News Published: 28 January 2020

EASO operations in Greece to expand significantly



The Agency's operations in Greece are expected to double in size to over 1000 personnel in 2020; Hosting agreement signed to improve efficiency of support through legal and administrative clarity.

(Text in Greek below)

On 28 January 2020, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Greek government signed a Seat Agreement for the Hosting of the EASO Operational Office in Greece. The agreement was signed in Athens by the Executive Director of EASO, **Nina Gregori**, and the Greek Alternate Minister for Migration and Asylum, **Giorgos Koumoutsakos**.

Commenting on the signing of the agreement, Ms **Gregori** stated: *"EASO has been continuously increasing its operational support and cooperation with the Greek authorities since 2011. We have already started further expanding our support in the country in these weeks, and today's agreement gives us the needed administrative and legal framework to do so effectively. I want to thank Alternate Minister Koumoutsakos for the renewed effort he put into ensuring that the agreement was finalised as a priority. This continued constructive approach reflects the long-standing and ongoing excellent working relationship EASO has in partnering with our Greek colleagues."*

The hosting agreement gives legal and administrative clarity to the status of EASO in the country, including that of its staff and assets, thus allowing the Agency to be better able to support the Hellenic asylum and reception authorities.

Based on an Operating Plan which was signed between EASO and Greece in December 2019, the Agency is already scaling up its operational presence in support of the Greek authorities. Deployed EASO personnel will **double from approximately 500 to over 1000** throughout the year. They will work to support the

Greek Asylum Service, the national Dublin Unit, the Reception and Identification Service and the Appeals Authority. The personnel will include caseworkers, field support staff, reception staff, research officers for the Appeals Authority, interpreters and administrative staff.

Within this increase, the operational **presence on the Greek mainland will increase by four times the level of 2019**, including personnel being permanently deployed to eight new locations in Thessaloniki and Ioannina to support the country's regular asylum procedure. At the same time, the number of **caseworkers will double on the islands** (from approximately 100 to 200) **and triple on the mainland** (from approximately 30 to 100).

EASO's operations in Greece in 2020 will translate to a financial commitment of at least **EUR 36 million**.

Background

EASO has been supporting the Greek authorities since 2011. The Agency's operations in the country have grown substantially since then, most notably as a result of the increased numbers of asylum applications since 2015.

EASO's operations in Greece are now at unprecedented levels, with **over 500 personnel** at any given point, that were **deployed in 36 locations** in the country in 2019. The Agency's operational presence in the country is expected to double in 2020. Last year, EASO's operational commitment in Greece translated to a financial commitment of **EUR 27.5 million**.

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