

Country Operations

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Greece

Jette Christiansen

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

Following a request by the Greek government, in February 2011, EASO agreed to support Greece in establishing its new Asylum Service, First Reception Service, Appeal Authority, and a reception system in general, as well as supporting the reduction of case backlog with the deployment of Member States experts as part of Asylum Support Teams (AST). Following a request by the Greek Government for further support, EASO continued its support until December 2014. In this second phase EASO deployed AST to support Greek officials with training on the establishment of nationality (in close cooperation with Frontex), on the collection and analysis of statistical data, and in the field of Country of Origin Information (COI), as well as in providing support on EU funding See the [Press Release](#) (OP) and the [Press Release](#) (SSP)

On 13 May 2015, following a request by Greece to further improve and enhance the Greek asylum and reception system, the EASO Executive Director decided to provide Special Support to Greece by providing expertise from EASO and EU Member States up to the end of May 2016. This was extended by an Amendment until 31 December 2016. The request for further support by EASO resulted from the will to ensure sustainability of the good results achieved within the context of EASO support to Greece until then . New support included training of staff, setting up an effective guardianship system for unaccompanied minors, in particular within the asylum procedure, enhancing the quality of the asylum and reception procedures, as well as support for the better management of EU funding complementing the national budget.



In September 2015, immediately after the launch of the relocation programme, EASO and Greece also signed the EASO Hotspot Operating Plan to Greece. This document laid down the conditions and objectives of EASO's specific technical and operational support to Greece. EASO support was further increased by Amendment no 1 (December 2015) and Amendment no 2 (April 2016).

In particular, EASO provided support with the provision of relevant information to potential relocation candidates and the registration process at the Asylum Service, handling outgoing Dublin take charge requests, including relocation, detection of possible document fraud and implementation of the admissibility procedure.

In December 2016, EASO continued to support Greece and its capacity building process in the framework of a Special Operating Plan to Greece.



See [Press Release](#)

In December 2017, EASO and the Government of Greece signed a [new Operating Plan](#) outlining the technical and operational support measures that the Agency planned to implement in the country in 2018. The Operating Plan built on the previous operational support provided by EASO to Greece and aimed to respond to the pressure on its asylum and reception systems as well as to sustain the full implementation of the EU asylum acquis.

See [Press Release](#)

EASO's support to Greece continued in 2019 based on a new [Operating Plan](#). In this framework, EASO continued to perform a wide range of operational activities including support in processing of applications under the border and the regular asylum procedure, information provision, handling outgoing Dublin 'take charge' requests, supporting the enhancement of the Greek Asylum and Reception system and training Greek personnel.

See [Press Release](#)



Under the 2020 [Operating Plan](#) EASO doubled its operational presence throughout Greece, continued to support the Asylum and Reception system through a wide range of activities and expanded its operations to include 7 new sites on the Greek mainland. With an amendment to the Operating Plan signed in May, EASO introduced the Voluntary Relocation Programme from Greece to EU+ Member States.



In the 2021 [Operating Plan](#), EASO continued to expand its operations in Greece, introducing new activities to support the dedicated Taskforce for improved reception and asylum management, including the Joint Pilot Project for the establishment of a Multipurpose Reception and Identification Centre on the island of Lesbos. In addition, a new sub measure was introduced in the field of reception, to support the national Strategy on Unaccompanied Minors.

On 9th December 2021 the Executive Director of EASO and the Greek Minister of Migration and Asylum signed the 2022-2024 Operational Plan, which constitutes the longest one in the Agency's history to date.

The 3 year long 2022-2024 Operational Plan aims at contributing to the enhanced capacity of the Greek Authorities in processing asylum applications and providing reception conditions in line with CEAS, for persons in need of protection in Greece.

The EUAA will provide support to the National Asylum and Reception Authorities in governance, strategic planning, quality and procedures.

Regarding asylum, the Agency will support the asylum processing of applications for international protection at first and second instance, the Relocation programme and the processing of Dublin requests.

Concerning reception, the EUAA will continue supporting first and second line reception national authorities, including in the development and implementation of a national pre-integration strategy.

Through the introduction of a new measure in the Plan, the Agency will also support the National authorities in providing protection to Unaccompanied Children.

Funding, training and capacity building remain horizontal activities across all operations.

EUAA currently operates in around 45 locations throughout Greece with more than 680 personnel of various capacities.

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

The Ministry is responsible for general coordination, establishment, management and supervision of relevant authorities and policymaking. Presidential Decree 4, Gov. Gazette A' 4/15.01.2020 regulates the establishment of the Ministry on Migration and Asylum. Within the Ministry, the following Secretariats are established:

Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoMA)

- General Secretariat for Migration Policy
- General Secretariat for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
- Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors
- Special Secretariat for the Coordination of Stakeholders

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, (MoLSA)

The Ministry is responsible for 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. Law 4538/2018 on Foster Care and Adoption prescribes the outline for the National Foster Care System from which unaccompanied and separated children will be benefited as well.

General Secretariat for Migration Policy (GSMP)

As established under Presidential Decree 18, Official Gaz. A'34/19.02.2020 on Renaming and Establishment of General and Special Secretariats at the Ministry of Migration.

[Asylum Service \(AS\)](#)

The Asylum Service is an independent body under the General Secretary for Migration Policy established under Law 3907/2011. According to Law 4375/2016, the Asylum Service is the competent authority for the implementation of asylum Law and other forms of international protection of third country nationals and stateless people. The Asylum Service comprises the Central Asylum Service and the Regional Asylum Services, which include the Regional Asylum Offices (RAOs) and the Independent Asylum Units.

[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.

General Secretariat for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (GSRAS)

As established under Presidential Decree 18, Official Gaz. A'34/19.02.2020 on Renaming and Establishment of General and Special Secretariats at the Ministry of Migration.

[Reception & Identification Service \(RIS\)](#)

The Reception and Identification Service is an independent body under the General Secretariat for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. 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.

[Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors \(SSPUAM\)](#)

As established under Presidential Decree 18, Official Gaz. A'34/19.02.2020 on Renaming and Establishment of General and Special Secretariats at the Ministry of Migration. The SSPUAM is responsible for the protection of unaccompanied minors and separated minors.

[National Centre for Social Solidarity \(EKKA\)](#)

The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) is a supervised organization 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, additionally according to Law 4756/2020 EKKA is responsible for the representation of unaccompanied minors. Furthermore, EKKA is responsible (Law 4538/2018) to supervise the on-line matchmaking system that supports foster care and adoption procedures remain impartial and ensure the accountability of relevant actors.



**Main
International
Partners**



The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union, it develops and translates into policies and initiatives the EU strategy. The European Commission is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and managing the day-to-day business of the EU. It was established in 1958 and its headquarters are in Brussels, Belgium.



UNHCR the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the UN Refugee Agency, dedicated to aid and protect the rights of refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. It was founded in 1950 in response to the refugee crisis following World War II, and currently operates in 135 countries. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. In recognition of its work, UNHCR has won two Nobel Peace prizes, in 1954 and 1981.



IOM the International Organization for Migration is the principal intergovernmental organization dealing with migration issues. IOM's stated mission is to promote humane and orderly migration by providing services and advice to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers. It was initially established in 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to help resettle people displaced by World War II. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland and received its current name in 1989. In September 2016, IOM became a related organization of the United Nations. As of March 2019, the International Organization for Migration has 173 member states and eight observer states. It is the only global migration agency dealing with all aspects of migration.

Statistic of deployments

2019

576 Personnel

11 Locations

2020

639 Personnel

43 Locations

2021

689 Personnel

50 Locations

2022

674 Personnel

46 Locations

Figures refer to aggregated data collected during the year. Locations are counted as cities i.e., Athens as one and not as offices (Katehaki, Piraeus, Keranis etc). The same for Thessaloniki, Lesvos and Korinthos.

Number of deployed personnel: Consists of the total number of different persons deployed by EUAA over the reporting period, regardless of the duration of their deployment. All deployment figures do not include deployed interpreters by EUAA in support of asylum, reception or temporary protection activities.

Number of locations: Consists of the total number of locations where EUAA personnel has been present over the reporting period, regardless of the duration of the support.

[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Italy

Stefano Pes

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

[Background](#)

An increase in immigrant arrivals, the implementation of a new EU asylum package, and the need to maintain a high standard in asylum and reception processes motivated Italy to ask the Agency for assistance.



In June 2013, EUAA (then EASO) and Italy signed the first [Special Support Plan](#) with a duration until the end of 2014. This Plan covered a number of prioritised areas, such as data collection and analysis, Country of Origin Information (COI), Dublin system, reception system, emergency capacity and training of independent judiciary, as well as further professional development of the National Asylum Commission.



In March 2015, a new Special Support Plan was signed to continue support activities, whereas in December 2015 - after the launch of the relocation programme as part of the “hotspot” approach - EUAA and Italy signed the EASO Hotspot-Relocation Operating Plan to Italy. The Plan laid down the conditions and objectives of EASO’s technical and operational support to Italy. In particular, EUAA provided support by joint-processing asylum cases through deployment of asylum support teams (ASTs), composed of national experts. Activities included support with information provision, registration of applications for international protection in view of relocation and handling Dublin 'take charge' requests.

In 2017 and 2018, the Agency extended its activities in Italy on the basis of an [Operating Plan for 2017](#) with its [first amendment](#) and an [Operating Plan for 2018](#). EASO provided support to the Italian authorities with provision of relevant information to potential applicants for international protection; handling registration of applicants for international protection; handling Dublin 'take charge' and 'take back' requests through a dedicated support to the Dublin Unit in Rome; strengthening the reception capacity, in particular with regards to unaccompanied minors; professional development activities and study visits for the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration (MOI), activities in the field of COI; and strengthening the Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents in implementing protection measures for unaccompanied children.



In December 2018, EUAA, the Italian Ministry of the Interior and the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents signed a new [Operating Plan for 2019](#)¹. Through this framework, the Agency provided support to the Italian authorities in the following areas: designing an information provision system and developing SOPs, referral pathways and monitoring system for Dublin cases; lodging of applications for international protection; processing of first instance decisions and follow-up with regards to appeals at Territorial Commissions; processing of the Dublin procedures at the Dublin Unit; strengthening the Italian COI Unit in standardising high quality COI used in the asylum decision process; implementing a system to monitor and manage the reception system; supporting the Italian Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents with capacity building activities for volunteer guardians; organising training activities aimed at boosting the technical capacity of immigration police in registering asylum requests.



With regard to the [2020 Operating Plan](#), EUAA's deployments to Italy were reduced as the country had made significant progress in addressing its backlog in first instance and pressure on reception facilities was eased due to decrease in arrivals. As such, EASO shifted its focus to supporting the reduction of backlog of appeals to first instance decisions. The Agency also continued to provide capacity strengthening (although not operational) support on quality reception and asylum.

In 2020, EUAA continued to be heavily involved in ad hoc disembarkations stemming from SAR (Search and Rescue) events and voluntary relocations based on the Standard Operating Procedures which were agreed to in Malta in the autumn of 2019. Furthermore, EUAA continued to support the quality and standardisation of asylum procedures and the monitoring of the Italian reception system, also supporting the standardisation of procedures and data collection.

Due to the Covid-19 emergency, an [amendment](#) to the 2020 Operating Plan to Italy has been agreed and signed by all beneficiaries.



The migratory situation in Italy and the national policy environment in the field of asylum and migration have experienced substantial changes over the past years, with a new wave of changes brought by the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020.

The health emergency and the increase of sea arrivals put the Italian reception system under pressure, with significant impact on the management of the system.

The Agency support in 2021 builds on the results achieved in 2020, and continued addressing the consequences of the disproportionate pressure on the Italian asylum and reception system, also in view of the Covid-19 health emergency. Specifically, in the [2021 Operating Plan](#), the following areas were be prioritized:

- Quality and standardisation of access to asylum procedures, including in emergency situations and ad hoc disembarkation events;
- Support the quality and standardization of Dublin procedure and asylum determination procedures;
- Support the management of judicial backlog;
- Support the quality management and monitoring of the Italian reception system;
- Support the coordination mechanisms amongst Italian asylum authorities and the efficiency and standardisation of procedures through the development and management of information systems.

See [Press Release \(1\)](#), [Press Release \(2\)](#), [Press Release \(3\)](#), [Press Release \(4\)](#), [Press Release \(5\)](#)

To ensure a higher impact on its operations, the EUAA agreed with Italian authorities a 3 year Operational Plan in Italy. From 2022 to 2024 - in

accordance with the operational situation and needs assessment carried out with the main Italian stakeholders – the following operational objectives and results will be pursued:

- Enhanced capacity of the Italian authorities to ensure timely and harmonised access to the asylum procedure in compliance with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).
- Enhanced quality and standardisation of Dublin and asylum determination procedure in Italy.
- Enhanced capacity of the Italian authorities to manage the judicial backlog regarding asylum cases.
- Enhanced quality and sustainability of the Italian reception system.
- Improved coordination of the cooperation and solidarity mechanism among EU MSs and of post SAR disembarkation activities for timely implementation of the Voluntary Relocation process as per Standard Operating Procedures (under the 2019 Malta Declaration).

The Operational Plan was signed by the Head of Department of Public Security and the Vice Head of Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration within the Ministry of Interior, by the Head of Department of Judicial Organization, Personnel and Services of the Ministry of Justice, and by the EUAA Executive Director.

[1] See corrigendum

Stakeholders

Main National Partners	
The Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration	The Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration , within the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for the organisation of the assistance and reception of irregular migrants, of applicants for international protection and beneficiaries of international protection.
The Department for Public Security	The Department for Public Security , within the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for the coordination of all activities related to the management of order and public security, technical and operational coordination of the police forces, the directorate and administration of State Police and the management of technical support.

The National Asylum Commission (NAC)	<p>The National Asylum Commission (NAC) is responsible for the coordination of the Territorial Commissions (TCs) in which applications for international protection are dealt with in first instance, for the Country of Origin Information (COI) Unit, provision of guidelines and training of TCs' staff and for the management of database on applicants for international protection.</p>
<p>The Specialized Sections on Immigration and International Protection of Tribunals</p>	<p>The Specialized Sections on Immigration and International Protection of Tribunals are responsible for immigration, international protection and free movement of EU citizens in 26 Tribunals, managing asylum seekers' appeals against decisions issued by the Territorial Commissions.</p>
The Court of Cassation	<p>The Court of Cassation is in charge of ensuring the observance and harmonised interpretation of the law, as well as compliance with the limits of the various jurisdictions.</p>

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2019

About **300** Personnel

About **20** Locations

2023

About **355** Personnel

About **95** Locations

2020

About **200** Personnel

About **45** Locations

2021

About **265** Personnel

About **50** Locations

2022

About **300** Personnel

About **80** Locations

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Number of locations: Consists of the total number of locations where EUAA personnel has been present over the reporting period, regardless of the duration of the support.

[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Malta

Nadia Gmira-Verots

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

The Agency has been **supporting Malta since 2017** in an effort to further enhance the quality of the **national asylum and reception system**.

At present, in cooperation with the Maltese authorities and external stakeholders, a new **multi-annual Operating Plan** was drafted and signed in December 2021 for the period 2022 - 2024.

Building on the progress achieved through the operational and technical assistance provided, and assuming that the number of arrivals would remain at similar levels as in 2021, the Agency initiated, in cooperation with the Maltese authorities, phasing out from specific support areas towards the end of 2022, with a possible carry over into 2023.

The **2022-2024 Operational Plan**, in this perspective, foresaw a shift of activities, including **information provision**, and more particularly support in the **development of content and tools**. Additionally, it has been anticipated a **withdrawal of support** to AWAS (Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seeker) in the area of **age assessments**. All other activities that were supported by EUAA during 2021 are part of the current Operational Plan.



In line with the changes in the operational context following the **invasion of Ukraine** launched by the Russian armed forces, on 24 February 2022, on **29 April 2022**, the **2022-2024 Operational Plan, was amended**, following a request of the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement (currently Ministry of Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality) for additional support.

A third pillar, **Temporary Protection Support**, was added to the OP Amendment 1, aiming at increasing the capacity of the Maltese authorities **to manage the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)**. The expected outcome as agreed with the national authorities was to enhance the capacity of the Maltese authorities to effectively implement the TPD via **information provision, TP registrations, assessments of eligibility criteria, as well as issuing of TP decisions and certificates**.

Given the reduced pressure to the Maltese Asylum and Reception system and following a Needs Assessment exercise that was initiated in July 2022, **a second [Amendment to the Operational Plan](#)** was signed between the EUAA and the Maltese Authorities on 15 May 2023. The Amendment superseded [Amendment 1 of 29 April 2022](#), and it foresaw support in the areas of **Asylum, Reception, as well as Temporary Protection**.

Asylum authorities requested EUAA's support in 2023, to improve access to the asylum procedure and increase the capacity of the authorities to manage first instance backlog. Building on EUAA's achievements, **in 2023 support focused on Quality Assurance in Asylum**, in addition to regular support activities (registration & front desk, Dublin, support to asylum decision making processes, digitisation, COI, relocation). In Reception, the Maltese authorities requested EUAA's continued support to enhance the capacity of the Quality Assurance Unit and implement **quality assurance reception activities**.

Considering the decreased pressure of the Maltese Asylum and Reception systems, the latest amendment, agreed in May 2023, also foresaw the **gradual phase out** from operational activities, as well **as a planned exit from support by EUAA at the end of 2024**. The aim is to ensure a **sustainable phase-out strategy** with effective handover to the Maltese authorities of activities, with retention of knowledge and continuation of workflows developed with the support of the EUAA.



In 2017, the main focus of the collaboration with the Maltese government was initially directed towards the revision of the **age assessment** procedures, the organisation of **trainings for the local authorities** and the dissemination of **best practices for lodging applications of international protection**.

In 2018, EUAA had continued providing its support to the Office of the Refugee Commissioner (now International Protection Agency), by providing **training sessions to Caseworkers and Dublin Officers**.

In 2019, the Agency and Malta cooperated on **ad hoc voluntary relocation** exercises taking place on the Maltese territory. This also included **support in the registration of applications of international protection**, information provision, support for vulnerability assessments, as well as support to the Dublin Unit.

During the same year, according to data of the Ministry of Home Affairs, sea arrivals recorded, were more than double in comparison to 2018. More particularly, **during the first seven months of 2019, the number of applications increased by 83%** compared with the same period in 2018. A Needs Assessment exercise conducted by EUAA, concluded that the Maltese Asylum and Reception system was facing disproportionate pressure, by straining the national capacity and resources across several areas, including the registration of applications for international protection, first-instance determination, Dublin procedure, and second-instance determination.

The Maltese Reception system was additionally impacted by the significant number of arrivals recorded in 2019 and early 2020, while the situation was further worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic.



As early as January **2020** the number of **cumulative irregular arrivals** to Malta surpassed those recorded in the same period of 2019 and, despite a ban on entry, a significant increase was recorded. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the exacerbation of the conflict in Libya, affected the arrivals in the country and the movements along the central Mediterranean route. In line with nationwide Covid-19 prevention measures, face-to-face registrations in Malta were interrupted for nine weeks before restarting in the second half of May remotely.

As a result, EUAA had **expanded its operational support** to Malta in Reception. EUAA personnel deployed started supporting the Maltese authorities in **Vulnerability Assessments, Vulnerability screening and Referrals** as well as in providing **technical support in Reception**. Additionally, EUAA continued to support the Maltese authorities with **ad hoc disembarkations and voluntary relocations**. Towards the end of 2020, the Operating Plan was amended so that the Agency started providing support to age assessment procedures. Operating in the offices of the Refugee Commissioner, EUAA personnel resumed providing support in the **registrations of asylum cases, the renewal of asylum seeker documents and administrative work**. In parallel, EUAA kept providing support to the **Malta Dublin Unit** during the pandemic.

Several tools were reviewed with EUAA's support, namely:

- A Referral Form, used to refer vulnerable people to the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS);
- A Vulnerability Assessment Tool;
- A Screening Tool to prioritise cases of registered applicants that need to be assessed;
- A screening tool to prioritise cases that need to be assessed from the residents that did not have access to the asylum procedure;
- A recording tool to keep track of the stage of each referral.

[Stakeholders](#)

Main National Partners	
International Protection Agency (IPA)	<p>After an initial trial period where the International Protection Agency (IPA) worked alongside UNHCR, on 1st January 2002 it became fully operational and started to deal with applications for international protection completely on its own. IPA's main responsibility is to receive, process and determine applications for international protection in Malta. This Agency is also bound by the obligations assumed by Malta under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.</p> <p>IPA's 's fundamental objective is to ensure a totally independent, fair, efficient and swift eligibility determination process while, at the same time, guaranteeing the best quality possible regarding the hearing, analysis and determination of applications. EASO collaborates with IPA to improve the access to asylum procedure in Malta and increase the capacity to manage the asylum backlog at first instance determination. In doing so, EASO personnel supports IPA in the field of registration, Dublin Regulation and Country of Origin Information.</p>
Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS)	<p>The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) was legally set up in 2009 and falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security. AWAS is responsible for six open centre accommodation's residents who have received protection status or are in the process of having their claim for asylum processed. Additionally, AWAS also manages the guardianship of unaccompanied minors. The Agency implements the national legislation and policy concerning the welfare of refugees, persons enjoying international protection and asylum seekers.</p> <p>In practice, AWAS manages reception facilities, provides information programmes in the area of employment, housing, health, welfare and education, and promotes government schemes related to resettlement voluntary returns. Accordingly, EASO supports AWAS in enhancing its capacity to implement reception standards in line with the Common European Asylum System, providing technical assistance in vulnerability assessments, social work, age assessment and information provision.</p>

[Detention Services \(DS\)](#)

In Malta, persons detained in terms of the Immigration Act are held in facilities specifically designated for this purpose, which are situated inside army or police premises, such as Safi Barracks. The centres are administered by a specially established civilian force known as the Detention Service (DS), which is run by army officers, and is under the authority of the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement.

The Detention Service was set up to run the operations of all closed accommodation centres, provide secure and humane accommodation for detained persons and maintain a safe and secure environment. Immigrants are kept in detention pursuant to the issuance of a detention order by the Principal Immigration Officer in accordance with applicable legislation.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2019

About **40** Personnel

About **1** Location

2023

About **65** Personnel

About **5** Locations

2020

About **85** Personnel

About **4** Locations

2021

About **140** Personnel

About **7** Locations

2022

About **125** Personnel

About **7** Locations

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Number of locations: Consists of the total number of locations where EUAA personnel has been present over the reporting period, regardless of the duration of the support.

Locations

[See full screen](#)

Cyprus

Francesco Torcoli

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

EASO's support to Cyprus dates back to June 2014, with the establishment of a Special Support Plan. The Plan allowed EASO to support in a number of areas such as training of staff, support to managing vulnerable groups, advice on age assessment procedures, enhancing the reception conditions, as well as concerning data collection and analytical capacities (i.e. statistics and information technology). Since then, Cyprus continued to request EASO's support to face the growing pressure on its asylum system.



The Operating Plan 2021, signed on 17 December 2020, thus follows eight years of continuous cooperation between EASO and the Republic of Cyprus.

The 2021 Operating Plan focuses on supporting and enhancing national capacities in the areas of registration of applications for international protection and access to asylum procedure, reception, backlog reduction for first instance and second instance asylum cases.



The Pournara First Reception Centre continues to be one of the main beneficiaries of EASO support, namely the so-called 'Safe Zone', the Examination Centre for interviews and the Registration area. Activities supported by EASO include enhancing the system's efficiency and effectiveness through digitalization and remote working modalities, strengthening the attention on best practices especially in relation to vulnerability and quality, and contributing to the creation and implementation of a national reception model and strategy. The Agency provides technical support and capacity building activities, along with increased operational support, to reduce existing backlog of first and second instance asylum cases, in order to reduce the pressure that the Cypriot asylum system has been experiencing in the last years.



The [2022-2024 Operational Plan](#), the first of the multi-annual plans to be signed in Cyprus, signed on December 13, 2021 between EASO, the Minister of the Interior and the Chief Registrar of the Republic of Cyprus. The plan aims to continue contributing to the enhanced implementation of the EU Asylum Acquis and EU reception standards for persons in need of protection in Cyprus.

The 2022 Operational plan provides support to Cypriot authorities in line with the assistance previously provided in 2021, under 3 measures: Support to Asylum (registration, first instance and determination at appeal), Support to Reception and

Cross Cutting Support (applicants with special needs, quality, capacity building digitalization and transfer procedures).

Regarding **Support to Asylum**, the EUAA aims at strengthening the capacity of the Aliens and Immigration Unit of the Police (AIU) and the Cyprus Asylum Service (CAS) to respond to registrations and arrivals primarily at the First Reception Centre 'Pournara'. The Agency will also continue assisting CAS with processing applications at first instance and enhancing the capacity of the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC) to manage and reduce the backlog at second instance.

Concerning **Support to Reception**, the EUAA will continue to implement activities in the Kofinou Reception Centre (i.e. social work, reception support, info provision). Following the development of the integrated national reception strategy in 2021, the EUAA will support its operationalization and implementation.

Lastly, the 2022-2024 Operational Plan outlines **Cross Cutting Support** which the EUAA will be providing to the relevant authorities, to inform practices across asylum and reception. The support provided focuses on streamlining procedures, developing tools and providing the resources for support to applicants with special needs, quality assurance mechanisms, capacity building, digitalization and relocation exercises.

Throughout the implementation of the Plan, the Agency in Cyprus also plans to begin engaging with, and supporting additional stakeholders, including: the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD), Ministry of Health (MoH) and Social Welfare Services (SWS).

On 24 February 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine led to a nationwide humanitarian emergency. The resulting influx of refugees to the European Union led to Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022, where Art.3 par.2 stipulates that the EUAA should provide operational support to Member States that have requested assistance to help them cope with the situation, including for the purposes of applying the aforementioned Decision. In Cyprus, the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 was activated by Ministerial Decision on the 22nd of March 2022, and the article 20 of the Cyprus Refugee Laws which incorporates the Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC.

Against this backdrop on the 13th of April 2022 the Cypriot authorities requested support from the EUAA for the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in Cyprus. Following this, the EUAA Executive Director on the 6th of May responded to the request confirming EUAA capacity to support with the allocation of new resources as needed.

Between 14 March and 10 July 2022, a total of 14,215 Ukrainian nationals have registered for temporary protection: 5,103 applications have been lodged online, 874 in

offices in Nicosia, 1,763 in Larnaca, 654 in Famagusta, 3,824 in Limassol and 1,997 in Paphos.

We support the authorities to manage the implementation of TPD and EUAA Registration support team is involved in the delivery of information provision, TP registration and assessment of the eligibility criteria. In May EUAA shipped EUAA leaflets on TP for adults and Unaccompanied and separated children, in EN and UKR, tailored to the CY specificities.

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

[Asylum Service, Ministry of the Interior](#)

The Asylum Service is responsible for the first instance determination of asylum applications, including the examination of the Dublin III Regulation criteria. In case an application is rejected by the Asylum Service (even if subsidiary protection is granted), the applicant has the right to lodge an appeal against this decision, before the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC), which must examine both points of law and substance. The decisions are based on the Refugee Law 2000 (6(I)/2000) and its subsequent amendments. The Asylum Service is also responsible, by the Refugee Law, for the operation of reception and accommodation centres for asylum seekers, as well as for coordinating all other competent authorities on asylum issues.

[Aliens and Immigration Service to the Police, Ministry of the Interior](#)

The Aliens and Immigration Service to the Police (AISP) is primarily responsible for receiving and registering applications for international protection on behalf of the Asylum Service (including fingerprinting for EURODAC and Dublin purposes). The AISP is also responsible for implementing detention and deportation orders issued by the Director of the Civil Registry and Migration Department.

[Civil Registry and Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior](#)

Civil Registry and Migration Department is the result of the consolidation of the Migration, Registration and Election Services, which were part of the Ministry of Interior and it is competent for civil registry and migration related matters, such as issuance of residence permits to third country nationals who are holders of an international protection status, handling applications for family reunification and issuing of entry and residence permits.

[Social Welfare Services, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#)

The Social Welfare Services (SWS) carry the responsibility for the provision of social welfare services to applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. Where the applicant is an unaccompanied minor, the Director of the SWS acts as the guardian of the minor during the asylum procedure and takes all measures necessary under the Refugee Laws and the Regulations under it on the minor's behalf and on his best interest including in respect of the asylum procedure.

[Ministry of Health](#)

According to the Refugee Law, applicants for international protection are entitled to any pharmaceutical treatment free of charge at public hospitals and health centres, when the applicant does not have sufficient funds. Obligatory medical screening examinations are also taking place at public hospitals upon the submission of the application for international protection.

General

Secretariat for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (GSRAS) As established under Presidential Decree 18, Official Gaz. A'34/19.02.2020 on Renaming and Establishment of General and Special Secretariats at the Ministry of Migration.

[International Protection Administrative Court](#)

The International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC) began operating as of 18 June 2019, and appeals were submitted before the court as of July 2019. IPAC is competent for examining appeals relating to provisions of the Refugee Law. Appeals have a suspensive effect, and both facts and points of law are examined. With a constitutional amendment, in September 2020 the time limit to appeal before the International Protection Administrative Court was reduced from 75 to 15 days.

[Supreme Court](#)

The Supreme Court of Cyprus is the highest court of the Republic. All appeal decisions taken by IPAC can be further appealed before the Supreme Court. At this level, they will not have a suspensive effect and only points of law are examined.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2019

About **85** Personnel

About **8** Locations

2023

About **220** Personnel

About **6** Locations

2020

About **120** Personnel

About **7** Locations

2021

About **165** Personnel

About **6** Locations

2022

About **260** Personnel

About **6** Locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Spain

Santos Begoña

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

[Background](#)

On the 17th of December 2020 EASO`s Executive Director Nina Gregori and the Secretary of State for Migration, Hana Jalloul Muro, signed the very first Operating Plan between the Agency and Spain. This followed extensive consultations since the summer of 2020.

With this Operating Plan EASO now supports all the major Member States of first arrival – Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Spain. EASO and the Secretary of State for Migration carried out a Joint Rapid Needs Assessment in the autumn in order to identify needs in the area of reception. Actions for support were subsequently formulated and agreed upon in an Operating Plan. The focus of the Plan is broad support to the development of a new model for reception and the related structural and organisational changes, including training. EASO also committed to work with the Spanish authorities in the Canary Islands where arrivals had risen substantially to over 23,000 by the end of 2020. The Operating Plan also includes an inception phase for cooperation in the area of resettlement.



On the 17th of December 2021 EASO`s Executive Director Nina Gregori and Secretary of State for Migration Jesús Perea Cortijo signed an Operating Plan for the years 2022 and 2023. This cooperation will build on the very first Operating Plan between the

agency and Spain implemented (and assessed) throughout 2021.

Actions for support have focused, and will continue to focus, on broad support to the development of a new model for reception and the related structural and organisational changes, including aspects such as data management and funding. EASO also remains committed to working with the Spanish authorities in the Canary Islands and increasingly in other areas of Spain which see high numbers of arrivals.

In addition to broadening and deepening the work on information provision and vulnerability procedures, contingency planning and reception conditions monitoring, the EUAA will seek to provide support to the development of new reception centres throughout the Spanish territory – and to the improvement of existing ones. Cooperation in the area of resettlement, in particular with regard to info materials and training, will continue after successful initiatives in 2021.

Training of a wide range of stakeholders in the area of reception remains overall a key pillar of the new two-year Operating Plan; training activities will cover induction, specific reception-related topics and training of trainers with the aim to strengthen capacity among the authorities.

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations (MISSM)	Royal Decree 497/2020 of 28 of April establishes in its Article 7.1(a) the basic organisational structure of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. It replaces the former Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, in accordance with the Royal Decree 2/2020 of 12 January 2020.
Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones (MISSM)	Article 21 of the Royal Decree 139/2020 of 28 of January establishes that the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration is responsible of the State Secretary for Migration in charge of developing policies on foreigners, immigration and migration.
	Royal Decree 286/2021 of 20 April amends the Royal Decree 139/2020 and Royal Decree 497/2020 and establishes a new organisational structure.

[State Secretary for Migration-\(SEM\)](#)

Royal Decree 497/2020 in its article 5 establishes that the **State Secretary for Migration** is responsible for developing policies on foreigners, immigration and migration. Royal Decree 286/2021 amends article 5 and establishes a new organizational structure under the State Secretary for Migration, divided in 2 Directorates General (Directorate-General for Migration and Directorate-General for International Protection Programs and Humanitarian Assistance and 3 Sub-Directorates (Sub-Directorate General for Migration Analysis, Sub-Directorate General for Economic Management and European Funds and Sub-Directorate General for Legal Affairs).

Directorate-General for International Protection Programs and Humanitarian Assistance

Directorate-General for International Protection Programs and Humanitarian Assistance former Directorate-General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Assistance (DGIAH). The new organizational structure is divided in 2 Sub-Directorates:

- Sub-Directorate General for Programs
- and Sub-Directorate General for Emergencies and Migration Centres.

Dirección General de Programas de Protección Internacional y Atención Humanitaria

The main competences of the new Directorate are:

1. the planning, development and management of the national reception system and humanitarian assistance programs
2. the planning, development and management of the reception facilities
3. management in cases of arrivals of third country nationals.

According to Royal Decree 286/2021 of 20 April, the **Sub-Directorate General for Programs** is responsible for:

Sub-Directorate General for Programs

Subdirección General de Programas

1. the planning, development and management of the national system for the comprehensive reception and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection, stateless persons and people under the temporary protection regime.
2. The management of grants and collaboration with public and private entities whose activities are related to the reception and integration.
3. The planning, development and management of humanitarian assistance programs for immigrants and urgent intervention for exceptional situations.
4. The management of grants and collaboration with public and private entities whose activities are related to the protection of migrant's human rights.
5. The development and management of voluntary return and family reunification programs and the reception and inclusion of migrants with a VISA for job search in close cooperation with the General Secretariat for Inclusion and Social Welfare Objectives and Policies

According to Royal Decree 286/2021 of 20 April, the **Sub-Directorate General for Emergencies and Migration Centres** is responsible for:

Sub-Directorate
General for
Emergencies and
Migration Centres

Subdirección
General de
Emergencias y
Centros de
Migraciones

1. the coordination and planning of emergency interventions in case of exceptional situations and humanitarian emergencies, in collaboration, where appropriate, with the autonomous communities, Government Delegations and Sub-delegations, local corporations, as well as with public and private entities.
2. The agreement with other ministerial departments, autonomous communities, local entities and public and private entities of reception and inclusion interventions addressed to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection and, where appropriate, stateless persons and individuals under the temporary protection scheme, in coordination with the General Secretariat for Inclusion and Social Welfare Objectives and Policies.
3. The planning, management and monitoring of migration centers, as well as referrals from these centers to other resources or programs.
4. The management of movable assets and immovable resources for the migration centers, their inventory; the management of leases and, where appropriate, the adaptation and conservation of the centers for the reception of migrants and the maintenance of their facilities; as well as the planning, coordination, preparation and management of works projects that affect migration centers.
5. The proposal for the contracting of works, services and supplies necessary for the operation of the centers.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2021

About **20** Personnel
About **8** Locations

2023

About **90** Personnel
About **10** Locations

2022

About **50** Personnel
About **10** Locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Lithuania

Ingrida Diurbeiko

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

[Background](#)

Following a Needs Assessment exercise conducted between February and May 2023 by the EUAA in close collaboration with the Lithuanian authorities, [a new Operational Plan](#) was signed, **with an implementation period from 1 July 2023 until 31 December 2024**. This is the third Operational Plan agreed between the EUAA and Lithuania. The 2023-2024 Operational Plan includes one measure, aiming at the provision of support in Reception, and more particularly in **providing Technical and Operational support to the national Reception models and strategies towards the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)**.

In this regard, the Agency continues supporting the Lithuanian authorities to strategically **conceptualise, design and develop the new Reception Agency of Lithuania** and enhance the quality of the reception procedures. EUAA's support in the 2023-2024 Operational Plan currently in place, extends its support through the delivery of trainings and thematic workshops, organisation of study visits to other Member

States for information sharing on reception models, good practices exchange, and support with contingency planning.

In the context of reception support, EUAA Asylum Support Teams (ASTs) will be deployed to cover the **areas of information provision, vulnerability pre-screening, and interpretation.**



Background

Lithuania's initial request for EUAA support took place in the summer of 2021

. Following an unprecedented increase of irregular migration flows, Lithuania noticed a significant rise in the number of asylum applications, which put pressure on its Asylum and Reception systems.

Following a request from the Lithuanian authorities expressing the need for EUAA's support in relation to asylum and reception related procedures, a Rapid Needs Assessment exercise was conducted, in collaboration with the national authorities, [which led to the signature](#) of the **[first Operational Plan to Lithuania](#)**, on 15 July 2021.

The Operational Plan objectives aimed to enhance efficiency in access to procedures for applicants, in processing asylum applications and improving the effectiveness and efficiency in managing first line reception.

During the implementation period of 2021, the Operational Plan was further amended on 14 September 2021, following another Rapid Needs Assessment exercise.



The amended Operational Plan was extended until 30 June 2022, expanding **EUAA support to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its subordinate institution - the Refugees' Reception Centre.**

The new amendment included **for the first time support in technical expertise for the design and planning of new reception facilities**, as well as dedicated support in the management of reception facilities for vulnerable asylum seekers.

A second Operational Plan was signed on **26 June 2022**, with an implementation period between 1 July 2022 until 30 June 2023. The main findings emerging from the Rapid Needs Assessment suggested proceeding with the deployment of Asylum Support Teams to further enhance the capacity of the national reception sites through continued support with **information provision, interpretation and vulnerability screening procedures**, as well as by providing relevant reception-related training to enhance the professional development of reception personnel. Furthermore, this

Operational Plan included the addition of a second area, and more specifically the **provision of Technical Support, aiming at conceptualizing the design of the new Reception Agency in Lithuania.**

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

[Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania](#) The Ministry of the Interior (Mol) is the main institution responsible to coordinate the implementation of the Lithuanian policies and regulations on migration. In particular, the following tasks fall under the coordination of Mol: migration, asylum and citizenship procedures; issuance and record-keeping of documents proving personal identity and citizenship; travel documents; residence permits; free movement of persons.

[Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania](#) The Ministry for Social Security and Labour (MoSSL) of the Republic of Lithuania is responsible to coordinate and foster integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third country nationals legally present in Lithuania. Furthermore the MoSSL of Lithuania is responsible for the management of the Refugees' Reception Centers in Rukla and in Vilnius which accommodate unaccompanied minors as well as vulnerable asylum seekers.

[Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania](#) The Migration Department (MD), under the Mol, is the main institution implementing state policy in the area of migration. With regard to international protection, the MD implements asylum procedures and is responsible for issuing decisions on the applications for international protection. The MD makes decisions regarding granting (or refusal to grant) an asylum also collects and analyses information on the countries of origin of the asylum seekers and, in case of a need, coordinates joint action, related to asylum procedures, implemented by the state institutions, other institutions and non-governmental organisations.

[State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania](#)

The State Border Guard Service (SBGS) is established under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. SBGS is responsible for the enforcement of public safety in the fields of State border guard and, within the scope of competence, to manage irregular migration. The main tasks of SBGS are: to ensure the inviolability of the State border and implement the policy of State border guarding; to implement international agreements, laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania establishing the legal regulations of the State border; to prevent, detect and investigate criminal activities and other violations of law; to protect human rights and freedoms and ensure public peace and security. SBGS is also managing closed reception facilities at 20 border crossing points where asylum applicants (who are not yet allowed entrance into Lithuanian territory) are accommodated. In addition to the above, SBGS is also tasked to manage the temporary reception facilities that were established to respond to the influx of irregular migrants: 1 tented reception facility erected in Foreigners' Registration Centre territory (Pabradė), 1 temporary reception facility which houses asylum seekers in SBGS School dormitory (Medininkai). Several temporary reception facilities (tents) are set up in frontier stations.

[Foreigners' Registration Centre \(FRC\) of the State Border Guard Service](#)

The Foreigners' Registration Center (FRC) provides first line reception facilities for asylum seekers, irregular migrants and third country nationals during the processing of their asylum applications or other procedures. FRC is managed by the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) and is located in Pabrade.

[Refugees' Reception Centre](#)

The Refugees' Reception Centre is a budgetary institution falling under the competence and management of the MoSSL. The Refugees' Reception Centre acts as a coordinator of the national integration programme for beneficiaries of international protection and as a guardian for unaccompanied minors. The Refugees' Reception Centre is also a designated institution to provide first line reception services to vulnerable asylum seekers and has three reception facilities in Rukla, in Vilnius (Naujininkai), and in Kaunas district.

**Main
International
Partners**



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Statistic of deployments

2021

About **34** Personnel
About **4** Locations

2023

About **12** Personnel
About **3** Locations

2022

About **30** Personnel
About **5** Locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Belgium

An Rita Buys

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

[Background](#)

[The Agency has been supporting Belgium since 2022](#), in the framework of an Operational Plan (OP), in an effort to further enhance the quality of the national reception system.

[The first Operational Plan with Belgium](#) was signed by the Executive Director of EUAA, Nina Gregori, and the Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration, Sammy Mahdi on 16th December 2021.

Following two Amendments to the OP in 2022, and after the Belgian authorities' request for extended support throughout 2024, [a third Amendment was signed in December 2023 by the Executive Director of EUAA, Nina Gregori, and the State Secretary for Asylum and Migration of Belgium, Nicole De Moor.](#)

[The Agency has been working with the Belgian federal asylum agency, FEDASIL, to increase short and medium-term reception capacity while ensuring that reception standards are in line with the Common European Asylum System \(CEAS\).](#)



The EUAA operational support to Belgium in 2024 is based on three pillars:

- **Frontline response** to address reception needs, notably to increase the number of reception spaces available and improve the quality of reception conditions. The Agency deploys expert personnel and supports with interpretation.
- **Structural support** to improve reception conditions especially regarding vulnerable persons, enhance arrival processes and information provision, as well as build the capacity of national authorities through training and learning activities.
- **Temporary Protection support** towards the effective implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive.

[Stakeholders](#)

Main National Partners

[Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers](#)

Fedasil is responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection and other target groups and guarantees high-quality reception and conformity within the various reception structures. Fedasil coordinates the various voluntary return programmes.

State Secretary for Asylum and Migration

Policy-making on asylum and reception, proposes measures to the Council of Ministers.

Immigration Office

Responsible for the registration and lodging of asylum applications, involved in the workflow of the arrival centre in Brussels.

Guardianship Service, Federal Department of Justice

The Guardianship Service belongs to the Federal Public Service Justice and has the mission to ensure judicial protection of all unaccompanied children staying in Belgium, by systematically appointing a guardian. The service is responsible for the identification of unaccompanied children by verifying their age and the persons that eventually accompany them.

Fedasil partner organisations

Currently: Croix Rouge Belgique, Rode Kruis Vlaanderen, Samusocial [municipal emergency service providing assistance to homeless and asylum seekers], Mutualités socialistes [mutual insurance company], Caritas International, Le CIRE, private partners. Management of collective reception centres, contracted by Fedasil.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2022

About **20** personnel

About **15** locations

2023

About **75** personnel

About **30** locations

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Locations

[See full screen](#)

Romania

Ioana Bornaci

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has been supporting the Romanian authorities **since 2022**.

The current agreed support foresees the implementation of the Operational Plan until December 2024, specifically in the area of **Temporary Protection, Asylum and Reception** with the aim to enhance the capacity of the Romanian authorities to process asylum applications and provide reception conditions in line with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS),. The responsible authority and main national partner of the EUAA, is the General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII) through its Directorate for Asylum and Integration (IGI-DAI) and the Directorate for Migration (IGI-DM).



The EUAA has been operating **in more than 10 different field locations** including Bucharest, Galati, Iasi, Radauti, Somcuta Mare, Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Brasov, Timisoara and Constanta.

In terms of operational activities, the EUAA supports the Romanian authorities in registrations of beneficiaries of temporary protection and of applications for International Protection. **The support to temporary protection beneficiaries** includes communication and information provision through the development, design, and distribution of information content, as well as in conducting asylum interviews and drafting assessments at first instance. To ensure the adherence to **quality standard**, EUAA also provides support to the development or update of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), guidelines and tools. The Agency also supports the GII in improving its **reception capacity**. To add to that, EUAA provides horizontal support through the deployment of interpreters and provision of training.



Romania is one of the main entry points for those seeking Temporary Protection following the war in Ukraine. In addition, the country has experienced an increase in the number of applications for International Protection over the last years, resulting in extraordinary pressure on its asylum and reception systems.

The EUAA signed for [the first time an Operational Plan](#) with the Romanian Ministry of Interior on 28 March 2022, and set the [framework for the provision of technical and operational assistance, in the areas of Reception and Temporary Protection](#).

The Agency continued its support to Romania in the areas of Reception and Temporary Protection in 2023, [following the signature of the 2023 Operational Plan](#), with an implementation date until 31 December 2023. Under this OP, support to Asylum was also added.

A 2024 Needs Assessment Exercise -launched in August 2023- indicated the need for continued support in the areas of Asylum, Reception and Temporary Protection, [and led to f an Amendment of the 2023 Operational Plan, which was signed in December 2023. The new implementation period is until the 31 December 2024.](#)

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

[General Inspectorate for Immigration – Directorate for Asylum and Integration \(IGI-DAI\) - Inspectoratul General pentru Imigrari – Directia Azil si Integrare \(IGI-DAI\)](#)

Access to procedure First instance determination Subsequent application Registration of Temporary Protection and Management of complex cases (incl. court proceedings where applicable)

[General Inspectorate for Immigration \(GII\) Directorate for Migration – Inspectoratul General pentru Imigrari – Directia Migratie](#)

Legal migration Irregular stay & returns Registration of Temporary Protection

[General Inspectorate for Border Police – Inspectoratul General pentru Politia de Frontiera Department for Emergency Situations / General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations - Departamentul de Stat pentru Situatii de Urgenta / Inspectoratul General pentru Situatii de Urgenta](#)

Management of the borders First contact for Temporary Protection & asylum seekers Set-up and Management of emergency temporary camps for accommodation and humanitarian assistance. Coordination of support for Ukrainian nationals fleeing conflict

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2022

About **60** personnel

About **10** locations

2023

About **60** personnel

About **10** locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

The Netherlands

Nadia Gmira-Verots

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

The Agency has been supporting the Netherlands **since 2022** in an effort to further enhance the quality of the national reception system.

In December 2023, the EUAA Executive Director and the Chairman of the board of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) and the Director General of the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) of the Netherlands signed the **second amendment of the Operational Plan with implementation until the end of 2024.**

With this amendment, the Agency continues to support the Dutch reception authorities in **providing reception conditions in line with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and introduces support to the Dutch asylum authorities.**

In the field of reception, EUAA support focuses on **increasing reception capacity** and enhancing **collaboration on contingency planning**. As regards the newly established support in the area of asylum, the Agency will support with the processing of well-founded asylum applications under the **PEPAC project (Project Expedited Processing Asylum Claims) at first instance.**



In the course of 2021, the Netherlands experienced a sharp increase in the occupancy in reception centres, following the relaxation of COVID-related travel restrictions. This increased pressure on the national reception system.

On 5 May 2022 the Executive Director of EUAA and the Chairman of the board of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) signed the [first Operational Plan](#). Under this first Plan, the EUAA aimed to support the Dutch national authorities exclusively in **providing reception to applicants for international protection** and to enhance operational collaboration between the two parties in the field of reception.

[Stakeholders](#)

Main National Partners

(COA) Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers

COA is the authority responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection in the Netherlands. It is an independent administrative body falling under the political responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Security. COA has been responsible for applicants' reception since 1994. It has currently approximately 3600 employees.

Ministry of Justice and Security

The Ministry of Justice and Security, more specifically the Directorate General of Migration, is the entity responsible for regulating migration in the Netherlands.

[Immigration and Naturalisation Service](#) (Immigratie — en Naturalisatiedienst - IND)

IND is the competent authority for registering and processing applications for international protection in the Netherlands, as well as for handling immigration and naturalisation applications. It is an independent administrative body falling under the political responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Security.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2022

5 personnel
1 location

2023

About **30** personnel
About **17** locations

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Locations

[See full screen](#)

Czechia

Operations came to an end in December 2023

Background

The EUAA has been [supporting the Czech Republic since June 2022](#) to enhance the capacity of the Czech authorities to effectively implement procedures and activities related to Temporary Protection.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 the Czech Republic has been receiving a **high number of displaced persons from Ukraine**. This event caused increased pressure on the country's registration and reception capacities. **A state of emergency was declared in Czechia as of 4 March 2022** and a contingency plan was fully activated to respond to the uprising needs of displaced persons fleeing Ukraine.



Under this backdrop, an Operational Plan was signed between the **EUAA executive Director and the Minister of Interior of Czechia** following a rapid needs assessment, to aid the national authorities until 31 December 2022.

In December 2022, in consideration of the ensuing high influx of Temporary Protection beneficiaries and the persisting impact on the Czech asylum and reception systems, a 12-month extension of the Plan was agreed until 31 December 2023. **In May 2023, following a request by Czech authorities the Plan was amended by excluding the provision of reception containers/units.**

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

Ministry of Interior
of The Czech
Republic
[Ministerstvo vnitra
České republiky](#)

The Ministry of Interior is the central governmental authority for home affairs, responsible, inter alia, for migration, asylum and integration policy.

Asylum and
Migration Policy
Department [Odbor
azylové a migrační
politiky](#)

The Asylum and Migration Policy Department is a department of the Ministry of the Interior, under whose remit falls in particular the field of international protection, refugees, entry and residence of aliens, the concept of integration of foreigners as well as beneficiaries of international protection (state integration programme), and the Schengen cooperation. It performs tasks in the area of access to asylum procedures (registration / lodging / making asylum applications (in specific cases), first instance determination, and return procedures in cooperation with Foreign police. Furthermore, it submits proposals for the establishment or change of the nature of asylum facilities or facilities for the detention of foreigners. The Department is competent to conduct the procedure on temporary protection.

Refugee Facilities
Administration

[Správa uprchlických
zařízení](#)

Refugee Facilities Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (RFA MOI) is an organizational section of the state subordinated to the 1st Deputy Minister of the Interior for Internal Security. It operates several types of facilities – Reception Centers, Residential Centers, Integration Asylum Centers, Facilities for the Detention of Foreigners, while it also provides services to different categories of foreigners based on their legal status (applicants for international protection, international protection holders, detained foreigners, temporary protection beneficiaries). It also ensures the implementation of voluntary returns of rejected applicants for international protection to their country of origin.

Foreign Police

[Služba cizinecké
policie](#)

The Foreign police of the Czech Republic has competence in the field of access to asylum procedures (making applications (in the majority of cases) / registration (fingerprinting), detention and return procedures, in cooperation with the Asylum and Migration Policy Department. Foreign police is competent to conduct procedure on temporary protection.

Fire Rescue Service
of the Czech

Republic Hasičský
záchranný sbor ČR

The Fire Rescue Service is responsible for coordinating the crisis response within the crisis management system of the Czech Republic. The Fire Rescue Service is headed by its General Directorate which is an organizational section of the Ministry of the Interior.

National Assistance
Center to assist
Ukraine Národní
asistenční centrum
pomoci Ukrajině –
NACPU

The NACPU center is the central organ responsible for crisis planning and management in relation to the Ukrainian crisis.

Regional Centers for
Help and Assistance
to Ukraine

Krajská asistenční
centra pomoci
Ukrajině – KACPU

The KACPU centers are regional platforms comprised of the various authorities and stakeholders responsible for registration, granting temporary protection and further services provided to the refugees from Ukraine.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of deployments

2022

About **2** Personnel

1 Location

2023

About **2** Personnel

1 Location

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Locations

[See full screen](#)

Bulgaria

Nadia Gmira-Verots

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

The EUAA is supporting Bulgaria **since September 2022** through the implementation of Operational Plans. The current [2023-2024 Operational Plan](#) was signed on 3 July 2023 by the Executive Director of EUAA and the Chairperson of the State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers in Bulgaria. It aims to support the national authorities in **processing asylum applications and providing reception conditions in line with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)**. Main fields of activities include **training, capacity building, interpretation services and support in the following areas:**

1. Quality assurance at first instance.
2. Digitalisation of case file management systems.
3. Country of Origin Information (COI) and Country Guidance.
4. Asylum processing at first instance including processing of Dublin requests.
5. First- and second-line reception.

The Operational Plan is foreseen to last until 31 December 2024.



Background

During **2021-2022**, Bulgaria experienced [a significant increase in arrivals](#) of third country nationals and asylum applications. The increased number of displaced persons from Ukraine seeking safety generated additional stress on the country's accommodation capacities. These developments exerted pressure on the country's asylum and reception systems and led the national authorities to request EUAA support on 27 May 2022.

On 2 September 2022 the Executive Director of EUAA and the Bulgarian national authorities signed the [2022 Operational Plan](#) to last until the end of that year. In this Operational Plan the **EUAA supported Bulgaria in the effective implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)**. EUAA activities focused on professional development, training and support to the administrative capacity in the field of digitization.

On 31 October 2022, the Bulgarian authorities requested the **continuation and expansion of EUAA support** as a result of the persisting pressure on the national

asylum and reception systems, further accentuated during the implementation of the 2022 Operational Plan.

The [2022-2023 Operational Plan](#) was an **amendment of the 2022 Operational Plan** and it included activities in the area of reception and asylum while it also maintained the measure in support for the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive.

In June **2023** the Bulgarian authorities requested **further support from the Agency to improve frontline and structural support at central level in asylum and reception**. As a result, the two parties signed the current [2023-2024 Operational Plan](#). As at that point, the flows of beneficiaries of Temporary Protection were relatively low and Bulgarian authorities managed independently the respective procedure, Temporary Protection was not included as a pillar of support in the current Operational Plan.

Finally, it is worth noting that the EUAA (then EASO) has provided support to Bulgaria through Operating Plans and Special Support Plans from 2013 to 2018.

The areas of support were various: asylum procedure, delivery of core training, identification of vulnerable people and referrals.

More information about past support in Bulgaria is available in the tab “Past Operations”

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

[Ministry of Interior](#) The Ministry of Interior is the central governmental authority for home affairs.

[State Agency for Refugees \(SAR\) at the council of Ministers](#) The State Agency for Refugees (SAR) at the Council of Ministers is the authority responsible for the management, coordination and implementation of the state policies relating to granting refugee and humanitarian status to third-country nationals in the Republic of Bulgaria. SAR is also responsible for the management and coordination of the reception system for asylum seekers.

Main International Partners



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Locations

[See full screen](#)

Statistic of deployments

2023

About **10** Personnel

About **7** Locations

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Number of locations: Consists of the total number of locations where EUAA personnel has been present over the reporting period, regardless of the duration of the support.

Slovenia

Operations came to an end in June 2024

Background

The EUAA supported the Republic of Slovenia from 16 December 2022 until 30 June 2024 in providing support to the asylum and reception conditions according to the CEAS (Common European Asylum System).

During 2022, the Slovenian asylum and reception systems faced **disproportionate pressure due to multiple factors:**

1. increase in the number of border crossings;
2. sharp increase in the number of applications for international protection;

3. additional pressure to the reception system due to beneficiaries of temporary protection being accommodated in reception facilities;
4. increased difficulty in the management of reception facilities due to the high turnover of residents in reception facilities.

Against this backdrop, a request for support was addressed to the EUAA in late August 2022 by Slovenian authorities, covering a broad spectrum of matters including **vulnerability identification, information provision in reception, asylum and reception procedures, accommodation capacity and interpretation services.**



Following a rapid needs assessment conducted by EUAA, an [Operational Plan](#) was agreed and signed between the EUAA Executive Director and the Minister of Public Administration and Acting Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia in December 2022. Furthermore, due to the continuous increasing pressure on the asylum and reception systems, an [Amendment 1 to the Operational Plan](#) was signed in June 2023 to extend support to the Republic of Slovenia for an additional year until the end of June 2024, when operational activities were successfully concluded.

The 2022-2024 Operational Plan allowed the EUAA to support the Slovenian authorities, among other things, in the following areas:

1. support to the improvement of quality and procedures concerning **the processing of asylum applications**;
2. support to the improvement of **reception conditions** through the support to information provision and vulnerability pre-identification;
3. support in the implementation of the **Temporary Protection Directive**;
4. **Trainings and professional development activities** for both asylum and reception Slovenian authorities' officials;
5. **The identification of best practices** in both asylum and reception, through exchange study visits.

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

Ministry of Interior (Migration Directorate - Direktorat za migracije)	The International Protection Procedures Division, which is part of the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior is a specialised and centralised authority responsible for examining applications for international protection and competent to take decisions at first instance.
Police/Border Police	The authority responsible for the Preliminary procedure.

Government Office for
Support and Integration
of Migrants

(Urad vlade za oskrbo in
integracijo migrantov,
UOIM)

The authority responsible for accommodation and reception of asylum applicants.

Ministry of Labour,
Family, Social Affairs
and Equal Opportunities

Centres for social work provide support to applicants.

Main International Partners



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Statistic of Deployments

2023

About **23** Personnel

About **3** Locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Austria

Operations came to an end in June 2024

[Background](#)

The EUAA supported Austria from February 2023 until June 2024 in providing reception conditions according to the CEAS (Common European Asylum System). In 2022 Austria had been experiencing disproportionate pressure on its reception system, with increased arrivals and a rising number of applicants for international protection. Staffing shortages combined with increasing pressure on the existing reception staff, made the identification and management of vulnerable cases challenging.

Against this backdrop, the Austrian authorities requested support from the Agency on 31 August 2022 to better respond to emergency reception needs. In consideration of the situation and following a rapid needs assessment, the [2022-2023 Operational Plan](#) was agreed and signed between the EUAA Executive Director and the Director General for Migration and International Affairs of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior in December 2022. The Operational Plan foresaw support in the following areas:

1. **Support to the management and operation of reception facilities** through the deployment of reception personnel.
2. **Support to communication and information provision**, including through the development of information material.
3. **Support for vulnerability identification, screening and referrals**
4. **Training and learning activities.**
5. **Study visits** focusing on reception system management, workflows and procedures
6. **Support with interpretation services.**



Following a request in September 2023 by the Austrian authorities to extend the duration and amend the scope of the support provided by EUAA, Amendment 1 to the Operational Plan was signed by both parties on 29 September 2023. **Under the Amendment 1** to the [Operational Plan](#), **the EUAA focused on the provision of structural support to improve reception conditions in reviewing and developing reception management workflows and guidance on vulnerability.**

The aim was to ensure a harmonized approach for standard operating procedures and protocols employed by the Austrian authorities, while using applicable EUAA tools and guidance where relevant.

In the area of reception, EUAA also maintained frontline support - with activities planned as follows:

1. Support to the planning and implementation of vulnerability related activities;
2. Support to enhance access to relevant funding mechanisms;

3. Continued support in training;
4. Continued provision of interpretation services.

On 13 March 2024, **Amendment 2** to the [Operational Plan](#) was signed by the Agency and the Austrian Authorities, **reducing the implementation period until the end of June 2024, when operational activities were successfully concluded, meeting agreed objectives.**

Stakeholders

Main National Partners

Federal Ministry of the Interior / Bundesministerium für Inneres

The National Authority responsible for:

- Migration
- Asylum Procedure
- Reception Procedure

The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services BBU GmbH (Bundesagentur für Betreuung und Unterstützungsleistungen GmbH)

The National Authority responsible for:

- Reception

Main International Partners



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Statistics of Deployments

2023

About **12** Personnel

About **2** Locations

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[Locations](#)

[See full screen](#)

Germany

Bart Vandenbroucke

Coordinating Officer

[send email](#)

Background

The EUAA is supporting the German asylum national authorities in the processing of Dublin cases according to the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The EUAA support is provided through the implementation of an Operational Plan agreed between the two parties in June 2024.

In 2023, the highest level of asylum applications was recorded in Germany since 2016, making it the top receiving EU country. The German asylum and reception system had been already experiencing constant and disproportionate pressure since 2022., a situation intensified by the influx of Temporary Protection beneficiaries fleeing Ukraine. This surge increased, the workload of the national authorities for the processing of asylum applications and in other asylum related areas, including the Dublin procedure. Although in 2023 Germany remained the top EU country in terms of Dublin decisions and implemented transfers, and despite the measures taken by the Government, the effective management of the Dublin workload was continuously impeded by staff shortages, a key and ongoing challenge.



Against this backdrop the **German authorities requested support from the Agency on 28 March 2024** to manage the Dublin cases workload. [A targeted needs assessment was carried out in April 2024](#), focusing on Dublin support, and on 20 June 2024 the [Operational Plan 2024-2025](#) was signed aiming to increase the national capacity in the processing of Dublin cases. The following actions are foreseen in the Operational Plan to be supported through the deployment of EUAA experts in the country:

- **The processing of outgoing take back requests** where there are clear grounds that another Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application.
- **The processing of outgoing information requests to other EU+ Dublin units** when there is evidence suggesting that an asylum applicant was present in that country before arriving in Germany.

Stakeholders

**Main National
Partners**

[Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community \(BMI\)](#)

The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) and its executive agencies cover a broad range of tasks and activities, ranging from civil protection and integration to security. BMI also designs the Federal Government's migration policy, sets laws on residence, freedom of movement and asylum at national and European level, and handles issues related to returns of third-country nationals.

[Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#)

The Federal Office is a Federal authority within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). As the centre of excellence for migration and integration in

Germany, the Federal Office is not only responsible for processing asylum applications and ensuring refugee protection, but is also a motor for the nationwide promotion of integration. The authority's remit also includes research into migration.

Group 32 within the Directorate-General 3 ('Business processes of asylum, Statistics, Dublin procedures') is responsible in BAMF for processing Dublin cases (Dublin Unit). The Unit consists of six divisions:

BAMF - Dublin Unit

- Division 32A, responsible for the operational management of Dublin cases including EURODAC.
- Division 32B, responsible for transfer and information requests and coordination of transfers from Member States.
- Division 32C, responsible for the coordination of transfers to Member States
- Divisions 32D (Berlin Dublin Centre), 32E (Bochum Dublin Centre) and 32F (Bayreuth Dublin Centre), responsible for transfer and information requests to Member States, issuing transfer decisions, apprehension and detention cases in close cooperation with the Aliens Authorities of the Federal States and the Federal Police, which are also the enforcing bodies of the transfers.

The Dublin Unit is responsible for the following actions:

- Analyses of the Dublin interview in order to issue the transfer decision
- Issuing transfer decisions
- Sending and replying to take charge and take back requests to/from other Member States
- Sending and replying to information requests to/from other Member States



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Related content

- [Archive of Operations](#)
- [EUAA Asylum and Reception Operational Response Catalogue](#)