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Introduction

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) *Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union* is drawn up in accordance with Article 12.1 of the EASO Regulation[1].

Its objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of asylum in the EU (including information on Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland), describing and analysing flows of applicants for international protection, major developments in legislation, jurisprudence, and policies at the EU+ and national level and reporting on the practical functioning of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). As part of the Report, EASO also indicates its activities undertaken in 2018 in respective thematic areas.
The production process follows the methodology and basic principles agreed by the EASO Management Board in 2013.

Primary factual information was obtained by EASO from EU+ countries in a process coordinated with the European Migration Network (EMN)[2], to avoid duplication with the 2018 Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Furthermore, the European Commission was consulted during the drafting process and actively contributed. In accordance with its role under Article 35 of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees, which is reflected in the EU Treaties and the asylum acquis instruments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was also consulted during the drafting process and indicated publically available information resources produced by its experts, to inform the present report.

Statistical information was primarily derived from Eurostat, an overview of which is available in the annex to the Report. Selected statistical data at EU+ level was also obtained from the EASO Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS) data collection for additional insights, as well as for the section on Dublin procedures (due to unavailability of respective Eurostat data at the time of writing).

As in previous years, the report aims to provide an analysis based on a wide range of sources of information – duly referenced - to reflect the ongoing debate at European level and to help identify the areas where improvement is most needed (and thus where EASO and other key stakeholders should focus their efforts) in line with its declared purpose of improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the CEAS. To that end, EASO takes due account of information already available from other relevant sources, as stipulated in the EASO Regulation, including from EU+ countries, EU institutions, civil society, international organisations, and academia. Contributions were also specifically sought from civil society with an open call for input from the EASO Executive Director to the members of the EASO Consultative Forum and other civil society

stakeholders, inviting them to provide information on their work relevant for the functioning of the CEAS. A dedicated workshop was organised to gather insights from think-tank and academia representatives. Members of the EASO Network of Courts and Tribunals contributed to the report by providing relevant examples of national case law.

All efforts were made to provide a broad coverage of key relevant developments in areas covered by the Report within its scope. Yet, the report makes no claim to be exhaustive; in particular, state-specific examples mentioned in the report serve only as illustrations of relevant aspects of the CEAS.

The EASO Annual Report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018 inclusive, but also refers to major recent relevant developments in the year of writing. Whenever possible, information referring to 2019 was based on the most up-to-date sources available at the time of adoption of the Report by the EASO Management Board.

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1 Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office

2 Unless otherwise stated, information on state practices refers to that input.

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