



European Asylum Support Office  
Bureau Européen d'Appui pour l'Asile

# EASO training strategy

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION

The EASO training strategy outlines the principles and procedures that will guide EASO in the implementation of its training mandate as provided for in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of 19 May 2010 on establishing a European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter the regulation) <sup>(1)</sup>.

With the implementation of this strategy, EASO is committed to supporting the enhancement of quality standards and the harmonisation of asylum practices throughout the European Union. The raising of quality and harmonisation standards shall strengthen the overall trust in EU asylum procedures and contribute to the establishment of the common European asylum system.

In line with the regulation, the implementation of EASO's training strategy shall be guided by the following principles.

1. EASO training activities will be undertaken within the operational framework provided for in the regulation with the main goal of supporting Member States and the Commission in the implementation of the common European asylum system <sup>(2)</sup>.
2. The implementation of this training strategy will further promote harmonisation and assist Member States in the provision of quality training as specified in the legal instruments of the common European asylum system <sup>(3)</sup>.
3. To this end, EASO will cooperate closely with and rely on the commitment of Member States' asylum and immigration authorities, the Commission, other EU Agencies, UNHCR and other relevant actors whose expertise can contribute to improving the quality of the training provided <sup>(4)</sup>.
4. In implementing this strategy, EASO will take an open, constructive and dynamic approach and remain fully committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality, efficiency and transparency <sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter the regulation). Available on the Internet (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:132:0011:0028:EN:PDF>).

<sup>(2)</sup> As provided for in the regulation, Articles 1 and 2 on the establishment and purpose of the European Asylum Support Office.

<sup>(3)</sup> As an example, reference is made to Articles 31(6) and 37 of Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 (the qualification directive) and to Article 4(3) of the amended proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection status (COM(2011)319 final). Available on the Internet (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:337:0009:0026:EN:PDF> and [http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110601/319/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v12%5b1%5d.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110601/319/1_EN_ACT_part1_v12%5b1%5d.pdf)). It is acknowledged that the provisions of the recast proposal could be subject to substantial changes by the conclusion of the ordinary legislative procedures.

<sup>(4)</sup> As provided for in Article 2(5) and 6(2) of the regulation.

<sup>(5)</sup> As provided for in Article 2(4) of the regulation.

5. EASO will build its training activities on the tools and expertise existing within Member States' administrations <sup>(6)</sup> and make every effort to develop training tools and methodologies that are adequately suited to their training needs. In this regard, EASO will duly take into consideration the European Union education and training framework, including the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning <sup>(7)</sup>.
6. EASO training activities will primarily target Member States' administrative authorities, courts and tribunals responsible for asylum matters <sup>(8)</sup>. To the extent possible, EASO will widen the scope of these activities to other actors, including, but not restricted to, other relevant national authorities, EU agencies, UNHCR, academia and relevant civil society organisations. Access to training activities will be granted on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the needs of Member States and availability of human and financial resources.

## Involvement and participation of Member States, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of training activities

In cooperation with Member States, EASO has established a network of national contact points that will act as a liaison with their respective administrations on training-related matters. National contact points are nominated by Member States, taking into consideration the recommendation adopted by EASO on the needs and responsibilities related to the performance of this function.

EASO will also maintain close cooperation with associated countries, countries with observer status at the EASO Management Board and other EU agencies such as Frontex, FRA and CEPOL.

EASO will collaborate with other relevant EASO will collaborate with other relevant stakeholders through the establishment and maintenance of a reference group. Among others, the reference group will be

<sup>(6)</sup> In accordance with Articles 2(2) and 6(2) of the regulation.

<sup>(7)</sup> Specific reference to the European Union training and education framework is available on the Internet ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm)).

<sup>(8)</sup> As provided for in Article 6(1) of the regulation.

composed of representatives from the Commission, UNHCR, NGOs, members of courts and tribunals in the Member States and academia. The reference group will support EASO in the development, updating and quality maintenance of training tools. Through its cooperation with the reference group, EASO will also promote mutual understanding and collaboration among relevant EU actors to further enhance the coherency, credibility and legitimacy of the common European asylum system.

Additionally, EASO may engage in thematic or ad hoc consultations and develop partnerships with relevant agencies or organisations for the development and implementation of specific training tools or activities. Furthermore, EASO will foster an open dialogue with civil society organisations through the EASO consultative forum.

## Structure and methodology for the development and implementation of training activities

EASO will support Member States in the identification of training needs; setting up of training targets; and design, implementation and evaluation of up-to-date quality training. EASO will also support Member States with the provision of training in the context of intra-EU and external dimension support actions <sup>(1)</sup> as well as in other ad hoc support.

EASO's training support will be twofold.

- EASO will support Member States in the development and publication of training materials (e.g. online courses and training manuals). The publication of EASO materials will be compliant with EU copyright law.
- EASO will also support Member States in the organisation of training events and delivery of training (e.g. organisation and delivery of thematic or ad hoc training sessions).

EASO training activities will be developed in five separate steps.

- **Step I** — Identification of target groups and training needs.
- **Step II** — Conception of training methodologies and tools.

- **Step III** — Selection and establishment of a training and expert pool.
- **Step IV** — Implementation of training tools at the national level.
- **Step V** — Evaluation and quality control.

### Step I — Identification of target groups and training needs

Member States will regularly inform EASO of their training needs and identify relevant target groups for training within their respective administrations. In doing so, Member States shall focus on their national asylum officials (newly recruited as well as experienced asylum officials) as the primary target group. EASO will provide guidance and advice to Member States in the process of establishing and monitoring their training targets. To this end, EASO will make specific training recommendations and develop a mechanism, the EASO training cockpit, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of training activities.

The establishment of the EASO training cockpit is in line with the responsibility assigned to EASO in the Commission communication of 2 December 2011 on enhanced intra-EU solidarity in the field of asylum, which envisaged the setting up of a quantitative target for asylum officials to be trained; as well as Union-wide objectives to measure the impact of training activities <sup>(2)</sup>.

EASO will also encourage Member States to consider the adoption of a general commitment to ensure that all asylum officials within their administrations are trained in the core aspects of the European asylum curriculum.

As provided for in Article 6 of the regulation, EASO will devote particular attention to the development and implementation of training tailored to meet the needs of courts and tribunals in the Member States.

EASO will, to the extent of its capacities, develop training in response to continuous or ad hoc training needs identified by Member States. Other relevant stakeholders may propose areas for further training that will be developed upon agreement between EASO and Member States.

<sup>(1)</sup> As provided for in Articles 10 and 7 of the regulation.

<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 on enhanced intra-EU solidarity in the field of asylum (COM(2011) 835 final of 12 December 2011), Section 1.2. Available on the Internet ([http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/201112/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v6.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/201112/1_EN_ACT_part1_v6.pdf)).

EASO will periodically report on the implementation of training activities and relevant achievements. The timely and accurate provision of data by Member States through the national contact point network will allow EASO to successfully exercise this function.

## Step II — Conception of training methodologies and tools

EASO will review and strengthen existing training resources and take an inclusive approach in the development of new tools and selection of new training methodologies. Training methodologies will include the preparation of e-learning courses and the organisation of face-to-face workshops, train-the-trainer courses and seminars. EASO also envisages the drafting and publication of manuals, handbooks or guidelines <sup>(1)</sup> and remains open to consider other methodologies such as webinars or online tutorials.

The development of new tools will be suited to the needs of Member States. In the process of conceiving new training resources, EASO will consider the availability of time, cost efficiency and adaptability of tools to different audiences.

EASO will, in collaboration with Member States, take the lead and contribute in-house expertise to the development and updating of training tools. Member States will be invited to contribute to the process through the deployment of content experts who will support EASO throughout the drafting process. EASO will retain ultimate responsibility for the content of the training material (an EASO coordinator will be nominated for each specific training development), and may retain the responsibility to take a final decision should discrepancies arise among experts.

Whereas the development of new curricula or more substantial updates will require the deployment of Member State experts; other minor revisions or those aimed at reflecting new policy or legal developments will be undertaken by EASO.

EASO will also draw on the expertise of the reference group and other relevant actors in the field of asylum. They will be invited to support the process at different stages of the development and updating phases.

Training tools will be developed in English and will be divided in three main categories.

- **Continuous training** — Continuous training is developed to cover specific subject matters, such as the European asylum curriculum, or tailored to meet the needs of different audiences, such as members of courts and tribunals, asylum managers or members of the asylum intervention pool.

- **The European asylum curriculum (EAC)**

- EASO will continue to devote particular attention to the management, development and implementation of the European asylum curriculum (hereinafter EAC), a system of common vocational training consisting of interactive modules that cover all stages of the asylum procedure. Building on a pilot project transferred to EASO in January 2012, the EAC constitutes the cornerstone of EASO training activities.

EAC courses have been developed for selected subject matters and consist of an efficient blended learning method featuring preparatory self-study modules in online e-learning format that are followed by face-to-face sessions. The courses provide a wide spectrum of case studies and practical exercises based on the experience of different Member States. EASO relies on a train-the-trainer system (with a strong multiplier effect) to facilitate the implementation of EAC within national administrations. For this reason, considerable attention is devoted to the building of didactic skills among future national EAC trainers.

After more than 6 years of extensive development through the pilot project, EASO will engage in a comprehensive revision of the current EAC content. This revision will include a broad editing and harmonisation exercise (including terminology, references and style) and may also lead to the merging or abandonment of modules.

Upon the completion of this comprehensive review, EASO will set up a regular updating mechanism to ensure that relevant developments in the field of asylum are reflected quickly and effectively. The updating mechanism will take into consideration the availability of experts from Member States and from the reference group as well as the resources needed for the online management of modules.

Furthermore, EASO will evaluate the current e-platform and choose the most adequate solution for new training needs. A strong e-learning platform will not only ease the administrative burden of training development and administration on EASO and Member States, but should also allow for the modernisation of

<sup>(1)</sup> The publication of training resources may include the adoption of technical documents in application of Article 12(2) of the regulation.

the learning tools and techniques used in the current curriculum.

- **Training curriculum available to members of courts and tribunals** — In cooperation with relevant stakeholders and representatives of courts and tribunals in the Member States, EASO will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the training needs of Member States' judicial and quasi-judicial authorities. Based on this evaluation, EASO will develop a specific curriculum to support quality enhancement and harmonisation of decisions across the EU.
- **Development of training to support Member States under particular pressure** — <sup>(1)</sup> One of the key functions of EASO is to support Member States that are subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception systems. Such support will often involve the design and implementation of training activities.

In this context, EASO will, to the extent possible, build on existing training resources and expertise. EAC, as a ready-to-use curriculum that covers relevant asylum matters, may be of particular relevance. Being partly managed online, it also gives great flexibility for implementation at short notice. The main difference with the regular use of EAC is that, in case of particular pressure, national training sessions can be directly organised in the specific country under particular pressure. For this purpose, EASO will rely on trainers from the EASO asylum intervention pool and could shorten the online training period. In line with the regulation <sup>(2)</sup>, EASO will develop methodologies to provide experts who are part of the asylum intervention pool with timely specialist training relevant to their duties and functions when an action to support Member States under particular pressure is foreseen.

Should the use of EAC at short notice be hindered by the unavailability of translation for non-English-speaking contexts, EASO would consider the implementation of face-to-face sessions through the use of interpreters.

EASO may also request that Member States support the accelerated development of ad hoc training strategies through the deployment of content and training experts. Training in this context will be guided by the principles and plans

governing the provision of specific support to Member States under particular pressure and provided in coordination with the deployment of asylum intervention teams.

- **Other training initiatives** — EASO will remain open to considering its engagement in other relevant initiatives, regardless of whether they can be comprised under the above categories. These initiatives may include the development of training activities in cooperation with other agencies (such as Frontex, CEPOL and FRA); participation in training organised by other actors (e.g. UNHCR); the provision of specific training as part of the development of thematic action plans (e.g. as part of the implementation of the EU action plan on unaccompanied minors 2010–14); or the development of specific training resources (such as training on the EASO COI portal).

In line with the regulation, EASO may also engage in training activities to support the enhancement of asylum and reception capacities in third countries in the context of capacity building and external dimension initiatives <sup>(3)</sup>.

### Step III — Selection and establishment of an EASO training and expert pool

EASO acknowledges the heavy reliance of the training system on the expertise made available by Member States through their national trainers and deployment of training and content experts to the EASO training and expert pool. Without the support, commitment and enthusiasm of Member State experts, EASO would not be in a position to deliver quality up-to-date training.

- **National trainers** — Member States are, in consultation with EASO, invited to identify and propose national trainers among experienced, motivated and skilled asylum officials. While the training pool is generally restricted to members of national asylum administrations, EASO may exceptionally include other relevant actors (such as UNHCR staff) to support training in specific areas. All national trainers will be provided thorough content and didactic training. EASO will establish

<sup>(1)</sup> EAC training has been already provided through the implementation of EASO's operating plan for Luxembourg in January 2012 and its operating plan for Greece throughout 2012. The positive evaluation of these activities confirmed the benefits of using EAC as a training tool to support countries under particular pressure.

<sup>(2)</sup> Reference is made to Article 6(6) of the regulation.

<sup>(3)</sup> As provided for in Article 7 of the regulation. In this context, EASO is taking part in the implementation of a pilot project, 'Quality and training in the asylum processes', within the framework of the Prague process — building migration partnerships (BMP) dialogue. The project is based on action 2 of Chapter VI — Strengthening capacities in the area of asylum and international protection of the Prague process action plan 2012–16. Further information on the adoption of the Prague Process is available on the Internet (<http://pl2011.eu/en/content/prague-process-action-plan-adopted-2012-2016>).

criteria and procedures for the certification of national trainers. Once certified, national trainers will provide training to their peers at the national level. Additionally, trainers may be called to support specific regional or external training initiatives.

- **EASO training and expert pool** — EASO has set up an EU-wide training and expert pool to coordinate the involvement of Member State experts in the development and implementation of training activities. The pool, which is divided into the three following categories, will be managed by EASO in coordination with Member States.
  - **EASO training experts** — EASO will, in consultation with Member States, continue to identify experienced national trainers. These expert trainers are called to support EASO in the implementation of train-the-trainer sessions at the EU level. While the pool is generally restricted to members of national asylum administrations, EASO may exceptionally include other relevant actors (such as UNHCR) to support training in specific areas.

In order to broaden the expert base and promote a fruitful training dynamic, EASO foresees the deployment of teams of at least two trainers. Furthermore, efforts are made to combine the deployment of more experienced and less experienced trainers and to maintain a geographical and regional balance.

To enhance trainers' didactic, coaching and tutoring skills, and in addition to the didactic training provided within EAC, EASO will hold annual didactic seminars that will serve as refresher sessions and give trainers the opportunity to share experiences and best practices.

- **EASO content experts** — Member States will, following the request of EASO, continue to identify subject matter experts to support the development and updating of training tools. Besides the exercise of its core function, EASO may draw on the expertise of the pool for other relevant matters and promote dialogue among its members through the organization of specialised meetings and facilitation of informal communication.
- **EASO didactic experts** — In line with EASO's commitment to the provision of high quality training, EASO has also established a pool of didactic experts. Members of the didactic expert pool support EASO in the development of training resources and implementation of activities (including, but not restricted to, the facilitation of didactic workshops and seminars).

## Step IV — Implementation of training tools at the national level

Training practices vary amongst Member States. This variation equally affects the development of national training and the implementation of EASO training tools. EASO will seek an increased commitment to training amongst Member States through the raising of awareness on the relevance of training with regard to the achievement of the core objectives of the common European asylum system.

To the extent possible, the implementation of EASO training activities will follow a train-the-trainer system. Through this system, EASO will set up an annual training plan for the provision of training to selected national trainers who will, upon certification, organise and deliver training to their peers at the national level. This system does not only maximise EASO training efforts but also allows greater flexibility in the organisation of training events and provides for a durable capacity within Member States. Depending on the availability of resources, EASO may provide for the participation of national asylum officials in the general train-the-trainer sessions regardless of their nomination to become certified trainers. Exceptions may be made to fill in spaces in open courses as well as to facilitate the provision of training to asylum officials on matters that are not covered by their Member States' training plans.

EASO will mostly rely on Member States for the translation of training resources for non-English-speaking audiences. Member States may count on the support of EASO in the process of managing the translations, uploading them into the platform when required and identifying other EU funding opportunities to cover their cost. With regard to the latter, EASO will promote cooperation and dialogue among Member States.

EASO will further support regional cooperation and the sharing of information on training initiatives from which more than one Member State could potentially benefit. Additionally, EASO may support the organisation of training activities at a regional level with the aim of reducing organisational costs and promoting regional cooperation.

To facilitate the management of training activities, EASO will encourage and assist Member States in the adoption of concrete annual national training plans. Progress on the implementation of national action plans will be measured and presented to Member States through the EASO training cockpit. EASO will manage and further develop an online training platform for the implementation of the EAC or other relevant training initiatives.

## Step V — Evaluation and quality control

EASO will adopt standard procedures for the development and updating of training resources. These procedures will regulate the involvement of the reference group and other relevant stakeholders in the quality evaluation of training tools and establish mechanisms to facilitate the identification of quality concerns. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring the consistency and compliance of the training tools with the standards set in international and European law and jurisprudence.

A comprehensive review of existing training resources will be undertaken throughout 2012 and 2013 with a view to improving the quality and consistency of the existing training tools. Following this review, a clear methodology will be adopted and followed for the regular updating and publication of EASO training material.

The quality of training will also benefit from the establishment of criteria and procedures for the certification and evaluation of national and EASO training experts.

EASO will also enhance and standardise the existing evaluation mechanisms (e.g. through online questionnaires and evaluation forms). The content of these evaluations will be taken into account in the process of updating and developing training tools. Likewise, EASO will encourage informal and formal communication with all relevant parties regarding the identification of potential areas of improvement.

In line with the regulation, EASO will also develop methodologies to evaluate and assess the impact of training activities that have been carried out and make a comprehensive comparative analysis with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the common European asylum system.

While EASO is fully committed to this training strategy the commitment of Member States and their involvement at all levels is decisive in the implementation.