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Foreword

With Europe experiencing yet again an increase in the number of applications for international protection in 2019 (for the first time since 2015), asylum remains a high priority in the EU policy agenda. As the trends change over time, we remain collectively working toward providing optimal solutions to persons in need of protection, while maintaining the integrity of national asylum systems.

The 2020 edition of the EASO Asylum Report offers a concise and comprehensive overview of key developments in international protection and the functioning of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). To produce its annual flagship report, EASO collects and analyses information from a wide range of reliable sources to provide an in-depth look at policy changes and improvements over the course of the year, while underlining challenges which remain to be addressed.

As EASO celebrates its 10-year anniversary in 2020, we are reminded of the agency's growing importance in providing operational and technical assistance in asylum matters to EU+ countries. The information produced by EASO is vital to enable policy-makers to make informed decisions, to help countries cope with an ever-changing landscape of migratory patterns and to empower national administrations in processing, case by case, a continuous stream of applications.

We look forward to the long-awaited adoption of a new regulation for the European Union Asylum Agency, which will transform EASO into a fully-fledged EU agency, strengthen its role and expand its mandate. As the centre of expertise on asylum, EASO will continue to provide service-oriented, impartial and transparent support toward the effective implementation of CEAS.

I am grateful for the on-going collaboration with all our partners towards common, transparent and sustainable asylum systems across Europe. Efficient systems can respond rapidly to the changing patterns in migration flows and ensure a clear, fair and dignified process to each applicant for international protection. We are already seeing global and national situations emerging in 2020 which may lead to more people seeking refuge. Now, more than ever, we must continue to work towards a truly common European asylum system by attaining convergence in addressing the needs for international protection and showing solidarity with Member States which are under the greatest pressure.

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