

Press Release: European Asylum Support Office Publishes its Work Programme for 2012

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has recently published its Work Programme for 2012. During its second year of operations, EASO will consolidate the work undertaken in 2011 and will start new tasks in accordance with the EASO founding Regulation. EASO will concentrate on a specific set of priorities which comply with the expectations laid out in the Stockholm Programme and Action Plan. At the same time, EASO is still setting-up its organisation and recruiting more staff.

The mission of EASO is to support the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and to support the European Union Member States and their asylum-services. EASO is developing into an independent centre of expertise that is close to the Member States and their asylum-offices as well as to the European Commission. The Executive Director of EASO started his work on 1 February 2011 and the EASO became operational shortly thereafter. The Executive Director of EASO rapidly started building EASO's vital structures, recruiting people whilst at the same time becoming operational in Greece.

In 2012, EASO will concentrate on a specific set of priorities which comply with the expectations laid out in the Stockholm Programme and Action Plan. The EASO priorities for 2012 are:

1. Fulfilling the Operating Plan for Greece;
2. Further developing the EASO work on the European Asylum Curriculum, Country of Origin Information, Quality of the asylum process and Interpreters' list;
3. Building the EASO organisation.

Within the tasks of EASO, the priorities are:

- *Permanent Support:* EASO Permanent Support to Member States will include the following:

- European Asylum training
- Quality control activities for asylum procedures
- Country of Origin Information (COI)
- Activities following the EU Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (UM)
- Information, Documentation and Analysis

- *Emergency Support:* Provide support to Member States facing particular pressures on their asylum and reception systems;

- *Relocation, Resettlement and External Dimension:* In 2012, due to budget constraints, EASO will focus on organising exchange of information and best practices on relocation and resettlement. EASO will also have a supporting role in the possible extension of the relocation project for Malta

(EUREMA). In addition EASO will develop an action plan for the activities of EASO for the External Dimension.

As to the EASO organisation, in 2012 EASO will strengthen the communication and cooperation with partners and stakeholders. EASO also plans to move into its permanent premises in the Valletta Harbour during this year. In 2012 EASO will also publish its first country of origin information report on Afghanistan.

Moreover, in order to be in a better position to fulfil its tasks, in 2012 EASO aims at recruiting about 20 new staff members, bringing the total staff to around 60.

Dr Robert Visser, Executive Director of EASO, said that 2012 will present many challenges for the European Asylum Support Office and in general for Asylum and Immigration in Europe. 2012 will be the first full year for EASO. The expectations on EASO are high, nevertheless I am confident that EASO will deliver. Responsibility, commitment, and solidarity will remain key principles upon which EASO shall base its actions in 2012. Looking back at 2011, Dr Visser thanked all stakeholders for their support and cooperation in setting up the agency and making its work a success.

The EASO Work Programme 2012 can be accessed through the following link :

http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/asylum/asylum_easo_en.htm