



EASO/2016/COS/924

EASO SPECIAL SUPPORT PLAN TO BULGARIA

- Amendment No 1 -

The EASO Special Support Plan to Bulgaria is in force since 5 December 2014, signed by the Executive Director of EASO and the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria, for a duration up to the end of June 2016.

Given the specific request of the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees dated 1 June 2016 for an extension of the duration of the Plan with additional 12 months and adjusted needs in the scope of the support measures, the amendments (marked in *Italics*), as described in Annex I, are hereby agreed.

EASO shall send a copy of the amendment to the Members of the EASO Management Board.

SIGNED

Luxembourg, 10 June 2016

The Executive Director
of the European Asylum
Support Office

Mr Jose Carreira

The Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Interior
of the Republic of Bulgaria

Ms Rumiana Bachvarova



Annex I

This Special Support Plan lays down the conditions and objectives of EASO’s specific technical and operational assistance to Bulgaria until *30 June 2017* and sets out the conditions for participation in these specific EASO activities.

The implementation period of the EASO Measures is extended until 30 June 2017.

Based on changed needs, the implementation of Measure BG 4: Support in the provision of procedural safeguards and improved reception conditions for children and unaccompanied minors, Measure BG 6: Support with capacity building in COI and EASO Measure BG 7: Support with developing practical training tools for interpreters in the asylum determination procedure are no longer foreseen.

- EASO Measure BG 8 is merged into Measure BG 1, as follows:

EASO Measure BG 1: Support in complying with the EU Asylum Acquis and practical application of quality tools in the asylum procedure	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees Ministry of Interior Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Current situation	Bulgaria (BG) is currently in the process of transposing the new EU Asylum Acquis into the national legislation.
Objective(s)	EU Asylum Acquis is fully transposed in BG national legislation. <i>An effective quality management system of the BG asylum procedure is in place.</i>
Pre-conditions(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator. - <i>BG will make available quality tools currently used.</i> - <i>Ensuring that the support under this measure is consistent with and complements the ongoing work under the EASO Quality Matrix as well as other relevant EASO products.</i>
EASO support	<i>2 activities / 4 experts / 5 calendar days each</i> <i>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</i> Translation of EASO Quality Tools.
Implementation	<i>2016: Q3-Q4; 2017: Q1, Q2</i>
Deliverable(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Capacity building and support in the systematic and practical application of quality tools delivered by EASO in the framework of the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.</i> 2. <i>A quality management system developed and implemented.</i>

- EASO Measure BG 2 is amended as follows:

EASO Measure BG 2: Support with the identification and referral of vulnerable groups at entry points and with the asylum registration process	
Responsible	State Agency for Refugees



Authorities	Ministry of Interior, Chief Directorate Border Police
Current situation	<p>Screening of persons with special needs (vulnerable categories and unaccompanied minors in particular) is carried out in a fragmented and non-systematic way and lacks timely intra institutional exchange of information, identification and referral according to the Asylum Procedures Directive.</p> <p>UNHCR's project called "Response to vulnerability in asylum" (RVA) has developed checklists and a methodology to support the identification of person with specific needs applying for international protection.</p> <p>Within the EASO Operating Plan to Bulgaria, implemented from 01/11/2013 – 30/09/2014, a first data collection on existing referral procedures was undertaken. In addition, a registration manual as well as a manual on the identification of vulnerable groups was developed.</p>
Objective(s)	<p>Improved capacity to identify and refer vulnerable asylum applicants and respond to their special procedural and reception needs.</p> <p>Improved exchange of relevant information between the different institutions, ensuring the necessary and timely identification, registration and referral to the asylum procedure, securing the access to the procedure in line with the Asylum Procedures Directive.</p>
Pre-condition(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appointment of staff responsible for subject-related topics. – Appointment of a coordination group of the stakeholders involved. – The identification and referral mechanism shall build on the EASO Quality Tool on the Identification of Persons with Special Needs.
EASO support	<p><i>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</i></p> <p><i>2 activities / 4 experts / 3 calendar days each</i></p> <p><i>1 activity / 2 experts / 2 calendar days each</i></p>
Implementation	2016: Q2-Q3; 2017: Q1
Deliverable(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A national identification and referral mechanism for vulnerable groups developed and implemented, in cooperation with responsible Bulgarian authorities. 2. <i>Implementing guidelines describing the procedure on the identification of persons with special needs by different stakeholders drafted.</i> 3. <i>A workshop organised for the improved coordination amongst different stakeholders and training on the use of the implementing guidelines for the identification and referral mechanism.</i>

- EASO Measure BG 3 is amended as follows:

EASO Measure BG 3: Support in the field of reception and social activities	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees
Current situation	Significant improvements in reception capacity and conditions have been made since



	<p>the end of 2013. The reception and accommodation centres of SAR have increased. Currently, there is sufficient reception capacity to manage current flows, as well as some emergency capacity. Basic reception conditions have improved drastically. Further development of strategic planning and policy development for SAR would be important for maintaining and improving quality standards, including tools such as Standard Operating Procedures, coordination between the various units of SAR HQ as well as the registration and reception centres, complaint mechanisms. Further improvements in access to social workers and education are still necessary as well.</p> <p>The 'National Strategy for the Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria' (2014 - 2020) was adopted in July 2014, however there is no approved action plan nor financial framework for implementing the Strategy yet.</p>
Objective(s)	Enhanced capacity of the State Agency for Refugees in managing and developing improved reception facilities in order to fulfil national and international obligations in the field of reception of asylum seekers and integration of beneficiaries of international protection in Bulgaria.
Pre-condition(s)	– BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator.
EASO support	<p>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</p> <p>1 activity / 2 experts / 2 calendar days each</p> <p>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</p> <p>1 activity / 2 experts / 2 calendar days each</p>
Implementation	2016: Q2-Q4; 2017: Q1
Deliverable (s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Hands-on support as well as practical and strategic advice delivered on managing and developing improved reception facilities: proposal drafted for the development of tools for the enhancement of reception conditions and management of the reception system, as well as enhancement of the situation of children and UAMs in reception centres</i> 2. <i>Relevant stakeholders provided with on-the-job coaching in the use and application of the proposals in practice</i> 3. <i>Support in the preparation of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in the asylum and reception process delivered, for the efficient referral of beneficiaries of international protection to the integration system (as regards language courses, social services, education system, etc.), with a special focus on children and UAMs.</i> 4. <i>Support provided in enhancing coordination and cooperation with external stakeholders involved in the integration process.</i>

- A new EASO Measure BG 4 is introduced, as follows:

NEW EASO Measure BG 4: Support in the field of statistics and data analysis	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees
Current situation	In Article 6, "a", of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the



	<p><i>Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, it is provided that for the purpose of “enhancement of Member States’ capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies and procedures”, the Fund shall support, in particular, the following actions: “actions enhancing the capacity of Member States — including in relation to the mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis management established in Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (19) — to collect, analysis and disseminate qualitative and quantitative data and statistics on asylum procedures, reception capacities, resettlement and the transfer of applicants for and/or beneficiaries of international protection from one Member State to another.”</i></p> <p><i>In this context, enhancing the statistical and analytical capacity of the State Agency for Refugees is essential. SAR’s activities at the present time are limited to statistical data collection, but there is no unit dealing with data analysis. Due to restrained functionalities of SAR’s automated information system – “Refugees”, a big part of the statistics provided to EASO and Eurostat are collected manually.</i></p>
Objective(s)	<p><i>The capacity of the State Agency for Refugees for information and documentation management is enhanced.</i></p> <p><i>The Automated Information System – “Refugees”, is optimized.</i></p> <p><i>Coordination between the different stakeholders involved in data analysis is improved.</i></p>
Pre-condition(s)	<p><i>– BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator.</i></p>
EASO support	<p><i>3 activities / 6 experts / 3 calendar days each</i></p> <p><i>1 activity / 2 experts / 2 calendar days each</i></p>
Implementation	<p><i>2016: Q3, Q4, 2017: Q1</i></p>
Deliverable (s)	<p><i>1. Capacity building delivered: needs assessment and follow-up; provision of know-how, best practices and expertise on automated systems and databases;</i></p> <p><i>2. A workshop organised for the improved coordination amongst different stakeholders on the use of data analysis.</i></p>

- EASO Measure BG 5 is amended as follows:

EASO Measure BG 5: Support with the development, implementation of relevant methodology and training in the field of age assessment	
Responsible authorities	<p>State Agency for Refugees</p> <p>Ministry of Interior, Chief Directorate Border Police including Migration Directorate</p>
Current situation	<p>There are currently only limited procedures in place to assess the age of asylum applicants, and there is a lack of clarity of the responsibilities of different stakeholders in developing a protocol. In general, there is little awareness of the age assessment methods adopted in other Member States.</p> <p>Within the framework of the EASO Operating Plan to Bulgaria, the report “EASO age assessment practice in Europe” was translated into Bulgarian.</p>
Objective(s)	<p>Enhanced capacity of the relevant stakeholders to use a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach in age assessment and in referring unaccompanied minors to suitable</p>



	facilities.
Pre-conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator. – Appointment of a coordination group of the stakeholders involved.
EASO support	<i>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</i> <i>2 activities / 4 experts / 2 calendar days each</i>
Implementation	<i>2016: Q3-Q4; 2017: Q1</i>
Deliverable(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Age assessment methodology developed, including specific instructions/guidelines for stakeholders implementing the age assessment methodology.</i> 2. <i>Two workshops delivered to introduce the age assessment system to the relevant stakeholders organised.</i>

- EASO Measure BG 9 becomes new EASO Measure BG 6 and it is amended as follows:

NEW EASO Measure BG 6: Support with contingency planning	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees Ministry of Interior
Current situation	<p>EASO set up an Early Warning and Preparedness System introduced by the Dublin III Regulation, which aims at preventing crises arising from particular pressures on, or internal shortcomings of, national asylum systems. There is a strong need for contingency planning for ensuring that national asylum systems function properly. These elements set the scene for ensuring the further harmonisation of practices and for strengthening solidarity and practical cooperation among the Member States.</p> <p>In April 2014, the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior developed a National plan for increasing the readiness for reacting in case of increased migration flows. The implementation of the plan continued until 31st December 2014. The Plan is a prolongation of the Action Plan for Managing the Crisis Situation (November 2013 – April 2014). The main goals set in the new Plan are: 1) decreasing the number of illegal immigrants at the territory of the country and 2) enhancing the capacity for accommodation of foreign nationals and establishing humane living conditions at the accommodation places.</p>
Objective(s)	National preparedness framework/contingency plan operational – in which reception conditions and access to the asylum procedure should be made available as soon as possible, avoiding delays and creation of backlog.
Pre-conditions(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator. – BG will make available the national plan for increasing the readiness for reacting in case of increased migration flows. – <i>EASO will make use of its Practical Handbook on contingency planning, in accordance with EASO WP 2016 Rev2.</i>
EASO support	<i>1 activity / 2 experts / 5 calendar days each</i> <i>1 activity / 2 experts / 3 calendar days each</i>



Implementation	2016: Q4; 2017: Q1-Q2
Deliverable(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National contingency plan developed, <i>following the structure and methodology provided by EASO Practical Handbook on contingency planning.</i> 2. Guidance provided as to the analysis and assessment of indicators in order to determine when an emergency situation has come into effect.

- EASO Measure BG 12 becomes new EASO Measure BG 7 and it is amended as follows:

NEW EASO Measure BG 7: Support with the professional development in 1st instance and judicial instance	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees National Institute of Justice Relevant Administrative Courts
Current situation	The responsible authorities are in the process of further strengthening their capacity in the field of asylum.
Objective(s)	Improved capacity of stakeholders involved in asylum-related matters at 1 st instance and the judicial instance.
Pre-condition(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BG will appoint a Coordinator by each responsible authority. – Workshop topics to be indicated by responsible authorities. – Training location(s) and further facilities if needed provided by stakeholders national institutions.
EASO support	<i>5 activities / 10 experts / 2 calendar days each</i>
Implementation	<i>2016: Q2-Q4; 2017: Q1-Q2</i>
Deliverable(s)	<i>5 tailor-made workshops and subsequent on-the-job coaching delivered on the practical application of Common European Asylum System.</i>

- EASO Measure BG 10: Support with regard to training in the EASO Training Curriculum and EASO Measure BG 13: Study visits of Bulgarian officials in the field of asylum and reception to EU Member States, are merged into NEW EASO Measure BG 8, as follows:

NEW EASO Measure BG 8: Professional development and Study visits of Bulgarian officials in the field of asylum and reception to EU Member States	
Responsible authorities	State Agency for Refugees Ministry of Interior, Chief Directorate Border Police Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Administrative Courts dealing with the review of asylum cases
Objectives	<i>On-going exchange and cooperation between the Bulgarian authorities and /Courts and other Member States in the field of asylum and reception.</i> <i>Enhance the capacity for the State Agency for Refugees and responsible bodies in the Ministry of Interior to implement the instruments of the Common European Asylum System and strengthen the cooperation with other Member States.</i>



	<i>Enhance the capacity of staff in support of the enhancement of quality and harmonisation in the area of international protection, by appropriate professional training in EASO Training Curriculum modules, ultimately contributing to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System.</i>
<i>Pre-condition(s)</i>	– <i>Appointment of a Coordinator by each responsible authority.</i>
<i>EASO support</i>	<i>6 activities / 12 experts in total / 4 calendar days each 15 activities / 15 experts in total / 2 calendar days each 3 activities / 15 experts in total / 2 calendar days each</i>
<i>Implementation</i>	<i>2016: Q2-Q4; 2017: Q1-Q2</i>
<i>Deliverable(s)</i>	<i>1. 18 Bulgarian experts are trained in the EASO Training Curriculum modules, attending as Category A the training courses organised during 2016-2017. 2. 20 Bulgarian experts are attending as Category A the professional development activities organised by EASO during 2016-2017. 3. Three study visits organised in the Member State.</i>

- EASO Measure BG 11 (Support with regard to training in the regulations of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund/Regulations 514/2014 and 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council) becomes new EASO Measure BG 9 and it is amended as follows:

<i>New EASO Measure BG 9: Support with regard to training in the regulations of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund</i>	
<i>Responsible authorities</i>	<i>Ministry of Interior</i>
<i>Current situation</i>	<i>International Projects Directorate has been appointed as Responsible Authority for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).</i>
<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Capacity of the Ministry of Interior staff improved in the area of AMIF project awarding, implementation, monitoring and reporting.</i>
<i>Pre-condition(s)</i>	– <i>BG will appoint a Measure Coordinator.</i> – <i>BG will provide premises for the workshops and a list of participants 20 days before the events begin.</i>
<i>EASO support</i>	<i>1 activity / 2 experts / 2 calendar days each 2 activities / 4 experts / 2 calendar days each</i>
<i>Implementation</i>	<i>2016: Q2-Q4; 2017: Q1-Q2</i>
<i>Deliverable(s)</i>	<i>1. Training delivered for existing staff from the Ministry of Interior, covering the following subjects: monitoring, verification and evaluation, clearance of accounts. 2. Two workshops delivered for officials of the Responsible Authority in the field of asylum and integration.</i>



- EASO Measure BG 14 (Mid-term review and final evaluation of the implementation of the EASO Special Support Plan to Bulgaria) becomes NEW EASO Measure BG 10, as follows:

NEW EASO Measure BG 10: Final evaluation of the implementation of the EASO Special Support Plan to Bulgaria	
<i>Responsible authority</i>	<i>EASO</i>
<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Evaluation of the implementation of the EASO Special Support Plan to Bulgaria.</i>
<i>Pre-condition(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– <i>Appointment of staff responsible for subject-related topics.</i>– <i>Aggregate and summarise the views of the Bulgarian authorities.</i>– <i>Ensure that the evaluation team has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents related to the Special Support Plan.</i>
<i>EASO support</i>	<i>1 activity / 3 experts / 5 calendar days each</i>
<i>Implementation</i>	<i>2017: Q2</i>
<i>Deliverable(s)</i>	<i>Completed final evaluation, which will assess the performance of the EASO Special Support Plan to Bulgaria, as well as identify key lessons and proposing practical recommendations for follow-up actions.</i>