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COI units continued to follow the EUAA recommended methodology. Following EASO's transition into the EUAA, the COI Report Methodology798 and the Writing and Referencing Guide for COI Reports799 for researchers who co-draft EUAA COI reports were rebranded by the EUAA.

Several methodological updates were implemented in 2023, without any major institutional changes to national COI units. For example, Austria's methodology was revised, including new specifications for reporting.

Poland developed several templates for short thematic COI reports, with specific terms of reference and short guidelines for COI researchers and experts, to ensure important subjects are not overlooked and relevant topics are included. In response to the growing data on the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) in 2023, the Polish COI unit also created an application to facilitate data navigation.

Sweden made efforts to improve its methodology for developing COI on countries that are considered to be safe. They also developed a checklist for COI reports on conflict and the security situation, as well as standardised texts describing some common sources of data on conflict that are included in the reports.xxxiiAdditionally, internal guidelines on writing, style, and referencing were produced by the Swedish Migration Agency, Unit for Migration Analysis.

The Netherlands continued developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) programme with the dual objective of implementing a new, scalable and shareable GIS software and building a European network of COI verification through geodata. In addition, the Office for Country Information and Language Analysis (OCILA) of the IND started drafting factsheets on the availability of adequate shelter in countries of origin for rejected minor applicants for international protection.

The potential use of AI tools for COI research and analysis for the provision of COI was explored in Norway, which intends to establish a small team to understand better and use the potential of AI in their work.

A challenge that seemed to persist across COI units in the production of COI, included staff shortages and high turnover which resulted in fewer reports being produced.

Several countries reported challenges in conducting COI research and obtaining accurate information on various topics. These challenges were attributed to armed conflict, security concerns, and political issues, such as authoritarian leaderships or regime changes, where the international community has limited access. Such countries include Afghanistan, Belarus, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russia, Sudan and Ukraine.

Additional challenges included the increased workload and the ongoing difficulty of responding to numerous requests and providing information to handle emergency situations in the least amount of time, as well as providing information in the most succinct and clear manner.

- 798European Union Agency for Asylum. (February 2023). *Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology*.

- 799European Union Agency for Asylum. (February 2023). *Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports Writing and Referencing Guide*.

- xxxiiThe sources used are mainly ACLED and Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP).

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