

2020 OPERATIONAL & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE¹ PLAN
AGREED BY EASO AND GREECE

Valletta Harbour and Athens
20 December 2019

¹ Operational & Technical Assistance Plans include Operating Plans and Special Support Plans

Having regard to Articles 8, 10 and 13 to 23 of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter 'EASO Regulation'),

The Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter 'EASO')

and

The Alternate Minister for Citizens' Protection of Greece

Hereby agree on the Operating Plan (hereinafter 'the Plan') for the deployment of Asylum Support Teams and the provision of technical and operational assistance to Greece from 1 January until 31 December 2020.

Any amendments or adaptations of this Plan shall be agreed in accordance with Article 18(2) of the EASO Regulation.

EASO shall share a copy of the Plan with the Members of the EASO Management Board for information.

Valletta Harbour and Athens

Executive Director. of the
European Asylum Support
Office

Alternate Minister for Citizens' Protection of
Greece

Nina Gregori

Giorgos Koumoutsakos

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legal Framework

Article 13 of the EASO Regulation states:

1. A Member State (or Member States) subject to particular pressure may request EASO for deployment of an Asylum Support Team. The requesting Member State or Member States shall provide, in particular a description of the situation, indicate the objectives of the request for deployment and specify the estimated deployment requirements.
2. In response to such a request, EASO may coordinate the necessary technical and operational assistance to the requesting Member State(s) and the deployment, for a limited time, of an Asylum Support Team in the territory of that Member State(s) on the basis of an Operating Plan.²
3. All EASO activities performed in the context of the support and technical assistance as identified in the plan herewith fall under the legal framework of the host Member State. This includes, inter-alia, the safety and security of persons and assets participating in those EASO activities.

1.2 Operational Situation and Needs Assessment

Being the main recipient country of third-country nationals attempting to reach Europe through the Eastern Mediterranean route, Greece, has been called to manage an extremely volatile migratory situation over the last years. The unprecedented influx of third-country nationals from Turkey to Greece in **2015 (861,630** persons, almost exclusively concerning sea arrivals), which continued with the same pace during the first months of 2016, led to the introduction of the EU-Turkey Statement which entered into force on 20 March 2016. While the implementation of this agreement (alongside with other measures preventing irregular border-crossing along the Western Balkan route) had an immediate effect resulting in drastically fewer new arrivals, a considerable constant flow of new arrivals has continued in Greece the following years (**36,310 in 2017** and **50,508 in 2018**). Specifically for 2018, the arrivals which increased by 34% compared to the preceding year, reflected the high volume of land crossings from Turkey to Greece (18,014), indicating that third-country nationals are exploring alternative pathways to Greece, not covered by the implemented EU-Turkey statement³.

Until September **2019, 36,141** persons have arrived on the Greek islands a higher figure compared to the respective period in 2018 with an increasing trend entering the summer months. Irregular land crossings remain also in high levels – almost **10.000** third-country nationals have crossed the EL-TR land borders in the first six months of the year. Recent flows concern mainly persons from **Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Palestine** but also third-country nationals from Central Africa (primarily **Democratic Republic of Congo**). The main entry points to Greece through the sea so far in 2019 are the islands of Lesbos and Samos, while increasing numbers of disembarkations are also reported in Chios and in smaller southern Dodecanese islands.

The volume of asylum applications has been constantly rising over the past years. From a total of **13,187** applications lodged in **2015**, Greek Asylum Service registered almost 3 times more asylum claims during the following year (**51,053 in 2016**). The annual total of applications further increased in **2017 (58,641)** and reached another record-high level in **2018 (66,967** lodged applications), a year during which the number of asylum applications at EU level has been notably decreased. Until September **2019, 48,554** applications have been registered in the 18 regional offices and asylum units in Greece. In parallel with the rise in the overall volume of applications, the number of asylum applications

² Asylum Support Teams are composed of Member States deployed experts, contracted temporary workers and EASO staff.

³ UNHCR Operational Portal: Refugee Situation Greece, accessed 06 November 2019

submitted by unaccompanied minors (UAM) has greatly increased, from **383** in **2015** to **2,639** in **2018** and **2,127** UAM applications already in the first ten months of **2019**⁴.

The **Greek Dublin Unit** remained under heavy pressure in 2018. Despite the significant drop in outgoing Dublin requests (from **9,556** in 2017 to **5,120** in 2018, a 46 % decrease), most of which relating to family reunification or humanitarian reasons (take charge requests), an overwhelming increase was noted for incoming requests (from **2,134** in 2017 to **9,216** in 2018), with most of the cases concerning third-country nationals having applied for asylum or having entered irregularly in Greece and then sought international protection in another Member State. For both types of requests, 2019 figures so far indicate a slightly increased workload for the Dublin Unit as in the past year (**3,831** outgoing and **8,709** incoming requests during the first ten months of the current year)⁵.

As regards the second instance status determination procedure, the volume of the lodged appeals has been showing a significant year by year increase since 2015 when applicants had appealed against **3,712** first-instance decisions – five times as many appeals (**15,292**) were lodged last year compared to four years ago. Based on the number of appellants in the first ten months of **2019 (11,316)**, asylum applications channeled to the **Appeals Authority** for determination by the independent Appeals Committees remain at comparable levels with 2018.⁶

The constantly increasing pressure on all stages of asylum examination in Greece, which became particularly intense after the end of the relocation program in 2017, is directly reflected in the backlog of the competent authorities. At the end of **2018, 76,330** applications had been pending at all instances, a 60 % increase compared to the backlog at the end of **2017 (47,815** pending cases). It is estimated⁷ that around four fifths of these applications are pending at first-instance with the remaining awaiting for a final decision at the appeal stage. On average, almost **2,400 more applications** were being added to the backlog of Greek Asylum Service and Appeals Authority **every month in 2018**, indicating that the processing capacity of the national authorities needs to be urgently enhanced. At the end of July 2019, **84,390** applications at all instances remained unresolved⁸.

The constant flow of arrivals through sea and land borders combined with the increasing trend of asylum applications and appeals continues to put **significant pressure on the Reception and Asylum systems in Greece**, which are already accommodating a substantial number of applicants, already present in Greece since previous years, whose cases are still pending at different stages of the asylum procedure. Specifically for the Eastern Aegean islands, despite efforts from the authorities to decongest the hotspots, the reception situation remains alarming - at the beginning of November 2019, **35,482** persons were residing in the reception facilities, almost four (4) times as many as indicated as the official prescribed capacity (**9,138**). The majority was located in the hotspots or in other official structures (93 %) with the remaining finding shelter in facilities managed by UNHCR or NGOs (5 %) or in Police custody (2 %). **Lesvos** was hosting the largest population with almost 17,000 third-country nationals officially reported, while close to 6,400 third-country nationals were recorded in **Samos**, almost seven (7) times the reception capacity of the island. All other islands were hosting more persons compared to the official capacity rendering conditions in these islands extremely challenging⁹. On the mainland, the accommodation scheme is comprised of reception sites, apartments, hotels and buildings. The majority of these facilities are run under the auspices of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and Ministry of Defense by IOM (and SMS partners), UNHCR and other IOs and CSOs

⁴ Asylum Service Statistical data, as published at [official website](#), accessed 06 November 2019

⁵ Asylum Service Statistical data-Dublin Regulation III, as published at [official website](#), accessed 12 July 2019

⁶ Asylum Service Statistical data, as published at [official website](#), accessed 12 July 2019

⁷ AIDA Country Report: Greece, 2018 update, Based on input received from Appeals Authority

⁸ <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> accessed on 07 November

⁹ Data published by the Greek national coordination centre for Border control, immigration and Asylum (N.C.C.B.C.I.A.)

1.3 Flexibility Clause

The Plan aims to provide timely, active and flexible support to the identified needs of the Host Member State. The foreseen activities will be implemented in consideration of the changing circumstances of the international protection and reception systems in the Member States, as well as any specific circumstances on the ground, and subject to the availability of financial resources and experts.

The schedule of the measures and tasks in the Plan is a forecast and may change. Any change will be subject to a discussion between EASO and the Host Member State. The Executive Director of EASO is authorised to make changes that may be accommodated within the objectives of a measure without requiring an amendment of the Plan, provided that they do not affect the overall budget and that the Host Member State is timely informed in writing.

The Plan may be revised including suspension or termination of Measures at any time in order to reflect new operational developments in accordance with Article 18(2) of the EASO Regulation.

1.4 Lawfulness and Respect for Fundamental Rights

Support related to the participation in EASO activities under this Plan must be carried out in a way that fully respects human dignity. All personnel involved in operational support activities shall maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, respect and promotion of fundamental rights and international protection. This particularly applies vis-à-vis persons who are in need of international protection. Personnel is expected to meet obligations imposed upon them by the provisions of this Plan, in compliance with the requirements of the CEAS.

Whilst taking part in the EASO operational support activities, all personnel shall respect the applicable International law, European Union law and the national law of the Host Member State. They shall maintain the highest standards of integrity and conduct. They are to act responsibly and proportionally to current objectives. Whilst carrying out supporting functions, all personnel must not discriminate persons on grounds of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, age or sexual orientation. All persons are expected to treat every person with courtesy, respect and due consideration for the nature of any legitimate activity in which they are engaged. To perform their duties properly, they shall serve the public interest and refrain from any activities which could undermine or compromise their independence and the appropriate performance of their duties.

During the implementation of this Plan, all personnel must apply a zero tolerance attitude with respect to the infringement of fundamental human rights. All persons in EASO operational support activities shall comply and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

1.5 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Without prejudice to the public right of access to documents, as laid down in Regulation (EC) 1049/2001¹⁰ and the EASO implementing rules on access to documents¹¹, all versions of this document shall be made available to the competent authorities in each EU Member State, as well as the associate countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This Plan shall be made publicly available once it has been signed by EASO and the Host Member State.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Additional EU data protection legislation applicable to EASO that may enter into force during the implementation period of this Plan shall likewise apply as of the date of entry into force. The current plan also takes into account the General Data Protection Regulation as updated in

¹⁰ Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001, regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

¹¹ Decision No. 6 of the Management Board of EASO of 20 September 2011 laying down practical arrangements regarding public access to the documents of EASO

May 2018¹² with a Corrigendum to the 2016/679 Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (Data Protection Directive).

Whenever processing personal data during the activities agreed within the current Plan, members of Asylum Support Teams will act as data processors on behalf of the competent authorities of the Host Member State, following the applicable EU and national laws and regulations, as well as the instructions received from the Host Member State as the data controller. EASO will implement the necessary technical and organisational measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of the personal data it processes taking into account possible additional instructions received from the Host Member State. This is to prevent any unauthorised disclosure of or access to this information.

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

This chapter of the Plan describes the various measures to support the authorities of the Host Member State in the field of international protection and reception.

EASO will provide technical support to experts participating in this Plan with the aim of ensuring that all deliverables make good use of the expertise and information already available to EASO. All intellectual property rights of the work of the experts performed in the context of the Plan are vested in EASO. Selected deliverables developed under this Plan may be published.

2.1 Main National Partner Organisations

The Host Member State's main organisations involved in this Plan are the following.

Organisation	Responsibilities
Ministry of Citizen Protection (MoCP)	The Ministry is responsible for general coordination, establishment, management and supervision of relevant authorities and policymaking. In the Ministry, Migration Policy falls under the responsibility of the Alternate Minister of Citizen Protection. The Ministry of Citizen Protection and the Ministry of Migration Policy were merged into the new Ministry of Citizen Protection. (Gov. Gaz. 119A/8.09.2019).
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, (MoLSA)	The Ministry in charge of the definition of labour and welfare policies of the Greek Government. Law 4554/2018 on Guardianship of Unaccompanied Minors defines the responsibilities of the Ministry related to unaccompanied and separated minors.
General Secretariat of Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum	General Secretariat of Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum was established in July 2019 under the Ministry of Citizen Protection.
Greek Asylum Service (AS)	The Asylum Service is an independent body under the General Secretary for Migration Policy. in charge of the international protection status determination in Greece.
Appeals Authority (AA)	The Appeals Authority is an independent body under General Secretary for Migration Policy. It examines at second instance administrative (quasi-judicial) appeals lodged against decisions issued by the Asylum Service (first instance). It is composed of Appeals Committees.

¹² Corrigendum, OJ L 127, 23.5.2018, p. 2 ((EU) 2016/679)

Organisation	Responsibilities
Reception & Identification Service (RIS)	RIS is an independent body under the Ministry of Citizen Protection. Its mission is to manage third country nationals who cross the Hellenic borders without legal documents and/or procedures, in an effective manner and under conditions that respect their dignity, by placing them in first reception procedures. It is constituted by the Central Service and the Reception and Identification Regional Services. The Central Service is registered in Athens, has the responsibility of programming, planning and coordinating the activities that are taking place in the Regional Services, ensuring the unrestricted exercise of their function. The Central Service is responsible for ensuring the necessary conditions in order to implement the project of the Regional Services. Apart from planning, the Central Service is responsible to supervise/oversee the implementation of actions that are in line with the National Legislation (National Strategy) as well as with the international commitments of the country. The Central Service cooperates with European and International Organizations, while participating in actions and programmes financed by the E.U. and other institutions.
Department of Protection for Asylum Seekers (DPAS)	DPAS is an independent body under the Ministry of Citizen Protection responsible for the implementation of the national reception policy. It is mainly in charge of the planning, monitoring and implementation of projects for the protection of asylum seekers, including private accommodation scheme and cash assistance, with a special emphasis on vulnerable groups with the exception of unaccompanied and separated minors.
National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA)	The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) is a department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which coordinates the network that provides social support services, care and solidarity to populations experiencing crises or are in need of emergency social aid (par.2, article 6, Law 3106/2003). Under Law 4554/2018, EKKA is responsible for the recruitment and management of professional guardians. Furthermore, EKKA is responsible for the referral mechanism concerning the specialized accommodation of unaccompanied minors in Greece.
Office of the Prime Minister – National Programme for Unaccompanied Minors	The Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for the recently launched national programme, “No Child Alone,” for unaccompanied minors in Greece. The Prime Minister has appointed a National Coordinator to implement this plan.

2.2 Acceptance of Deliverables

Plans address the operational needs of Member States under particular pressure that have requested support from EASO. Such Plans give directions on the delivery of EASO’s technical and operational assistance and the deployment of Asylum Support Teams.

EASO shall ensure quality control of agreed deliverables. Where practical and applicable, steps shall be taken to document the Host Member State’s formal acceptance of deliverables.

2.3 Conditions for Deployment

General rules and conditions for Asylum Support Teams' deployment as well as special instructions for Asylum Support Team members (including databases that they are authorised to consult and the equipment that they may carry in the Host Member State, as well as practical information concerning location of deployment and related workflows) are published on the following platforms:

- EASO Asylum Intervention Pool's National Contact Point platform (EASO AIP NCP);
- EASO Asylum Intervention Pool System (EAIPS)
- EASO country-specific online platforms developed as part of the EASO Information and Documentation System (IDS) (e.g., EASO IDS Greece Operations Platform, EASO IDS Italy Operations Platform, EASO IDS Cyprus Operations Platform, EASO IDS Malta Operations Platform). These platforms are made available to members of ASTs upon their engagement, allowing for preparation for deployment (in case of national experts) and daily implementation of their tasks;
- Relevant thematic pages of the EASO IDS concerning the asylum and reception system of the Host Member State, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background. The Host Member State shall contribute to information concerning the asylum and reception system of the Host Member State, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background to be available on IDS for AST Teams.

Specific Asylum Support Team deployment details are provided under each measure, where applicable.

The Host Member State and EASO will provide Member States' experts with information on the general state of play with regard to the procedure for international protection and reception system in the Host Member State and specific information about the state of play of the deliverables as described in the specific measures. Every effort will be made by the different parties to provide a suitable working place for the expert(s) participating in the activities to implement the Plan. EASO will provide the technical equipment required for the work of the Asylum Support Teams and will reimburse costs incurred by persons participating in the activities, according to the applicable EASO rules.

The Host Member State shall provide EASO with information on the implementation of the Plan through timely input to the Early warning and Preparedness System and the delivery of tailored information on the execution of measures agreed in the Plan.

2.4 Organisational Pre-Conditions

The Host Member State shall grant appropriate access rights for the Asylum Support Team members to all relevant databases and commits to provide the Asylum Support Teams with the required information and data in the context of this Plan.

The Host Member State shall designate an overall Plan Coordinator, as well as a specific Measure Coordinator for each measure stipulated in the Plan. The Host Member State will also facilitate the provision of appropriate working spaces.

As far as operationally feasible, and where relevant, the working files shall be made available by the Host Member State in English (unless otherwise agreed).

Minimum working and security conditions (see section 3) are considered as organisational pre-conditions.

2.5 Implementation Period

The implementation period of this Plan is from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020.

The Plan, including the implementation period, may be revised at any time in order to reflect new operational developments.

2.6 Communication

The Executive Director shall designate the Union Contact Point under Article 20 of the EASO Regulation, who acts as an interface between EASO, the Host Member State, and the Asylum Support Team members. The Union Contact Point provides assistance, on behalf of EASO, on all issues relating to the conditions of deployment of the Asylum Support Teams, monitors the correct implementation of the Plan, and reports to EASO on all aspects of Asylum Support Teams' deployment.

Further, at the end of their deployment, Asylum Support Team members will provide a Final Report to EASO using the template available on the EASO Asylum Intervention Pool System . Feedback from the deployed Asylum Support Team members shall be gathered on the completion of their deployment and prior to reimbursement of expenses.

During the implementation of this Plan, experts as well as other personnel deployed as part of Asylum Support Teams will be briefed regularly on current situational and operational developments to address challenges and identify improvements.

Particular attention shall be paid to the need to continuously develop, improve and make available EASO support tools. Should such need be identified or changed during the plan implementation, it shall be communicated to EASO for further consideration.

The Host Member State and the Union Contact Point will manage the exchange of information concerning the tasks under the Plan.

EASO will maintain close cooperation and communication with the relevant stakeholders. EASO will also provide information to its partners (i.e. the European Commission, concerned EU Agencies, and international organisations) about the operational activities, as appropriate and in line with EASO transparency and communication policies. The timing and content of communication with the media shall be agreed upon between EASO and the Host Member State.

Where relevant the two parties will facilitate media coverage to ensure a wider dissemination and visibility of results.

2.7 Incident reporting

Participants in EASO activities who have reason to believe that a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred or is about to occur, are obliged to report the matter to EASO via the dedicated mailbox (complaints_operations@easo.europa.eu).

Any incidents that may occur during the deployment of an expert in the Asylum Support Teams shall be reported through the same channels. Incident reporting templates can be found on the IDS platform (<https://ids.easo.europa.eu/index.action>).

2.8 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

EASO will implement a structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methodology allowing evidence-based measurement of progress, corrective action-taking and reflective reviews.

In terms of monitoring EASO will make use of a number of tools developed in order to collect input from the implementation of the Plan and to guarantee feedback in real time. These elements will be outlined in a Monitoring Plan and structured in outputs and outcomes focusing on intended results and implementation processes.

Final, periodic or mid-term evaluations can be carried out in order to take stock of lessons learned and good practices. The evaluation(s) will be delivered within the European Commission's methodological guidelines for evaluations. They may be performed externally through engagement of evaluation specialist(s) or by EASO internally. Final evaluations will however always aim at including the involvement of the Host Member State and other stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation findings, as applicable, shall be shared with the Host Member State and communicated to the EASO governance structure (e.g. Management Board members and National Contact Points).

3. SECURITY

EASO should apply the security principles of the Commission's security rules. Commission Decision 443/2013 on the security in the Commission defines, that security shall be based on the principles of legality, transparency, proportionality and accountability.

The safety and security of persons participating in EASO activities under the plan are under the overall legal framework of the Host Member State and shall be provided by the respective authorities legally responsible and accountable for the public order and security on the territory of that Member State.

EASO will endeavor to support the identification of required security measures and the implementation of those that are under its remit, both legally and functionally, in close cooperation with the Host Member State security responsible.

To that end:

- Standard security requirements, identified herewith, should apply as a general rule;
- Specific security requirements for the specific plan, to be identified jointly by EASO and the Host Member State security responsible, and should be established in an annex to this plan.

3.1. Standard security requirements

The standard security requirements are rather pertaining to elements to be present in the implementation of the plan, not to minimum security standards:

- Both the Host Member State on one side and EASO on the other shall appoint a security responsible, acting as a single point of contact for security matters for the operation, both at central and local level.
- A pre-deployment briefing program, drafted in close cooperation with the respective national authorities, focusing both on general security rules and awareness, as well as on specific for the deployments security aspects. With regards of the decentralised nature of deployments, using e-learning and other distance based training techniques should be considered.
- Emergency (evacuation) plan. Certain operational activities, such as hotspots, require that staff shall have a clear guidance and training on how to evacuate quickly in case of emergencies. In a more general context, there could be a need to evacuate from the operational area as well. A security responsible should maintain updated information on the availability of evacuation plan and routes.
- Communication tools. As considered relevant by the EASO Security sector, EASO operational staff should have access to independent radio communication equipment. If possible, the equipment should be interoperable with the local law enforcement in charge of the security of the operation.
- Security of information. Sensitive non-classified and classified information should be protected adequately. EASO security responsible should be involved in supporting the proper classification of relevant information.

- Security of IT and communication equipment. EASO IT equipment is adequately prepared to protect the information level it has been foreseen to process.
- Personal security behavior should be included in the pre-deployment training, led by operational teams and performed for the experts during the first days of arrival to the operational area. This may refer to the EASO code of conduct as well.

Reporting security incidents from the operational area to the EASO HQ is essential with a view of the overall security management.

3.2. Specific security requirements

- Specific security requirements for the implementation of the Operating Plan, in particular security sensitive areas such as hotspots, shall be defined on the basis of a pre-deployment security assessment visit with the aim of identification of specific potential risks, identification of mitigation measures and communication of those measures to the Host Member State and involved stakeholders, prior to the deployment.

4. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

4.1. Cooperation with the European Commission [and EURTF]

All activities under this Plan will be closely coordinated with the Host Member State and with the steady support of the European Commission [as well as with the other Agencies [party to the EURTF]]. When relevant, EASO will participate in EURTF coordination meetings throughout the duration of the Plan.

4.2. Cooperation with UNHCR

In accordance with Article 50 of the EASO Regulation, EASO aims at a coherent and complementary continuation of the fruitful cooperation with UNHCR. The Union Contact Point will liaise with the UNHCR office in the Host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the Host Member State under the current Plan.

4.3. Cooperation with IOM

In accordance with Article 52 of the EASO Regulation, in July 2019 EASO signed a working arrangement with IOM to establish a cooperation framework covering the relevant areas of common work and interest setting objectives and principles of such cooperation. Therefore, the Union Contact Point will liaise with the IOM office in the Host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the Host Member State under the current Plan and in accordance with the working arrangement.

5. MEASURES

<p>Measure EL-AS 1: Enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service and Appeals Authority to implement the asylum procedure efficiently and in a timely manner, ensuring the protection of fundamental rights of applicants for international protection towards the implementation of the EU Asylum Acquis.</p>	
<p>Responsible Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Asylum Service • Appeals Authority
<p>Partner Organisations and Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main direct beneficiary are the Greek Asylum Service and Appeals Authority • Main indirect beneficiaries are the applicants for international protection arriving/present in Greece
<p>Description and Assessment of the Situation</p>	<p>Current situation</p> <p>In 2019 and until September of this year, 36,141 persons have arrived on the Greek islands, with an increasing trend during the months of August and September. Irregular land crossings remain also at high levels – almost 10.000 third-country nationals have crossed the EL-TR land borders in the first nine months of the year. Recent flows concern mainly persons from Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine but also third-country nationals from Central Africa (primarily Democratic Republic of Congo).</p> <p>In the first nine months of 2019, 48,554 applications have been registered in the 18 regional offices and asylum units in Greece. In parallel with the rise in the overall volume of applications, the number of applications submitted by unaccompanied minors has been also greatly increased, from 383 applications in 2015 to 2,639 in 2018 and 2,127 UAM applications already in the first nine months of 2019¹³.</p> <p>The Greek Dublin Unit remained under heavy pressure in 2018, 2019 figures so far (11,316) indicate similar workload for the Dublin Unit as in the past year (3,831 outgoing and 8,709 incoming requests during the first nine months of the current year)¹⁴.</p> <p>As regards the second instance status determination procedure, the volume of the appeals lodged has been showing a significant year by year increase since 2015 when applicants had appealed against 3,712 first-instance decisions – five times as many appeals (15,292) were lodged last year compared to four years ago. Based on the number of appellants in the first nine months of 2019, 11,316¹⁵ asylum applications channeled to the Appeals Authority for status determination by the Appeals Committees increasing in numbers in comparison with 2018.</p>

¹³ Asylum Service Statistical data, as published at [official website](#), accessed 06 November 2019

¹⁴ Asylum Service Statistical data-Dublin Regulation III, as published at [official website](#), accessed 06 November 2019

¹⁵ Asylum Service Statistical data, as published at [official website](#), accessed 06 November 2019

	<p>Member State(s) support request: The following needs have been identified with the stakeholders as part of the comprehensive needs assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for processing of applications for international protection on the islands • Support for processing of applications for international protection on the mainland • Support for timely and proper processing of Dublin applications • Support with information provision to applicants • Support for processing of cases at second instance (preparing files)
Pre-condition(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greek authorities appoint focal points to liaise with EASO and ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring. • Joint standard operating procedures are established and regular coordination meetings are held between concerned representatives of the responsible authorities and EASO to mainstream the collaboration at national level including mainland & islands • Quarterly Project Steering Group meetings take place between EASO and the beneficiary national authorities in order to ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring
Outputs	<p>EL-AS 1.0 EASO support to the Asylum Service & Appeals Authority to strategically plan and manage the Asylum System</p> <p>EL-AS 1.1 EASO support to the Asylum Service for processing applications for international protection at first instance on the islands</p> <p>EL-AS 1.2 EASO support to the Asylum Service for processing applications for international protection at first instance on mainland</p> <p>EL-AS 1.3 EASO support to the Dublin Unit to process outgoing requests according to the Dublin Regulation criteria</p> <p>EL-AS 1.4 EASO support to the Appeals Authority in issuing 2nd instance decisions</p>
Action deliverable(s)	<p>EL-AS 1.0 EASO support to the Asylum Service & Appeals Authority to strategically plan and manage the Asylum System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to strengthen the Asylum Service HQ on quality including the delivery of quality support, COI support. • Support provided to strengthen the Asylum Service HQ on training including, coverage of GAS staff participation to the EASO Train-the-Trainer sessions held in Greece or elsewhere, support and facilitation of national trainings on EASO modules and support and facilitation of operational trainings (central & local level). • Support provided to strengthen the Asylum Service HQ on coordination, planning & processes • Support provided to strengthen the Asylum Service data collection system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to strengthen the Appeals Authority with professional development activities targeting judges & staff <p>EL-AS 1.1 EASO support to the Asylum Service in processing applications for international protection at first instance on the islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided in registering applicants for international protection, as well as information provision and administrative procedures • Support provided in conducting interviews & drafting of opinions • Support provided to improve the timely identification of Dublin cases & the quality of the files submitted to the Dublin Unit • Support provided with interpreters for registration, interviews, information provision and other activities of the Greek Asylum Service <p>EL-AS 1.2 EASO support to the Asylum Service for processing applications for international protection at first instance on the mainland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided in registering applicants for international protection, as well as information provision and administrative procedures • Support provided with conducting interviews & drafting of opinions • Support provided to improve the timely identification of Dublin cases & the quality of the files submitted to the Dublin Unit • Support provided in information provision to applicants for international protection regarding the asylum procedures and the progress of their case through information provision teams and a dedicated hotline • Support provided with interpreters for registration, interviews, information provision and other activities of the Greek Asylum Service <p>EL-AS 1.3 EASO support to the Dublin Unit to process outgoing requests according to the Dublin Regulation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided for Dublin processing of outgoing requests to the Dublin Unit in Athens. • Support provided to enhance the Dublin transfers processing capacity • Support provided to the implementation of special programmes for unaccompanied minors • Support provided for the implementation of voluntary relocation schemes <p>EL-AS 1.4 EASO support to the Appeals Authority in issuing 2nd instance decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided with the preparation of files to support the Appeals Committees. <p>This support (the secondment of research officers) intends to provide technical support to the reduction of backlog by the Courts, and,</p>
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	<p>hence, to improve the timeframe in which decisions are taken. It also intends to improve quality of file preparation as well as consistency of the initial analysis of the appeals ensured through a dedicated support on COI research, in full respect of the principle of judicial independence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to strengthen the Appeals Authority Data Collection System • Support provided, on an ad-hoc basis, with interpreters for hearings and other activities of the Appeals Authority
<p>Inputs</p>	<p>Indicative number of the following inputs:</p> <p>EL-AS 1.0 EASO support to the Asylum Service & Appeals Authority to strategically plan and manage the Asylum System</p> <p>Human resources: 2 statisticians, 3 admin staff to the Coordination Unit of the Asylum Service HQ / MS expert-Interims to the Quality & Training Unit of the Asylum Service HQ based on needs.</p> <p>EL-AS 1.1 EASO support to the Asylum Service for processing applications for international protection at first instance in the Islands</p> <p>Human resources: 14 Info provision/36 registration-admin staff/ 167 Caseworkers/ 167 Interpreters / 6 Dublin assistants.</p> <p>EL-AS 1.2 EASO support to the Asylum Service for processing applications for international protection at first instance in Mainland</p> <p>Human resources: 8 MS Info provision (for 2 months)/ 10 Info provision/55 registration-admin staff/88 Caseworkers/ 88 Interpreters/ 4 Dublin assistants</p> <p>EL-AS 1.3 EASO support to the Dublin Unit to process outgoing request according to the Dublin Regulation criteria</p> <p>Human resources: 1 Legal Officer/ 14 Dublin experts/4 Dublin assistants</p> <p>EL-AS 1.4 EASO support to the Appeals Authority to issue 2nd instance decisions timely</p> <p>Human resources: 12 research officers/ 2 statisticians/ 3 Admin staff</p> <p>For all:</p> <p>Costs for trainings/meetings/workshops</p> <p>EASO will offer training based on needs and availability of resources.</p> <p>Equipment, material and operational support, including works, services, communication/promotional materials, infrastructure items, IT equipment, office supplies and printing provided where required for the joint EASO and national authorities' activities</p>

<p>Measure EL REC 2: Enhanced capacity of the National Reception Authorities to manage and operate the National Reception System, towards the implementation of the minimum EU reception standards.</p>	
<p>Responsible Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Citizen Protection • Department of Protection for Asylum Seekers • Reception and Identification Service • Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA))
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main direct beneficiaries are the Reception, Identification Service, Department of Protection for Asylum Seekers, Department of Protection for Asylum Seekers and the National Centre for Social Solidarity • Main indirect beneficiaries are the applicants for international protection arriving/present in Greece
<p>Description of the Assessment and the Situation</p>	<p>Current situation.</p> <p>The constant flow of arrivals through sea and the land borders combined with the increasing trend of asylum applications and appeals continues to put significant pressure on the reception and asylum systems in Greece, which is already accommodating a substantial number of applicants, already present in Greece since previous years, whose cases are still pending at different stages of the asylum procedure. Specifically, for the Eastern Aegean islands, despite efforts from the authorities to decongest the hotspots, the reception situation remains alarming - at the beginning of November 2019, 35,482 persons were residing in the reception facilities, almost four (4) times as many as indicated in the official prescribed capacity (9,138). The majority was located in the hotspots or in other official structures (93 %) with the remaining finding shelter in facilities managed by UNHCR or NGOs (5 %) or in Police custody (2 %). Lesvos was hosting the largest population with almost 17,000 third-country nationals officially reported, while close to 6,400 third-country nationals were recorded in Samos, almost seven (7) times the reception capacity of the island. All other islands were also hosting more persons compared to the official capacity rendering conditions in these islands extremely challenging¹⁶. On the mainland, the accommodation scheme is comprised of reception sites, apartments, hotels and buildings. The majority of these facilities are run under the auspices of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and Ministry of Defense by IOM (and SMS partners), UNHCR, and other IOs and CSOs.</p> <p>To address the capacity building needs of the authorities within this context, EASO cooperates closely with UNHCR & IOM to respond to the request of the Ministry of Citizen Protection in this regard in the framework of the Technical Assistance Project. EASO support is provided in coordination with the Technical Assistance Project.</p>

¹⁶ Data published by the Greek national coordination centre for Border control, immigration and Asylum (N.C.C.B.C.I.A.)

	<p>Member State(s) support request. The following needs have been identified with the stakeholders as part of the comprehensive needs assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with technical advice to the national reception authorities to strategically design, plan and manage the National Reception System, including the implementation of a national monitoring framework; professional development and capacity building of staff; and support related to absorption of EU funds and procurement procedures • Support related to the management and operation of first-line reception centres • Support related to the management and operation of second-line reception facilities
<p>Pre-condition(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reception authorities appoint focal points to liaise with EASO and ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring • In the framework of the Technical Assistance Project, joint standard operating procedures are established and regular coordination meetings and technical working group meetings are held between concerned representatives of the Reception authorities, UNHCR, IOM and EASO to mainstream the collaboration at national and Island level • Quarterly Project Steering Group meetings take place between EASO and the beneficiary national authorities in order to ensure effective operational coordination, implementation and monitoring • The amendment of the Law that assigns the management to the sites under RIS
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>EL-REC 2.0 EASO support to the national reception authorities to strategically plan and manage the National Reception System</p> <p>EL-REC 2.1 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage first-line reception</p> <p>EL-REC 2.2 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage second line reception.</p>
<p>Action deliverable(s)</p>	<p>EL-REC 2.0 EASO support to the national reception authorities to strategically plan and manage the National Reception System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to strengthen the Reception & Identification Service HQ on coordination, including the set-up and management of a Helpdesk, harmonization & guidance on first-line reception management (child protection, vulnerability and information provision) and second-line reception management (deployment of field staff & roll-out of monitoring tool) & ad-hoc coordination exercises (contingency planning/simulation exercise) • Support provided to strengthen the Reception & Identification Service HQ on training & quality, including roll-out of annual training plan, strengthening of training roster and curriculum development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to strengthen the Reception & Identification Service HQ on planning, funding & procurement, including funding & procurement coordination mechanism, planning & tracking tools • Support provided to national authorities, including the Ministry of Citizen Protection and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the implementation of national strategy/programme on unaccompanied minors <p>EL-REC 2.1 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage first-line reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided in the development and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures and guidance for first-line reception management <p>EL-REC 2.2 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage second-line reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided in the implementation of the National Reception Monitoring Framework (here in after NRMF) • Support provided in management of second-line reception through the deployment of RIS focal points to mainland reception sites
<p>Inputs</p>	<p>Indicative number of the following inputs:</p> <p>EL-REC 2.0 EASO support to the national reception authorities to strategically plan and manage the National Reception System</p> <p>Human resources:</p> <p>Coordination/Administration: 2 legal officers, 4 reception officers, 2 operations/admin assistants, 2 Interims for the Administration Department</p> <p>3 operations/reception assistants – HQ, 3 operations/reception assistants – North, 1 engineer</p> <p>Training & Quality: 1 training assistant</p> <p>Planning, Funding & Procurement: 2 MS experts (funding), 2 procurement assistants, 1 operations/admin assistant</p> <p>Logistics: 1 HQ logistics/7 field logistics assistants (cluster)</p> <p>UAM Strategy/Programme: 2 reception officers</p> <p>ICT: 4 ICT assistants</p> <p>Technical Advice: 2 MS experts (including funding, procurement, site management, child protection & ICT)</p> <p>EL-REC 2.1 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage first-line reception</p> <p>Human resources: 6 legal protection officers / 6 child protection assistants/ 5 information provision assistants / 5 vulnerability assistants / 22 interpreters</p> <p>EL-REC 2.2 EASO support to the National Reception Authorities to manage second-line reception</p>

	<p>Human resources:6 EASO reception assistants (NRMF)/64 EASO reception assistants/64 interpreters</p> <p>For all:</p> <p>Costs for trainings/meetings/workshops</p> <p>EASO will offer training based on needs and availability of resources.</p> <p>Equipment, material and operational support, including works, services, communication/promotional materials, infrastructure items, IT equipment, office supplies and printing provided where required for the joint EASO and national authorities' activities</p>
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