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Press Release: EASO signs new Special Support Plan with Cyprus



EASO and Cyprus extend Special Support Plan for country's asylum services

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Government of Cyprus have signed a new agreement that will see the Agency's Special Support Plan (SSP) extended until 31 January 2019, with additional amendments to its tasks.

The Amended SSP was signed by the Executive Director of EASO, José Carreira, and the Minister of Interior of Cyprus, Constantinos Petrides. The agreement will build on the expansion in support activities that EASO has been delivering throughout 2017 to improve and enhance the country's asylum and reception system.

In addition to extending the applicability, the new SSP also amends the previous version with new specific deliverables that EASO will provide in its operations supporting backlog management and in the field of reception and open accommodation. José Carreira welcomed the signing of the new SSP as a further bolstering of the close cooperation between EASO and Cyprus' Asylum Service:

"Today's extension of the SSP with our colleagues in Cyprus strengthens EASO's support to the country and enables us to keep building on the operational assistance we have been providing. I look forward to the work ahead; the Agency will do all it can to support Cyprus in managing its asylum and reception system as efficiently as possible."

EASO's support for backlog management began in February 2017, whereby the Agency deployed eight dedicated experts later in the year in order to assist Cyprus in clearing the backlog caused by an elevated number of applications for international protection in recent years. In addition to amending the Agency's deliverables in this area, the new SSP also sets out EASO's support in the field of reception and open accommodation through a series of measures.

The operational support is carried out exclusively at the request of, and on behalf of, the authorities in Cyprus. EASO does not take decisions on applications for international protection or carry out any executive functions.

Background

In September, Mr. Carreira visited Cyprus to open EASO's office in Nicosia and to discuss the Agency's operational support with Minister Petrides.

Cyprus first requested special support from EASO to improve the asylum and reception system in specific areas on 26 May 2014. Currently, in addition to the deployment of experts specialised in backlog management, EASO also simultaneously deploys 8 experts at the Kofinou reception center, assisting in vulnerability assessment, social assistance, and additional capacity building activities.

As a measure of contingency planning, EASO also stands ready to provide operational assistance to Cyprus in the field of registration, screening and reception of persons requesting international protection in case of high number of arrivals.

See Special Support Plan [EN]

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

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