

2020 OPERATIONAL & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE¹ PLAN
AGREED BY EASO AND MALTA

Valletta Harbour
12 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 Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security of the Republic of Malta (hereinafter 'MHAS')

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 Malta 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

Executive Director of the
European Asylum Support
Office

Permanent Secretary
Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security
of the Republic of Malta

Nina Gregori

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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

1.2.1 Operational Situation

A recent analysis of the situation in Malta shows a continued trend of increasing migratory pressure. According to MHAS data, between January and October 2019 sea arrivals more than doubled compared to last year, with 1 445 migrants recorded in 2018 and 3 115 in the current year.

The volume of applications showed a similar picture, with 1890 applications for international protection lodged during the first seven months of 2019, which was 83% higher than the level recorded during the same period in 2018. Accordingly, the average number of monthly applications increased from 148 to 270.

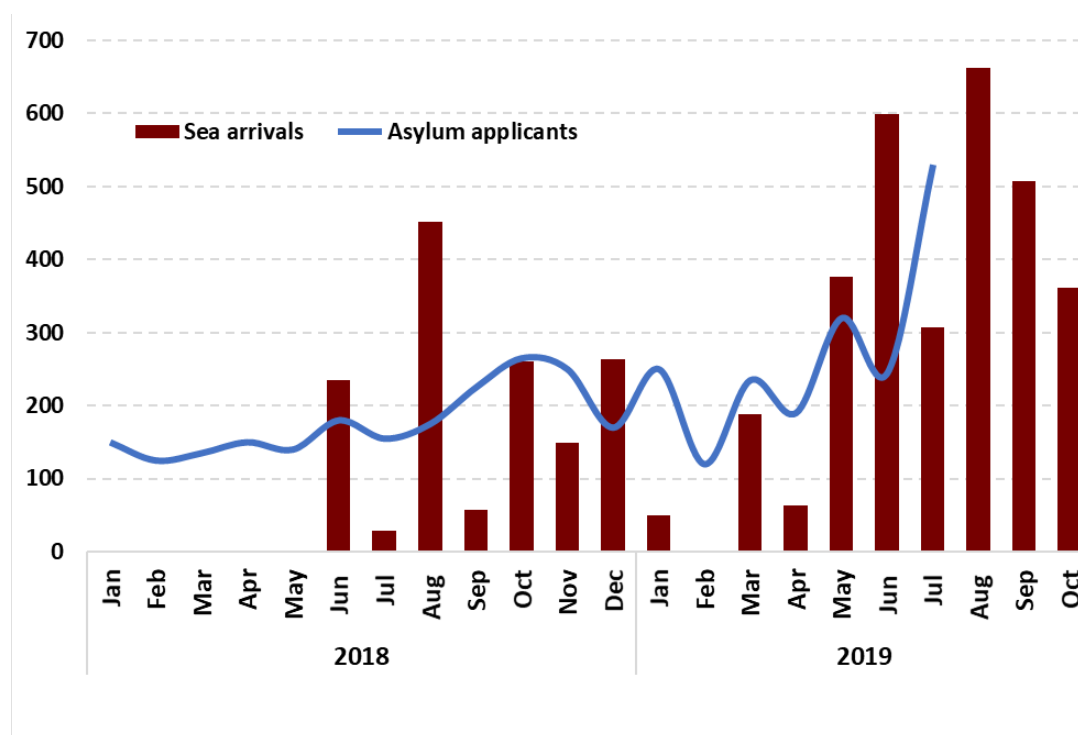
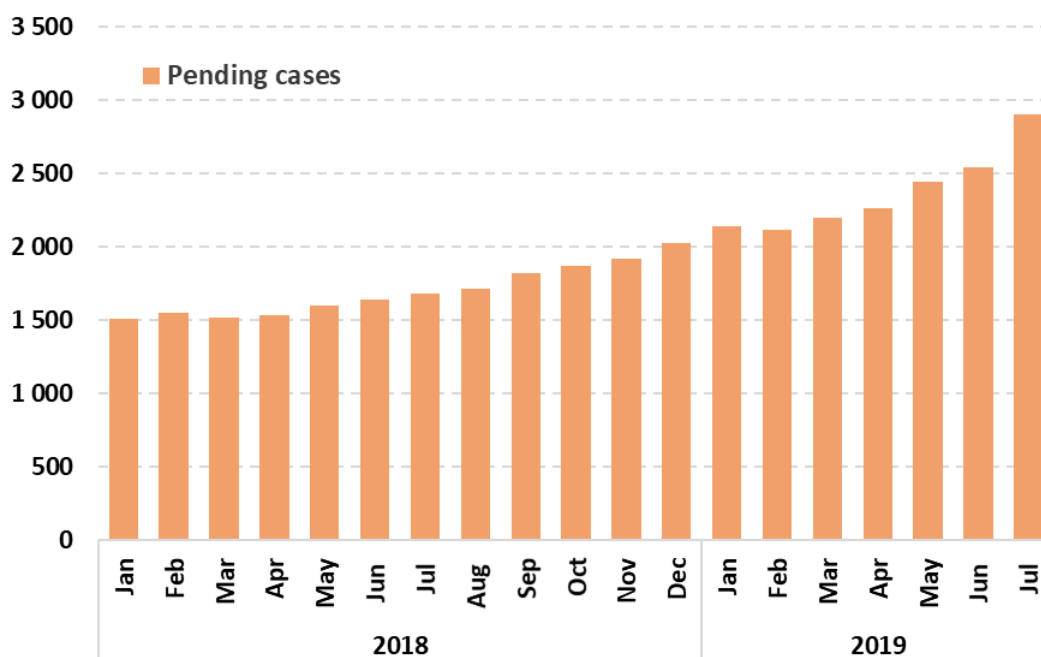


Figure 1. Sea arrivals (bars) and asylum applications (line), January – October, 2019.

Sources: MHAS and Eurostat

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

Eurostat data, comprising cases pending at all instances, showed that pressure on the Maltese asylum authority continued to increase during 2019 as well. While at the end of January 2018 there were 1505 applications awaiting decision, a year and half later, in July 2019, this figure rose to 2905. The backlog



also grew with an increasing rate, going from 47 cases added on average per month during 2018 to 126 during 2019.

Figure 2. Evolution of pending cases, January 2018 to July 2019

Source: Eurostat

1.2.2 Needs assessment process

In an effort to develop a comprehensive understanding of the current state-of-play and assess existing needs in the Maltese asylum and reception systems, in October 2019 EASO organised a series of meetings with key stakeholders. These included national authorities (Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, Office of the Refugee Commissioner, Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers, and the Refugee Appeals Board), international organisations (UNHCR, Red Cross, IOM), and non-governmental organisations (Jesuit Refugee Service). Through collaborative discussions, participants in these meetings shared their experience-based insights on existing needs and explored specific areas, in which EASO support may benefit local actors in the planning and delivering of their services. In parallel, EASO conducted desk research on the institutional context and service provision in the Maltese asylum and reception systems to identify existing capacities and possible challenges in the delivery of services. Reviewed literature comprised reports published by international and non-governmental organizations.

Currently, as a result of increased arrivals over the past year, the Maltese asylum and reception system is facing increased pressure, which results in delays and straining of current capacity and resources across a number of areas, including registration of applications for international protection, first-instance determination and the Dublin procedure, second-instance determination, and reception.

With regard to registration, in the framework of the 2019 Operating Plan, EASO’s support in facilitating swift access to the asylum procedure included information provision and registration of applications (making, registration and lodging). The needs assessment process revealed a number of areas for further development of EASO’s support in the above areas, as well as in terms of screening and referral of vulnerable cases.

With regard to first-instance determination, under the 2019 Operating Plan EASO has been assisting the Office of the Refugee Commissioner in handling the stock of pending cases by interviewing applicants, drafting evaluation reports and supporting with interpretation services. In addition, besides continuing with the above-mentioned activities, in 2020 EASO will support the Maltese Authorities in reviewing the relevant workflows, the enhancement of a quality control mechanism and the establishment of a Country of Origin Information Unit, in the development of specific information materials; and by offering training to the staff of the Office of the Refugee Commissioner.

As far as the Dublin Procedure is concerned, in the framework of the 2019 Operating Plan, EASO assisted in increasing the capacity of the Maltese Dublin Unit through the deployment of Dublin experts and the provision of administrative and clerical support as necessary. Building on this engagement, in 2020 EASO will continue to provide support in capacity building, as well as technical support to the Unit toward aimed at supporting their capacity to address the increased demands on the Unit

In the area of reception, despite efforts by Maltese authorities to make optimal use of existing infrastructure, due to a discrepancy between increased needs and current capacity, a number of challenges have emerged. In 2020 EASO will therefore gradually start supporting the Maltese Authorities, and in particular the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), with a view to enhancing their capacity to deal with the current pressure. Support will be delivered in agreed areas such as support for the management of reception capacity/facilities, vulnerability screening & referral and age assessment.

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 in order to facilitate the execution of measures agreed in the Plan.

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 in agreement with the changes in question.

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) 1049/2001³ and the EASO implementing rules on access to documents⁴, 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 May 2018⁵ 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.

³ 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

⁴ 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

⁵ Corrigendum, OJ L 127, 23.5.2018, p. 2 ((EU) 2016/679)

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 for Home Affairs and National Security	Immigration management
Office of the Refugee Commissioner (RefCom) including the Dublin Unit	Access to international protection determination procedure and first instance determination
Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) including Vulnerability Assessment & Response Team (VART)	Management of the reception system
The Principal Immigration Officer, Police	Authority responsible for issuing detention decisions

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.

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 IDS Malta Operations Platform. 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 MS 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 an officer responsible for security, 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 regard to 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 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 EASO radio communication equipment. If possible the equipment should be interoperable with that of 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 MS and involved stakeholders, prior to the deployment.

4. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

4.1. Cooperation with the European Commission

All activities under this Plan will be closely coordinated with the Host Member State and with the steady support of the European Commission

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 MT 1.0: Improved access to asylum procedure in Malta, through support with information provision, registration of applications for international protection and timely screening and referral of vulnerable cases</p>	
<p>Responsible Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHAS • RefCom • AWAS • Detention Service
<p>Partner Organisations and Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RefCom • AWAS • Migrants arriving to Malta following search and rescue operations • Migrants willing to apply for international protection in Malta
<p>Description and Assessment of the Situation</p>	<p>In light of the increased number of sea arrivals in 2019, which amounted to 3 115 for the period between January and October 2019 and more than doubled compared to the previous year, a need emerged as to the timely and efficient registration of applications for international protection.</p> <p>In the framework of the 2019 Operating Plan, EASO's support in facilitating swift access to the asylum procedure included information provision and registration of applications.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in 2020 EASO support will include also an update and/or development of information materials on the different steps of the asylum procedure to increase accessibility/intelligibility on the part of the applicants (see also measures MT2 and MT4); simplification of the registration process both in terms of registration templates and in terms of processing of registrations through technical solutions, and streamlining initial vulnerability screening and referral of vulnerabilities to relevant authorities.</p>
<p>Pre-conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT will appoint a Measure Coordinator • MT will provide appropriate working space to EASO registration staff. Availability of office and workstations will determine the scale of the EASO deployment; • MT will provide access to the relevant database(s), or relevant parts of the database, as required for the completion of this measure, to EASO ASTs, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation; • MT will ensure that the medical check proceedings will have been concluded before the third country nationals can start the registration procedure with EASO registration assistants; • MT will provide regular quarterly updates and data/analysis on registration workflow in order to optimise planning and deployed resources, and to get an updated overview of the asylum procedure in Malta.

Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provision package, covering the various procedural steps, with simple and clear content, appropriate for the age and level of understanding of the applicants, in a language that the applicant is reasonably supposed to understand and using appropriate dissemination tools (see also measure MT2 and MT4); • Tailored information provision sessions, based on materials developed; • Registration of applications for international protection; • Registration of applications in the implementation of the technical non-binding SOPs⁶; • Support the development of a business case for a project on simplification of the registration process and its implementation; • Timely screening of vulnerable cases and referral to the competent Maltese authorities
Action deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support on access to procedure, registration of applications for international protection, screening and referrals of vulnerable cases, including through information provision; • Updating/development of SOPs and other tools, as needed; • EASO registration staff, relevant Maltese officers, as well as interpreters are trained as required
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 information providers / 12 months to operate in the accommodation centers (e.g. Hal Far, Marsa); • Up to 9 registration assistants / 12 months to operate in designated locations (e.g. RefCom office, Safi Barracks); • 1 flow manager assistant / 12 months to operate in designated locations (e.g. RefCom office, Safi Barracks); • Up to 2 MS experts / 12 months; • 1 project manager, 1 business analyst, 1 software developer • Interpretation (physical and remote interpretation); • Training - 3 sessions of 2 days for EASO registration officers • On-line training for EASO interpreters on site; • Training for MT registration officers and information providers.

Measure MT 2.0.: Malta has increased capacity to manage and reduce asylum backlog at first-instance determination	
Responsible Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Refugee Commissioner (RefCom)
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RefCom • Applicants for international protection in Malta
Description and Assessment of the Situation	Eurostat data, comprising cases pending at all instances, showed that pressure on the Maltese asylum authority continued to increase during 2019. In July 2019, 2 905 applications were awaiting decision. The backlog also grew with an increasing rate, going from 47 cases added on average per month during 2018 to 126 during 2019.

⁶ Standard Operating Procedures prepared by COM and adopted as a follow up of the Malta Declaration (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/03/malta-declaration/>)

	<p>In the framework of the 2019 Operating Plan EASO has been assisting the Office of the Refugee Commissioner toward stabilising and reducing the stock of pending case by interviewing applicants and drafting evaluation reports and supporting with interpretation services.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in 2020 EASO will assist in training of staff from the Office of the Refugee Commissioner through the EASO modules on Inclusion, Interview Techniques, and Evidence Assessment; support the enhancement of quality control through initial check of application materials, as well as through ex-post facto sample review of evaluation reports; and assist in the development of information materials on the importance and specifics of the personal interview in the asylum process.</p>
Pre-conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT will appoint a Measure Coordinator; • MT will provide appropriate working space to EASO caseworkers. Availability of office and workstations will determine the scale of the EASO deployment. • MT will provide access to the relevant database(s), or relevant parts of the database, as required for the completion of this measure, to EASO ASTs, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. • MT will ensure that the medical check proceedings will have been concluded before applicants would be scheduled for interviews with EASO caseworkers. • MT will provide regular updates and data/analysis on a quarterly basis on the asylum backlog in order to optimise planning, resources and get an updated overview of the asylum procedure in Malta.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Interviews; • Evaluation reports to support asylum decision making process; • Information materials (see also measures MT1 and MT4); • Support for the creation of the Asylum Procedure Quality Control Unit; • Support with COI queries and the establishment of a COI Unit; • SOPs related to first instance workflows and other support tools, as needed; • Training package as required and new RefCom caseworkers and interpreters trained.
Action deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case work/file handling; • Improvement of the RefCom quality control mechanism; • Support with COI queries and the establishment of a COI Unit; • Development of relevant SOPs, information materials and other support tools; • EASO caseworkers/new RefCom caseworkers and interpreters are trained.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 caseworkers and up to 5 member state experts / 12 months; • 3 team leaders / 12 months; • 2 quality control officers / 12 months; • 2 COI research officers / 12 months; • 2 COI MS expert / 6 months; • Remote and physical interpreters / 12 months;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of RefCom/EASO caseworkers / number of weeks depending on the level of experience and needs of candidates. • Training of RefCom/EASO COI research officers / number of weeks depending on the level of experience and needs of candidates.
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Measure MT 3.0.: Malta Dublin Unit capacity is enhanced	
Responsible Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Refugee Commissioner (RefCom)
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malta Dublin Unit
Description and Assessment of the Situation	<p>Increased arrivals over the past year also placed extra pressure on the Maltese Dublin Unit.</p> <p>In the framework of the 2019 Operating Plan, EASO assisted in increasing the capacity of the Maltese Dublin Unit through the deployment of Dublin experts and the provision of material support as necessary.</p> <p>Building on this experience, in 2020 EASO will continue to provide support in capacity building, as well as technical support to the Unit toward addressing increased demands.</p>
Pre-conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT will appoint a Measure Coordinator • MT will provide appropriate working space to EASO experts. Availability of office and workstations will determine the scale of the EASO deployment. • MT will provide access to the relevant database(s), or relevant parts of the database, as required for the completion of this measure, to EASO ASTs, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. • MT will provide regular updates and data/analysis on a quarterly basis on the Dublin Unit in order to optimise planning, resources and to get an updated overview in Malta.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Dublin procedure cases; • Dublin procedure cases in the implementation of the technical non-binding SOPs⁷;
Action deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin Unit productivity improved and enhanced; • Dublin Experts deployed.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3 MS expert/ 12 months; • Training as required.

Measure MT 4.0.: Malta has enhanced capacity to implement reception standards in line with CEAS	
Responsible Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWAS
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWAS (central level)

⁷ Standard Operating Procedures prepared by COM and adopted as a follow up of the Malta Declaration (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/02/03/malta-declaration/>)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWAS - Vulnerability Assessment Response Team (VART) • AWAS - Age assessment Team • AWAS - Management of Reception Centres • Applicants for international protection
Description and Assessment of the Situation	<p>In the area of reception, despite efforts by Maltese authorities to make optimal use of existing infrastructure, due to increased needs and limitations in current capacity, a number of challenges and associated needs have emerged.</p> <p>In 2020 EASO will therefore gradually start supporting the Maltese Authorities, and in particular the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), so as to support AWAS vulnerability screening & referral and age assessment.</p>
Pre-conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT will appoint a Measure Coordinator. • MT will provide appropriate working space to EASO seconded staff. Availability of office and workstations will determine the scale of the EASO deployment. • MT will provide access to the relevant database(s), or relevant parts of the database, as required for the completion of this measure, to EASO ASTs. • MT will provide regular updates and data/analysis on a quarterly basis on the AWAS activity in order to optimise planning, resources and to get an updated overview in Malta.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Worker Team Leader and Vulnerability personnel deployed in support of AWAS existing Vulnerability Assessment & Response Team; • Social Worker Team Leader and Vulnerability personnel deployed in the main reception centres; • Methodology and tools to support the mapping of potential additional reception capacity; • Improved procedures and tools for age assessment; • A reception-related IT system (Entry / Exit) is deployed and implemented in the different accommodation centres under the management of AWAS; • Capacity building for strategic planning on efficient use of the current accommodation capacity/ ways to increase the accommodation capacity.
Action deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWAS referral system is enhanced, priority being given to cases where there are indicators of vulnerability/-ies that need immediate attention; • Age assessment operating procedures and tools; • Support the preparation and installation of an IT system (Entry / Exit) for reception management;
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 social worker team leader and 4 vulnerability assessment officers for VART / 12 months • 1 social work team leader and 1 vulnerability focal point / accommodation centre • 2 MS experts / 3 months and 1 project manager for the IT project • Training as required