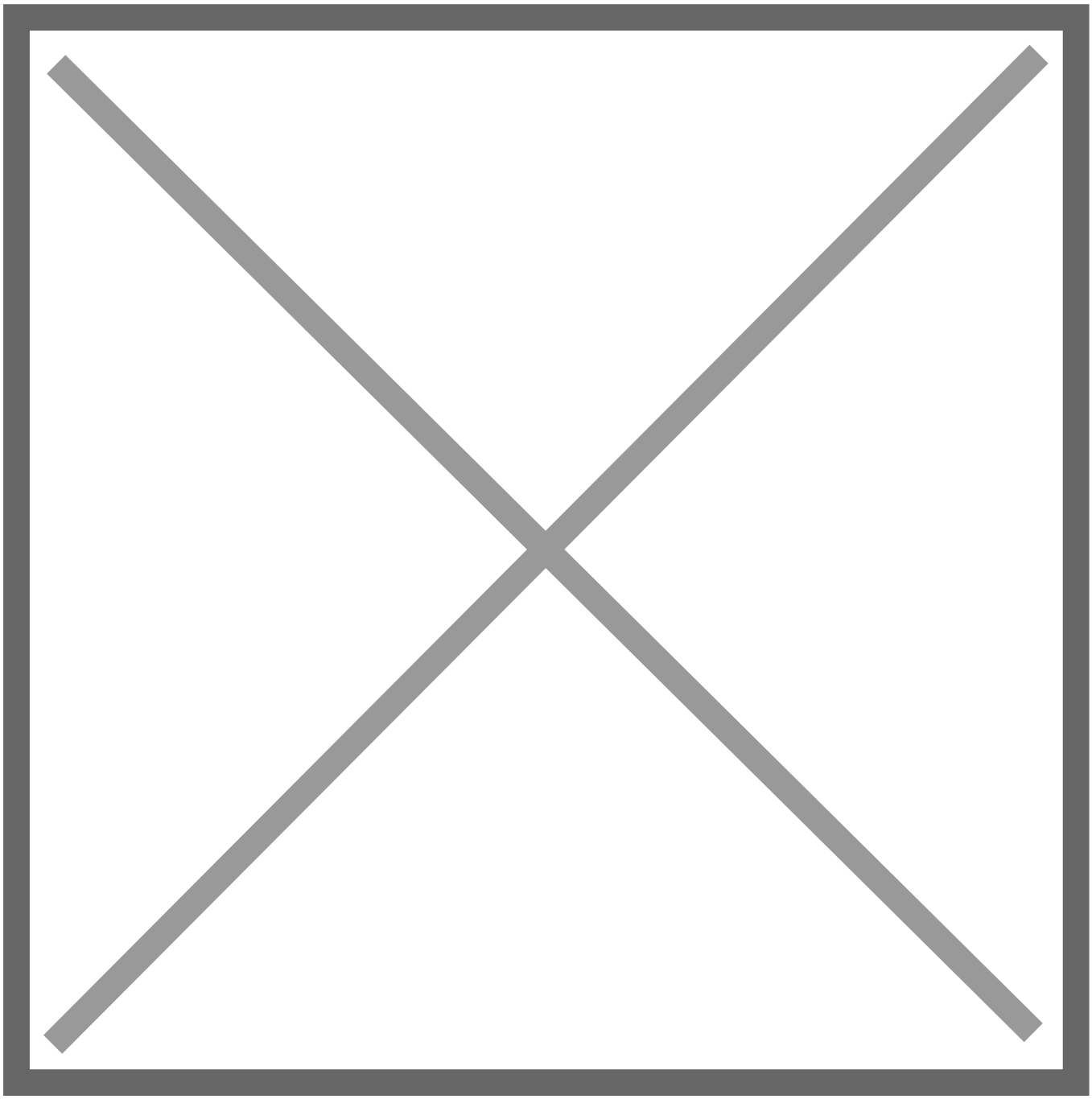
Please cite as: EUAA, 'Reader’s guide' in *EASO Asylum Report 2021*, Gennaio 2022.

Reader’s guide



The reader’s guide explains the legal basis and process by which EASO’s flagship report is produced. It includes methodological notes on the collection of qualitative and quantitative information; the wide pool of sources which were consulted; and additional products which are related to the report.

Legal basis

The EASO Asylum Report 2021: Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union is produced in accordance with EASO Regulation, Article 12.1 which specifies that:

> "The Support Office shall draw up an annual report on the situation of asylum in the Union, taking due account of information already available from other relevant sources. As part of that report, the Support Office shall evaluate the results of activities carried out under this Regulation and make a comprehensive comparative analysis of them with the aim of improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of CEAS."

Its objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of asylum in EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, describing and analysing flows of applications for international protection, major developments in legislation, jurisprudence and policies at the European and national levels, and the practical functioning of CEAS.

The production process follows the methodology and basic principles agreed by the EASO Management Board in 2013. Drafts are disseminated to the Management Board for their comments prior to its formal adoption and public launch.

Qualitative information

Primary factual information presented in the report was collected by EASO throughout the year in the framework of its the information management activities organised around the EASO Information and Documentation System (IDS). This involves desk research on developments related to each step of the asylum procedure and the collected information being validated by representatives of national authorities. Bilateral calls were organised with IDS focal points, who are nominated representatives of national authorities, to confirm, amend and add new information to ensure an accurate and comprehensive picture of 2020 developments. Supplementary information from EU+ countries was collected in a process coordinated with EMN, to avoid duplication with the 2020 Annual Report on Migration and Asylum.

The European Commission was consulted during the drafting process, in accordance with its role under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 35, which is reflected in EU Treaties and the asylum acquis instruments. UNHCR was also consulted during the drafting process and public information produced by its experts were included in the report.

The report provides an analysis based on a wide range of sources of information, duly referenced, to reflect the ongoing debates at the European level. It also identifies areas where improvement is most needed (and thus where EASO and other key stakeholders should focus their efforts) in line with its declared purpose of improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of CEAS. To that end, EASO takes due account of information already available from other relevant sources, as stipulated in the EASO Regulation, including from EU+ countries, EU institutions and agencies (such as Frontex and FRA), civil society organisations, international organisations and academia. Two open calls for contributions were launched to members of the EASO Consultative Forum and other civil society stakeholders, inviting them to provide information on their work relevant to the functioning of CEAS. They were also invited to share their publications to be used as sources and to

provide written input through a standardised online form.

Jurisprudence was collected throughout the year and added to the EASO Case Law Database, a publicly-available platform which serves as a point of reference for European and national case law related to CEAS. In addition, members of the EASO Network of Courts and Tribunal Members contributed to the report by providing relevant examples of national case law.

In an effort to further strengthen the report's methodological basis, EASO organised an online event with members of the JHA network to exchange experiences on the scope and methodology of producing annual reports. Representatives from EASO, Frontex, Europol, EIGE, Eurojust, FRA, the EU Agency on Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA) shared good practices and discussed strategies for the drafting and dissemination processes.

The *EASO Asylum Report 2021* covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2020 but also refers to relevant developments in the year of writing. Whenever possible, information referring to 2021 was based on the most up-to-date sources available at the time of adoption of the report by the EASO Management Board.

The report is not exhaustive and country examples presented in the report serve only as illustrations of relevant aspects of CEAS.

Quantitative information

Statistical information was primarily derived from Eurostat. Selected data at the EU+ level were also obtained from EASO's Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS) data exchange for additional information and for the section on Dublin procedures (due to unavailability of respective Eurostat data at the time of writing).

The data published in this report were extracted from Eurostat on 28 April 2021. The data are provisional and may be updated or revised by Member States. These data are provided to Eurostat by ministries and national administrations in Member States in the framework of Regulation (EC) 862/2007 on community statistics on migration and international protection as amended by Regulation (EU) 2020/851, except for data on first-time asylum applicants.

The annual data presented in the statistical annexes are computed as the aggregation of data submitted to Eurostat throughout the year on a monthly (or quarterly) basis or based on the annual statistics provided to Eurostat.
The following indicators are presented in this report:

- Applicants for international protection, withdrawn applications and pending cases collected monthly by Eurostat and presented based on their annual datasets.
- Asylum decisions in first instance (refugee status granted, subsidiary protection status granted, authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons granted, and rejections) collected quarterly by Eurostat: and presented based on their annual datasets.

- Final decisions on appeal or review (refugee status granted, subsidiary protection status granted, authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons granted and rejections), asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied minors and resettled persons collected annually by Eurostat.

Data published by Eurostat are rounded to the nearest five. As such, aggregates calculated on the basis of rounded figures may slightly deviate from the actual total. Thus, a '0' may not necessarily indicate a real zero value but could also represent a value of '1' or '2'.

The Eurostat Technical Guidelines for data collection were amended in December 2013 and subsequently entered into force in the reference month of January 2014. Thus, data published prior to 2014 are not necessarily comparable. The main changes for data collection included:

- Clarification on the definitions of first-time and repeated applicants;
- Instructions on how to report persons subject to a Dublin procedure in the pending cases table;
- Instructions not to report cases where another Member State assumed responsibility of negative asylum decisions; and
- Clarification on the definition of humanitarian protection.
- Methodological changes to the Eurostat Technical Guidelines entered into force as of January 2015 in reference to reporting on cases in the Dublin procedure and withdrawn cases, as follows:
- Persons subject to the Dublin procedure shall be removed from the stock of pending applications of the sending country from the time of the acceptance decision;
- Persons subject to the Dublin procedure shall be included in the stock of pending applications of the receiving country from the moment of physical arrival and when such persons apply or re-apply for asylum;
- Dublin transfers shall not be considered as an implicit or explicit withdrawal;
- Persons subject to the Dublin procedure and who abscond after the acceptance decision shall not be reported in withdrawn applications data;
- Revisions at the own initiative of the national asylum authority shall be considered as regular revisions (i.e. require revision of the previously-reported data); and
- Persons reappearing after implicit or explicit withdrawal of an application shall be considered under regular revisions and be removed from data on withdrawn applications.

Further modifications to the Eurostat Technical Guidelines were published in February 2018 and introduced:

- A new voluntary data disaggregation on 'status of minor' as of the 2018 reference period. The new concept measures whether a minor applicant was 'unaccompanied' or 'accompanied' by an adult with responsibility for the minor during the application procedure;
- An amendment and new specification to the 'Resettlement Framework' variable: the former category "Agreement in the JHA Council on 20.07.2015 – JHAC15" was changed to "EU Resettlement Frameworks – EU_RFW" to include Resettlement Frameworks launched by the European Commission (or Justice and Home Affairs Council) applicable to each reference year; and
- Methodological guidance on reporting on the new variables of Table A16 (resettled person), namely 'country of residence', 'decision' and 'Resettlement Framework'. These guidelines

were agreed in the Asylum and Managed Migration Working Group in 2016.

Products related to the EASO Asylum Report 2021

The National Asylum Developments Database presents the legislative, institutional and policy developments which are described in the report. Updates can be searched by country, topic, year and type of development. The information is also summarised and presented in a table by country and by thematic area in a PDF document.

The report presents a selection of jurisprudential developments based on the EASO Case Law Database. The hyperlinks within the text will bring readers to the specific case in the database.

The sources used for the production of the EASO Asylum Report 2021 are presented in the list of references at the end of the report. They are also available in a separate, detailed bibliography, grouped by type of source. Readers can easily identify whether sources are from European institutions and agencies, international organisations, national authorities, civil society organisations or think tanks and academia. A list of legislation and case law referenced in the report is also provided.





© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu