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As the centre of expertise on asylum, the EUAA plays an important role in strengthening CEAS by working with third countries. The revised external cooperation strategy, adopted in March 2023, provides the framework for this work, which is based on the understanding that a stable and functioning CEAS is contingent not only on improving legislation and procedures within Europe, but also on enhancing capacity in asylum and reception systems of third countries. In developing and implementing activities with third countries, the EUAA cooperates with a range of stakeholders, including EU+ countries, the European Commission, the EEAS and JHA agencies.

To continue practical cooperation on external dimension activities, in 2023 the Agency organised meetings of the Third Country Cooperation Network and the working group on cooperation with the Western Balkans, Türkiye and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Practical cooperation among EU+ countries was further facilitated through the third country support platform and the overviews of asylum and reception systems of various third countries, hosted on the Third Country Cooperation Network's website.

Cooperation with Western Balkan countries was strengthened through six roadmaps, within the framework of a EUR 6 million programme implemented in partnership with Frontex, the IOM and UNHCR. The work included aligning local asylum legislation with CEAS; introducing standard operating procedures in line with EU practices; capacity-building of local personnel, including through EUAA training modules; and direct support provided by experts from EU+ countries. The external dimension of the Agency's work also comprises sustained cooperation with the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) of the Turkish Ministry of the Interior. This cooperation aims to improve knowledge and capacity to manage fluctuating migration movements and to develop asylum and reception systems, with special attention to people with special needs. Following the February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye, the EUAA-PMM Roadmap for Cooperation was partially suspended, as the PMM redirected its efforts toward emergency responses. Nevertheless, a total of 25 activities were carried out in key areas, including COI, registration, project cycle management, identification and referral of applicants with special needs, and verification of the identity and country of origin of applicants.

List of EUAA roadmaps for bilateral cooperation

- Albania
- Bosnia Herzegovina
- Egypt
- Kosovo
- Niger
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Türkiye

Another component of the Agency’s external dimension work concerns the cooperation with M ENA countries. Through the EUAA-Egypt roadmap for cooperation, the Agency continued to support Egypt’s efforts in establishing an asylum system. At the regional level, in the context of North Africa, a shortage of human resources and the military coup in Niger in July 2023 significantly curtailed the Agency’s ability to deliver planned activities.

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