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New EU Agency for Asylum starts work with reinforced mandate

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) replaces the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) with more tools to support Member States in bringing greater convergence to asylum and reception practices at the EU's high standards.

On 19 January 2022, the new mandate of the EUAA entered into force following agreement last year between the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on the European Commission's proposal. It marks the first of the proposals to reform the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to be approved, and a significant step forward in the modernisation of the EU's asylum and reception practices.

This is a crucial moment for asylum and reception in the EU. The EUAA is a unique agency, with the tools and ability to support Member States and the Union itself in tangibly improving the application of the world's only multinational asylum system. It demonstrates yet again that the EU can rise above political challenges, and I am confident that this significant accomplishment will act as an enabler for progress of other files in the asylum and migration reform portfolio.

Nina GregoriEUAA's Executive Director

The former agency, EASO, had already been operating at the very limits of its mandate, providing an ever-increasing amount of technical and operational support to Member States over the past years. If the agency were an EU+ Member State, it would rank seventh in terms of registrations performed, and ninth in terms of opinions for decisions[1] issued.

The composition of the Management Team and Management Board of EASO automatically transfers to the EUAA, including the roles of Executive Director and Chair of the Management Board.

Commenting on the entry into force of the new Regulation, the EUAA's Executive Director, **Nina Gregori**, stated: "This is a crucial moment for asylum and reception in the EU. The EUAA is a unique agency, with the tools and ability to support Member States and the Union itself in tangibly improving the application of the world's only multinational asylum system. It demonstrates yet again that the EU can rise above political challenges, and I am confident that this significant accomplishment will act as an enabler for progress of other files in the asylum and migration reform portfolio."

The EUAA begins its work with a 2022 budget of EUR 172 million, an unprecedented eight operations (in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Spain) supporting asylum and reception authorities in Member States with almost 2,000 personnel, and 500 staff mostly based in the agency's headquarters in Malta, as well as in offices in Athens, Brussels, Rome, Nicosia, Madrid and Warsaw.

EUAA New Mandate

In addition to the former functions of EASO, the new EUAA mandate:

1. Allows for the quick deployment of **operational assistance** to Member States, thus reacting faster to Member State needs;
2. Establishes a permanent **asylum reserve pool** of 500 Member State officials at the disposal of the agency;
3. Establishes a broader **asylum training curriculum** for national officials, with the goal of developing into the EU's accreditation body for international protection officials;
4. Enables the production of more **practical guides, recommendations, tools and analysis** which support the work of national asylum and reception authorities;
5. Establishes an independent **Fundamental Rights Officer** to ensure that the rights of asylum applicants are always safeguarded;
6. Gives an enhanced role to **Civil Society Organisations** through a more independent EUAA Consultative Forum;
7. Establishes **EUAA liaison officers in EU Member States**, as well as the possibility to do so in non-EU countries;
8. Enhances the agency's **work with non-EU countries** to support asylum and reception capacity building in line with international standards;
9. Establishes a **complaints mechanism** to ensure recourse for anyone who considers that their fundamental rights have been breached;
10. Allows for preparations for the establishment of a **Monitoring Mechanism** in the coming years.

The Monitoring Mechanism, which will partly enter into force at the end of 2023, and partly once the various other CEAS legislative proposals are agreed to, will allow for the EUAA to monitor the operational and technical application of EU legal obligations. This will help Member States identify potential lapses in their asylum procedures in a constructive manner, and ultimately contribute to a more harmonised EU asylum system.

EASO has spent over a year preparing for the launch of the EUAA, while constantly increasing its governance mechanisms in order to ensure that the new mandate will be managed effectively and responsibly. While certain elements of the mandate's implementation are dependent on receiving necessary resources, the thorough preparatory work means that stakeholders will not experience any disruption in EUAA support during the transition.

Links and more information:

- Regulation 2021/2303, establishing the EUAA
- Library of EUAA Audio-visual material

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Notes

[1] Compared to decisions issued by 29 EU+ Member States. The EUAA does not issue decisions in its operations, but rather opinions for decisions, which are then to be taken by the national authorities.

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