

Editorial



It has been a particularly busy and productive winter at the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The Agency has continued to steadfastly implement its Governance Action Plan, which was presented to, and endorsed by, the Management Board in September 2018. I am particularly pleased that, at its recent meeting on 18-19 February 2019, the Management Board recognised and [welcomed](#) the continued implementation by EASO in terms of strengthening its governance.

One of the more visible signs of the transformation taking part at EASO has been the ongoing recruitment drive. The Agency has had to increase its pace of recruitment in order to achieve the ambitious target of reaching a complement of 500 highly skilled experts by the end of 2020. With around 200 staff working for the Agency just a few months ago, I am happy that the results are already becoming evident through an increase in staff capacity to fulfil our ongoing support activities to Member States and partner organisations.

Naturally, consolidating and strengthening EASO goes beyond human resources. As we continue to prepare for a more robust mandate under the proposal to be transformed into the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), which we hope will materialise as soon as possible, we have been working to ensure that we are ready to implement the new mandate when adopted.

At the end of the day, all of us at EASO remain squarely focussed on our important mission, being that of supporting EU+ Member States in implementing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). We have ramped-up many of our technical support activities over the past

months, such as through the publication of new practical tools and guidance, Country of Origin Reports, greater capabilities in terms of data collation and analysis, as well an ever-growing training programme.

At the same time, EASO stepped up its [operational support for Cyprus](#) this winter, while also signing new Operating Plans for Greece and Italy. We also successfully concluded our [special support in Bulgaria](#).

Finally, the changes over the past months were also reflected through the Management Board's [election of Ms. Nina Gregori](#) to be the new Executive Director of the Agency. She will take up her new duties in the near future. At the same meeting, the Board elected as its new Chairperson, Dr. David Costello, Member of the Board from Ireland. The Management Board also elected Mr. Mikael Ribbenvik from Sweden as the new Deputy Chairperson.

It has been an honour for me to lead the Agency together with the Management Team over the transition period during the past ten months. EASO's work is important not only to EU Member States and stakeholders, but also to the many thousands who are in need of international protection in Europe. I have no doubt that under the guidance of Ms. Gregori, EASO – and eventually the EUAA – will continue to strengthen itself and continue making a decisive contribution to the realisation of the Common European Asylum System.

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