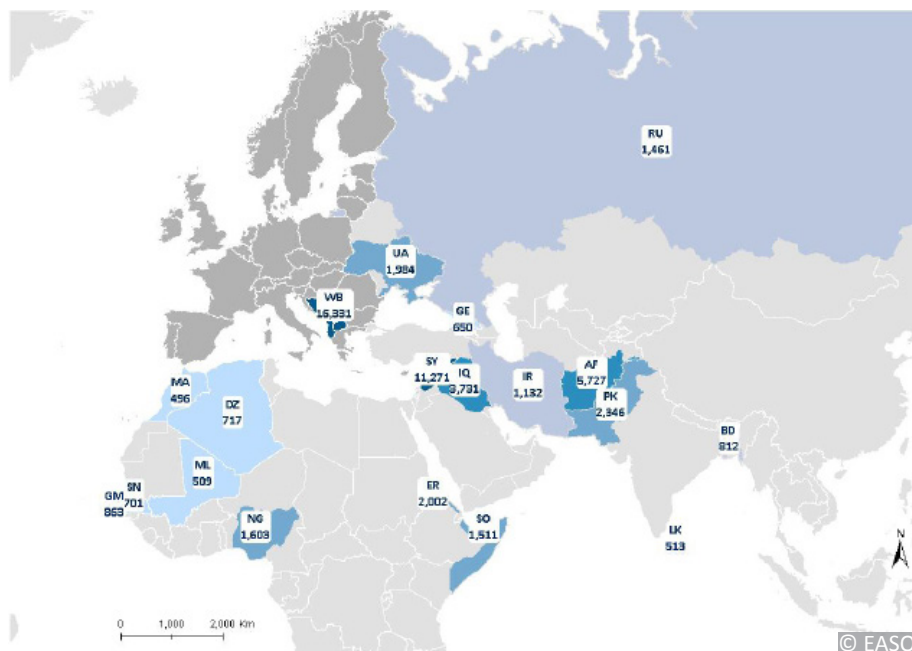
The share of repeated applicants reported by EU+ countries remained about 9 % of the total, roughly the same level as in previous months.

The number of claimed unaccompanied minors (UAMs) at the moment of lodging an asylum application totalled 2 425 in April.

UAMs as a share of total applications remained at the same level as in March, just below 4 %. Citizens of Afghanistan continued to represent the main group of claimed UAMs (38 %), followed by Eritreans and Syrians.

### 2. Main countries of origin of applicants in EU+ countries in April 2015

The map below displays the main countries of origin of asylum applicants recorded by EU+ countries in April 2015. Nationals of the six Western Balkan countries considered together were the most numerous and accounted for one fourth of the EU+ total for April. Western Balkan applicants as a group decreased by 29 % compared to March 2015.



However, the number of Albanian applicants increased 47 % compared to March and reached the highest monthly level since 2008.

Syria once again was the top single citizenship of applicants. Applicants from Afghanistan rose to third most numerous citizenship in April. There was also an increase in the number of Iraqi applicants, which rose 17 % from March. In recent years, the number of asylum applicants from these countries has increased in the summer months, in part due to seasonal factors.

<sup>1</sup> The EU+ is composed of EU-28 plus Norway and Switzerland. The share of repeated applicants is the proportion of repeated applicants in the total number of applicants for international protection. The share of UAM (unaccompanied minors) represents the proportion of asylum applicants claiming to be below the age of 18 years in the total number of applicants. It is important to emphasise that this term 'unaccompanied minor' here refers to applicants claiming to be minors and for whom an age assessment has not necessarily been carried out before provision of the data.

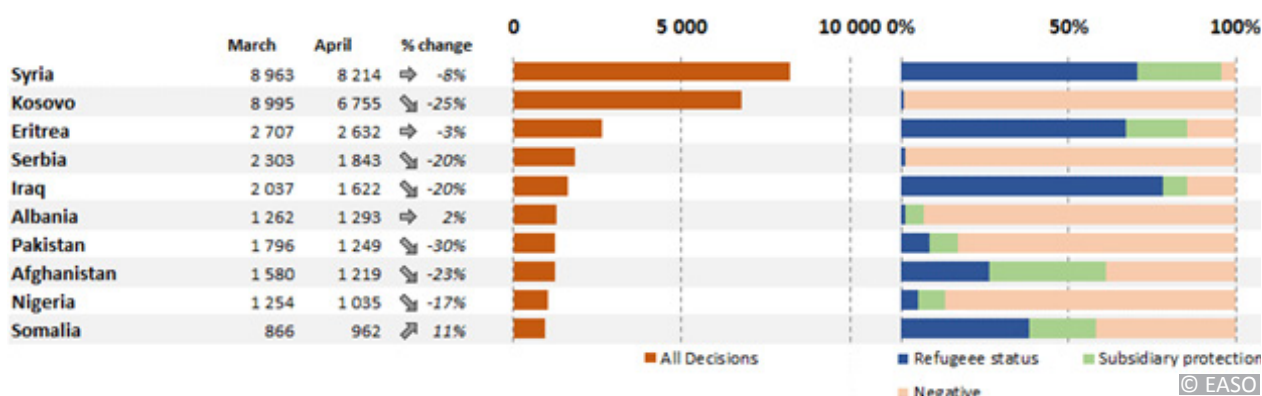
**Syria** – In April 2015, EU+ countries registered 11 271 Syrian applicants, a rise of 12 % compared to March and 68 % more than the total registered in April 2014. Germany remained the main destination country for Syrian applicants, followed by Hungary and Austria. Syrian applicants lodged their applications throughout the EU+ and a total of 19 EU+ countries reported Syria in their national top three main countries of origin in April, three more than in March.

**Western Balkan nationals (WB)** – 16 331 applicants from the six WB countries considered together submitted applications for international protection in EU+ countries in April 2015, a drop of 29 % compared to March. The drop is due to a strong decrease in the number of Kosovar applicants<sup>2</sup>, 7 520 less than in March. Despite this decrease, Kosovar applicants remained the largest WB citizenship, with 36 % of the WB total in April. Albania ranked second with 5 636 applicants recorded, 47 % higher than in March. The number of Serbian applicants continued to fall, decreasing by 20 % compared to March.

**Afghanistan** – The number of Afghan applicants grew for the second consecutive month and rose to 5 727 in April 2015, an increase of 23 % compared to March. Hungary was the main destination country for Afghans, followed by Germany and Austria.

**Iraq** – The number of Iraqi applicants rose to 3 731, which marked the second highest level after the peak recorded in January 2008. As for Syrian and Afghan applicants, the main countries of destination for Iraqis were Germany, Hungary and Austria. Together, these three EU+ countries comprised 71 % of the total number of Iraqi applicants recorded in the EU+ in April 2015.

### 3. Number and type of decisions issued in first instance in EU+ countries



In April 2015, EU+ countries issued 41 809 decisions at first instance, a decrease of 16 % compared to March, but 49 % above the level recorded in April 2014. At EU+ level, the share of positive decisions was 41 % of the total, one percentage point higher than in March.

Syrian asylum applicants had the highest number of decisions at first instance. 96 % of decisions resulted in a positive outcome, with 71 % granting refugee status and 25 % granting subsidiary protection. In April 2015, close to seven out of ten Syrian cases received a decision at first instance in one of three EU+ countries: Germany, Sweden and Bulgaria.

In April, the number of decisions issued on Kosovar cases fell by 25 % compared to March. 99 % of all first instance decisions issued to Kosovar cases were negative. Despite the relatively high number of decisions issued during April, at the end of the month there were still more than 22 000 Kosovars awaiting a decision at first instance.

EU+ countries issued 20 % fewer decisions on Iraqi cases in April than in the previous month. Despite this drop, the recognition rate for Iraqi applicants in the EU+ as a whole remained at the same level as in March, at 85 %.

#### Additional data and reports

Quarterly reports are available here: [easo.europa.eu/asylum-trends-analysis/quarterly-report](http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-trends-analysis/quarterly-report)

Other EASO documentation is available here: [easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation](http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation)

<sup>2</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



## Harlem Désir, French Secretary of State for European Affairs visits EASO

continued from page 1..

During the visit, Hon. Minister Harlem Désir met with EASO's Executive Director, Dr Robert K. Visser. The two discussed the various tools and activities which EASO uses to implement its tasks. These include: training and common asylum training material (EASO has trained over 7,000 asylum and reception officials in the past 3 years), common quality and common Country of Origin Information (COI); EASO operational support, on the ground, in Member States (in particular, its missions in Italy, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus); EASO's support towards third-country (i.e. non-member country) and EASO's Early warning and Preparedness system (EPS) (using the Early warning and Preparedness System, EASO provides risk analysis of asylum influx from third countries).



Moreover, at EASO, Mr. Harlem Désir attended a working lunch with a number of important stakeholders working in the area of asylum and migration.

EASO's Executive Director thanked Minister Désir for France's active involvement in the work and activities of EASO. Moreover, he highlighted that following the ten point action plan on migration and the statement of the European Council, EASO stands ready to use all tools at its disposal to make an immediate difference and improve the situation in the Mediterranean. EASO is now already working together with Member States, the European Commission and other EU agencies on the implementation of these measures, in particular those related to joint processing of asylum applications and fighting smuggling networks.

Hon. Minister Harlem Désir reaffirmed "France's political engagement in the Mediterranean area which is key for peace and security both in Europe and North Africa, and France's support to long lasting and comprehensive solutions to the migration issues in the Mediterranean"

[...] In that context, EASO role as a European support agency at a time when many countries face increasing pressure in terms of migrations is critical and should be recognized".

## European Parliament delegation visits EASO

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The delegation was made up by the following MEPs: Cecilia WIKSTRÖM (SE), Sophie IN'T VELD (NL), Angelika MLINAR (AT), Nathalie GRIESBECK (FR) and Petr JEZEK (CZ).

During the visit, the MEPs met with EASO's Executive Director, Dr Robert K. Visser to discuss the work of EASO. Moreover, the meeting also discussed ALDE's proposals contained in ALDE's Blueprint for a new European agenda on migration document. These proposals include, a call for the enlargement of the mandate of the EASO to be able to enhance its support Member States on the front line to process and treat with dignity asylum seekers and an increase in the financial resources for EASO.

EASO's Executive Director thanked the MEPs for their interest in the work of EASO and their active involvement in the areas of asylum and migration. On the proposals of ALDE (which are contained in the Blueprint for a new European agenda on migration document), the EASO Executive Director held that it was positive to get new ideas to the discussion. On the points related to EASO, it was appreciated that MEPs recognised the important role which EASO plays in supporting Member States' asylum and reception systems and they have repeatedly called for an increase in the budgetary allocation for EASO and an enlargement of its mandate.

## Hon. George Vella, Maltese Minister for Foreign Affairs visits EASO

On 29 May, the Maltese Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. George Vella visited the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to discuss its work, tools and activities and to analyse the situation of asylum in the EU, in particular the situation in Malta. During his visit Hon. Vella met with EASO's Executive Director, Dr Robert K. Visser and with EASO staff.



Photo: DCI - Omar Camilleri

On the left: Hon. Minister Dr. George Vella with EASO Executive Director, Dr. Robert K. Visser

Moreover, Hon. Vella and Dr Visser discussed the recently presented European Agenda on Migration which together with the ten point action plan on migration and the Statement of the European Council, of 23 April outlines the immediate measures that will be taken in order to respond to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean as well as the steps to be taken in the coming years to better manage migration in all its aspects.

In this context, EASO, has been assigned specific tasks, such as those related to joint processing of asylum applications, fighting smuggling networks, intra-EU relocation and resettlement from third



Photo: DCI - Omar Camilleri

countries.

## COI & LGB Workshop

On 19 and 20 May 2015, EASO organised a workshop on Country of Origin Information (COI) & Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual persons (LGB) in selected countries of origin. The workshop was attended by COI specialists from EU+ states (EU Member States + Norway and Switzerland), civil society representatives and UNHCR. Several experts (academics, Human Rights Watch, a Nigerian NGO representative) provided an overview of the legal framework in regard to LGB persons, its application, the treatment of LGB by state and non-state actors and the social life of LGB in Cameroon, the Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal and the Russian Federation.

In addition, a COI researcher from Lifos (the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency/SMA) presented the approach to and outcomes of a fact-finding mission to Nigeria on the specific topic of LGB. Similarly, the Research Directorate of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada introduced the Canadian methodology for identifying, contacting and interviewing oral sources on the question of LGB. Documentaries on the situation of LGB youths in Russia (Children404), on sexual minorities in Nigeria (The Veil of Silence) and Cameroon (Interview with Alice N'Kom) completed the plenary presentations by country experts.



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During break-out sessions, participants also had an opportunity to exchange views with the invited experts on the challenges of collecting COI on LGB in the selected countries.

Finally, the workshop offered an occasion to present the recently published EASO guide "Researching the situation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons (LGB) in countries of origin" as well as the new EASO training module on "Gender, Gender identity and Sexual orientation".

### Additional Information:

*Researching the situation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons (LGB) in countries of origin* publication s available here: [easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation](http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation)

## EASO and Greece sign agreement to continue EASO support to Greece until May 2016

EASO and Greece signed a new Support Plan which provides for EASO tailor-made support to Greece to be implemented over a period of 12 months. The Special Support Plan builds on the progress made within the framework of support which EASO has been providing to Greece since 2011 (under Operating Plan Phase I and II). In the next 12 months, EASO will support Greece in a number of prioritised areas, such as absorption of EU funds and other financial resources, planning and implementing projects, training Greek personnel in the framework of the EASO Training Curriculum, Dublin III procedures, Country of Origin Information (COI), setting up an effective guardianship system and transcription of interviews. In the field of reception, support will be offered in monitoring the provision of services and enhancing the quality of the reception procedure.

Following a request by Greece to further improve and enhance the Greek asylum and reception system, the EASO Executive Director decided to render Special Support to Greece by providing expertise from EASO and the EU Member States up to the end of May 2016.

The request for further support by EASO was inspired by the will to ensure sustainability of the good results achieved within the context of previous EASO support to Greece (under the Operating Plan to Greece Phase I and II), so that the current and future challenges can be adequately addressed. It was concluded that there is a need for supporting the training of staff, setting up an effective guardianship system for unaccompanied minors, in particular within the asylum procedure, enhancing the quality of the asylum and reception procedures, as well as better managing of EU funding which complements the national budget. EASO is coordinating special support teams on the ground in Greece and works closely with the Greek government, the European Commission's Taskforce on Greece, FRONTEX, UNHCR and other stakeholders. EASO support to Greece under the Special Support Plan will end in May 2016.

### Background

EASO support to Greece dates back to April 2011, when the Operating Plan Phase I was signed. Greece has faced particular asylum pressures in the past years due to a significant influx of irregular migrants at the European external borders.

Following a request made by the Greek Government, in February 2011, EASO agreed to support Greece until March 2013 and to deploy various Asylum Support Teams (ASTs). Since the beginning of its operations, Greece was supported in enhancing and building up its capacity in tackling the backlog of asylum cases. In addition, the setup of a sustainable and efficient asylum and reception structure was supported: new First Reception Service, Asylum Service, Appeals Authority and improved reception conditions. On 7 March 2013, EASO and Greece signed the Operating Plan Phase II. The Plan extended EASO support to Greece up until December 2014 in various areas, e.g. training of the staff of the new services, support to the backlog committees, support to improvement of reception procedures and the management of EU funds related to asylum and reception. On 13 May 2015, EASO and Greece signed a new Support Plan which provides for EASO tailor-made support to Greece to be implemented over a period of 12 months (until May 2016).

### Additional Information:

The Special Support Plan is available here: [easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation](http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation)

## EASO External Dimension meetings

On 5 May 2015, EASO organised an External Dimension Network meeting in Malta. EASO provided a general update on activities which have started and are planned in the framework of the EASO External Action Strategy. Several EU Member States representatives presented their ongoing and planned activities in the international protection field outside of the EU. The meeting saw very active exchanges between Member States, also in respect of EASO's role in External Dimension. The conclusions included that EASO has an important coordinating role to play and could collect more information from Member States on the international protection projects which different Member States are carrying out in Third Countries. Moreover, EASO could consider having a more geographical focus in the External Dimension Network meetings to gather Member States which are active in certain geographical parts to discuss future opportunities/matching needs.





The External Dimension Network meeting was followed up by an External Dimension Skills workshop on 6 and 7 May with a specialized external expert as well as EU Member States experts in the field of multicultural communication and inter-cultural links. When EU Member States experts are deployed in the External Dimension, they sometimes face different challenges than in Europe, with respect to multicultural communication and inter-cultural links. Member States experts already deployed in EASO External Dimension activities, or experts which may be deployed in the future, spent two interactive and interesting days working on how to improve capacity building activities while considering power distances, uncertainty avoidance and different communication cultures. The participants had in-depth discussions on how to improve communication in a multicultural environment in the External Dimension field. On the second day of the Skills workshop there was a joint session with ENPI Third Country participants to the Common European Asylum System training (from Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) and participants had a chance to have a practical exchange on communication in a multicultural environment.



## EASO carries out two activities under the ENPI project with Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco

During the month of May 2015, two activities have been carried out within the ENPI project involving Jordanian, Tunisian and Moroccan authorities.

During the week 5-8 May 2015, a total of 18 participants from the three countries took part in the face-to-face session (5-7 May 2015) of the EASO training on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and in the ENPI project mid-term meeting on 8 May 2015. Both events took place in Malta. During the CEAS face-to-face session, authorities from the three countries' involved in the project completed their EASO train-the-trainer sessions foreseen by the ENPI project. Most of them had already participated in the three EASO core modules sessions and are now ready to start with the delivery of national training sessions in their home countries with EASO support.



CEAS training session in Malta with Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan  
- 5-7 May 2015

The training in Malta was also an opportunity for EASO trainers to test the use of simultaneous interpretation during the face-to-face session and to identify, together with the trainees, areas for improvement and adaption of EASO training techniques to the needs of third country nationals.

On 8 May 2015, the CEAS participants also took part in the ENPI midterm meeting. The meeting gave an overall picture of the project's first year of implementation while also discussing together the proposed plan of future activities, till the end of the project in 2015. The meeting saw the participation of EASO Executive Director who, in his opening remarks, highlighted the importance for EASO to increasingly work in partnership with the European neighbouring countries and in cooperation with Member States and other International Organizations active in the region.



EASO Executive Director's opening remarks at the ENPI midterm meeting in Malta – 8 May 2015

The meeting brought together representatives of Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia as well as EU Member States experts and the European Parliament. Frontex, as the project's subcontractor, presented past activities implemented in partnership with Morocco and the planned 2015 initiatives in both Tunisia and Morocco.



ENPI midterm meeting in Malta on 8 May 2015

Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to discuss more in depth the activities' schedule and content in country specific breakout sessions. As the ENPI project will end in 2015, the meeting was important for identifying possible ways of future cooperation with both EASO and FRONTEX beyond 2015.

## EASO starts preparations for its info day



The EASO info day is an initiative that aims to inform stakeholders working in the JHA area of the products and services offered by EASO and how they can make best use of them. The event is held on 19 June of each year or on the following working day.

The event includes presentations in the respective Ministries, brown bag lunches, video events and info desks.

In 2014, info day events were held in many Member States and also in the European Parliament. EASO received a very positive response. The initiative was made possible by EASO's network of National Communication Multipliers.

This year we aim to build up on this success. 84 boxes of EASO Publications and Merchandise have already been sent to Member States to start preparing for this special day.

## EASO Participates in the European Day for Border Guards in Warsaw



The European Day for Border Guards (ED4BG) is an annual event, organised by Frontex, taking place during the second half of May each year.

ED4BG presents Europe's border-guard community with an opportunity to share experiences and

best practice. It provides a forum for topical discussion, exchange of views between key border-management players, and a platform to bring together the worlds of public service and private industry.

One of the event's key objectives is to foster a community of EU border guardianship with shared values and priorities. Above all it is an expression of appreciation and celebration of Europe's border-management authorities and their personnel.

This is the first year in which EASO participated as an exhibitor. There was positive interest in EASO and its products, in particular its publications.

**EUROPEAN**   
**DAY for BORDER**  
 **GUARDS**



## EASO Training Curriculum

### Training

The online part of the newly developed module on *Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation* and the module on *Inclusion* started in May, with the face-to-face session to be organised on 9 -12 June at the EASO premises. Additionally on 1 May, EASO initiated the online part of the train-the-trainer sessions in the module on *Evidence Assessment* and *Inclusion* with the face-to-face session taking place between 2 – 5 June in the premises of the Fundamental Rights agency (FRA) in Vienna. The content part of the module on *Inclusion* will be held in the German language, while the module on *Evidence Assessment* will be held in English language.

EASO will continue its training activities after the summer break with the train-the-trainer session in the newly updated module on *Country of Origin Information (COI)* and module on *Interviewing Children*. The online part of these train-the-trainer sessions will start on 7 September with the face-to-face sessions to be held in Malta between 6 – 9 October. If you wish you register for any of these train-the-trainer sessions, kindly submit your registration form to [training@easo.europa.eu](mailto:training@easo.europa.eu).

### EASO Training NCP Meeting

On 21 and 22 May EASO held the Training National Contact Point meeting. The main aim of this meeting was to provide Member States with an overview on the current state of play and recent developments in EASO training. This meeting also allowed Member States to share good practices with regard to the implementation of the EASO Training Curriculum at the national level and inform EASO about Member States' training needs and requirements.



EASO discussed with the EASO Training National Contact Points the EASO training plans for the second semester of 2015, including the training plans within the regional training sessions and External Dimension.

The participants also exchanged ideas on the new EASO training modules and tools to be developed and reflected on the way forward for the Annual Didactic Seminar. Moreover, EASO informed Member States about the changes in the procedure for the deployment of experts within the EASO training activities, presented the EASO Training Report for 2014 and provided an update on the certification and accreditation project. The EASO Training NCP meeting was attended by 19 Member States and representatives of UNHCR.

### Quality

#### EASO EXPERT MEETINGS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS

- EASO Expert Meeting on the 'Identification of Victims of Trafficking of Human Beings (THB) who may be in need of International Protection'
- EASO Expert Meeting on 'Children and Trafficking' and on 'Family Tracing'

On the 6 and 7 May 2015, EASO hosted an Expert Meeting on the 'Identification of Victims of Trafficking of Human Beings who may be in need of International Protection'

One of EASO's key objectives for 2015 is 'supporting a better identification of vulnerable persons'. It was also acknowledged during the first Expert Meeting on THB that EASO hosted in March 2014, that the issue of adequate and timely identification was one of the main challenges faced by asylum case officers when entering in contact with a victim or potential victim of trafficking in human beings.

Experts from 13 Member States together with representatives from the European Commission, Europol, Frontex, UNHCR, IOM and some other relevant stakeholders from civil society as NIDOS (the Dutch guardianship organisation) or Defence for Children participated in the meeting.

More information on EASO's training is available on [easo.europa.eu/about-us/tasks-of-easo/training-quality](http://easo.europa.eu/about-us/tasks-of-easo/training-quality)

After an overview from the European Commission of the legal framework on the topic, the focus was put on discussing good practices and the main challenges faced by Member States regarding the identification of victims or potential victims of THB in international protection procedures. The practical experience of some Member States, such as Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, was shared with participants, with a particular focus on training.

EASO presented its more recent activities in the field of trafficking of human beings (THB), together with its plans for 2015. Among them EASO presented its interactive practical tool on the Identification of persons with special needs that will be launched soon. EASO will also develop a network of Experts on the topic to facilitate communication and exchange of expertise. The network will benefit from access to an online platform on activities on THB which will be hosted on the EASO website.

Participants welcomed EASO's initiatives and agreed on the need for a specific training of asylum personnel on the field and on the importance of having more practical expert meetings and workshops based on real cases.

The meeting was held back to back with an Expert Meeting on '*Trafficking of Children*' and on '*Family Tracing*' (7 and 8 May) with a common session devoted to the 'identification of children victims of trafficking'. Discussions and presentations touched upon issues such as asylum-seeking children disappearing from reception facilities and the detection of possible abuses of international protection procedures.

Experts from 14 Member States together with representatives from of EUROPOL, FRA, FRONTEX, UNHCR, IOM and some other relevant stakeholders from civil society such as NIDOS, ICRC, ECRE, Missing Children Europe or Defence for Children participated in the second meeting on '*Trafficking of Children and on Family Tracing*'.

After the common session on Trafficking of Children, the meeting continued with a second session on the identification and prevention of the risk of re/trafficking of children including within the family tracing process.

On the second day, EASO presented the current state of play of the future EASO practical Guide on Family Tracing, and of the EASO Experts Network on Activities of Children (ENAC). The first conclusions the meeting highlighted the importance of:

- Using the proper terms when addressing THB and of acknowledging the differences of the specific definitions related to children victims on THB.
- Raising awareness of asylum case officers in contact with the children potential victim of THB through specialised training and tools.
- The role of guardians in the best interest determination of the child when assessing the potential risk for the child or for the family following the family tracing process.
- Providing updated information and input to the EASO Practical Guide on Family Tracing during the consultation and verification stage of the development process. Further enhancing the EASO Expert Network on Activities of Children (ENAC) by nominating additional experts.

Participants and network members will be able to find the key points and outcomes of the presentations, discussions and workshops on the Platform for EASO's Activities on Children hosted on the EASO website.



For further information about these and future meetings on vulnerable groups, please contact [EASO\\_vulnerablegroups@easo.europa.eu](mailto:EASO_vulnerablegroups@easo.europa.eu).

## EASO publishes updated report on asylum flows from the Western Balkans

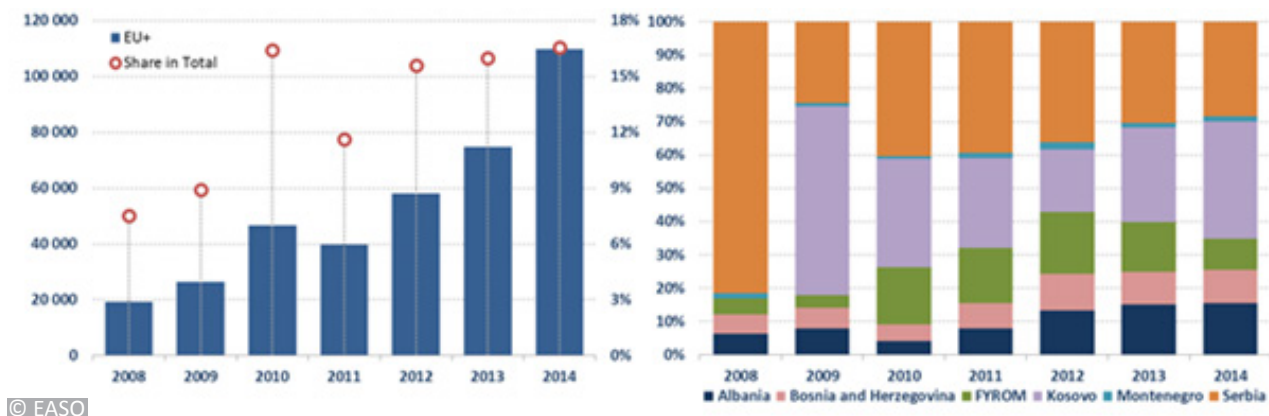
Due to the significant increase in numbers of applications from citizens of Western Balkans (WB) countries reported in the EU+<sup>1</sup> in the last year, EASO has updated the key findings of its 2013 report *Asylum Applicants from the Western Balkans: comparative analysis of the trends, push-pull factors and responses* (WB report) on the basis of the most recent quantitative data available as well as new qualitative information provided by the main receiving states.

Applications for asylum made by citizens of the Western Balkan<sup>2</sup> (WB) countries (when considered together) have continued to rise since EASO's first report despite the fact that applications from Western Balkans citizens are largely considered to be unfounded by EU+, as shown by a rejection rate of 96% in from Q3 2013 to Q4 2014.

*In 2014, close to 110 000 applicants in the EU+ originated from the Western Balkans*

Figure 1a: WB applicants and share in total applicants in the EU+, 2008-2014

Figure 1b: Yearly composition of WB applicants in the EU+, 2008-2014



This updated analysis provides decision – and policy-makers with tools for understanding and better managing situations in which they are confronted with large numbers of applications for international protection from Western Balkans citizens and other flows with similar characteristics. It also attempts to identify the measures which have proved to be the most effective in reducing the impact of some of the pull factors and in processing large numbers of applications for international protection where many may be unfounded, while ensuring full consideration of each individual claim and ensuring protection for those who need it.

The Update follows the structure of the original report and gives updated information on:

- The characteristics of the recent asylum flow of Western Balkan applicants to EU+ countries including a review of:
  - o Number of applicants for international protection;
  - o Seasonality;
  - o Profile and routes taken by Western Balkan applicants;
  - o Decisions in first instance;
- Push factors or major reasons for Western Balkan applicants to leave their country and apply for international protection in the EU+;
- Pull factors or elements that may determine the country chosen as a destination;
- Measures taken by EU+ countries to reduce or mitigate push and pull factors and their perceived effectiveness.

The report highlights that the WB flow is limited to a small number of MSAC and in some cases greatly affects their asylum systems' ability to process other claims.

<sup>1</sup> EU Member States plus Switzerland and Norway

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.



## EASO participates in the 5th EU intra agency football tournament



On 23/24 May EASO participated in the 5th EU intra agency football tournament. 33 teams from the EU agencies took part in this tournament. EASO participated with 2 teams (1 male only team and 1 mixed team). This was the first year in which EASO participated in this tournament. The EASO teams achieved remarkable results including a win against the Gallileo Space Agency (GSA), a draw against the finalists (FRONTEX) and also a draw against the European Banking Authority.



Most importantly is that the EASO team won the FAIR PLAY AWARD for the tournament.



WELL DONE EASO!!

## EASO Vacancies

EASO has recently published the following vacancies:

Seconded National Experts		
Reference Number	Title	Closing Date
EASO/2015/SNE/002	Country of Origin Information and Policy Expert (SNE)	4 June 2015
EASO/2015/SNE/003	Asylum Expert	6 July 2015

Seconded National Experts		
Reference Number	Title	Closing Date
EASO/2015/TA/003	Quality and Vulnerable Groups Officer (AD 5)	8 July 2015

For more information please visit our website on [easo.europa.eu/working-for-easo](http://easo.europa.eu/working-for-easo)

Your opinion is important to us! Visit the EASO consultation calendar, to keep updated on when EASO will open consultation procedures:  
[easo.europa.eu/easo-consultative-forum/open-consultations](http://easo.europa.eu/easo-consultative-forum/open-consultations)

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