



**Working Arrangement
between
the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
and the
European External Action Service (EEAS)**



The European Asylum Support Office (hereafter referred to as “EASO”);

and

the European External Action Service (hereafter referred to as “EEAS”);

together referred to as “The Parties”,

Considering the EASO mandate, in particular Article 7 of the EASO Regulation (EU) No 439/2010¹, on the support for the external dimensions of the CEAS, which facilitates the delivery of technical assistance projects to Third Countries, and Article 4 on EASO’s activities relating to information on Countries of Origin (COI) of asylum seekers thereof;

Considering the Articles 49, 50, and 52 of the EASO Regulation (439/2010), that provide for the cooperation with EU bodies, authorities of Third Countries and International Organisations, within the framework of Working Arrangements concluded herewith;

Considering that, as laid down in Council Decision of 26 July 2010, establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service², in particular Article 3(4) thereof, the EEAS shall extend appropriate support and cooperation to the other institutions and bodies of the Union, in particular to the European Parliament. The EEAS may also benefit from the support and cooperation of those institutions and bodies, including agencies, as appropriate.

Whereas

(1) Considering the EASO External Cooperation Strategy³ was endorsed by the EASO Management Board on 19 February 2019 to contribute to establishing and/or strengthening asylum and reception systems as well as protection-sensitive migration management in Third Countries in order to better protect asylum seekers and refugees;

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 COUNCIL DECISION of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU).

³ EASO External Cooperation Strategy, February 2019, Section 6(3), para. 2.



- (2) The EASO External Cooperation Strategy aims to complement EU+ countries efforts in providing access to the EU for persons in need of international protection with focus on resettlement and other legal pathways to international protection;
- (3) EASO's external action strategic objectives are also to facilitate the exchange of information and experience related to the external dimension of the CEAS between EU+ countries.

Have agreed as follows:

Chapter I – Purpose and scope

1. The overall objective of this Working Arrangement between EASO and EEAS (hereafter the "Working Arrangement") is to establish a framework for cooperative relations between the EASO and the EEAS within the remits of their respective legal frameworks. Through better coordination and proactive information exchange in particular, the Parties seek to facilitate a comprehensive, coherent and consistent Union's external action in the field of asylum and migration as part of the Union's external relations policy.
2. In accordance with the Parties' respective legal frameworks and the EASO External Cooperation Strategy, taking into account the Working Arrangements for cooperation on external action between DG HOME and EASO, the cooperation may include geographic and thematic areas of cooperation and shall be agreed by the Parties.
3. Geographical areas of cooperation may include:
 - a) Key priority Third Countries or Regions, in particular the Western Balkans⁴, Turkey, and Middle East and North African (MENA) countries;
 - b) Other Third Countries that are strategic partners in the field of asylum and migration, depending on newly emerging priorities or the needs of the EU+ countries' and/or Third

⁴ Included within the EASO-grouped category of 'Western Balkans' are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Countries, and provided the engagement is in line with the EU external relations policy framework.

4. Thematic areas of cooperation may include:
 - a) Possible assistance with field missions;
 - b) Situational awareness and exchange of information, capacity building, technical assistance, and institutional support needed in Third Countries.

Chapter II – Mode of Cooperation

1. The Parties will meet at least once a year at a management level to discuss the cooperation under this Working Arrangement, evaluate its implementation, and define concrete cooperation activities for the next year in support of the respective annual planning cycles of the Parties.
2. The Parties will each designate at least one official contact point for the purpose of this Working Arrangement (*Ref. Annex I to this Working Arrangement*).

Chapter III – Areas of cooperation

Exchange of Information and Situational Awareness

1. The Parties will keep each other informed of relevant developments and of contacts with Third Countries in the relevant policy area in order to pursue a more comprehensive, coherent and consistent Union's external action in the field asylum and migration.
2. EASO will remain in close contact with the relevant EU Delegations, and will proactively inform and regularly debrief EEAS about its planned and ongoing activities in Third Countries. EEAS HQ and relevant EU Delegations shall be informed in particular ahead of any new action undertaken by EASO in a third country.



3. As appropriate and upon agreement, the Parties may exchange, within their respective legal frameworks, information or expertise required for the purposes of preparation of analytical or situational awareness products on asylum-related matters.
4. Parties shall protect unclassified and sensitive non-classified information subject to this agreement with the exception of information which is expressly marked or clearly recognisable as being public information.
5. If appropriate and considered relevant, the Parties may conclude a separate specific arrangement to exchange European Union Classified Information in accordance with the Common approach on sharing EU classified information with EU institutions, agencies, offices and bodies.

Cooperation in Third Countries

6. The Parties may cooperate where relevant in the context of EASO possible operational activities in Third Countries, such as on the development of specific best practices. Such cooperation in Third Countries may also include, as appropriate, the facilitation of cooperation with competent authorities, including through the provision of advice and providing contact details.
7. The EEAS will facilitate, as appropriate, EASO requests for information or logistical support in Third Countries by relaying EASO enquiries and requests to EU Delegations. Where necessary, the EEAS shall facilitate EASO access to information in Third Countries and support the promotion of EASO mission and strategic objectives vis-à-vis competent Third Country authorities and international organisations. This may include the exchange of contact points in relevant Third Countries.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

8. The Parties will exchange information on envisaged or ongoing capacity building activities in the area of asylum, such as on training activities, and on EU funded technical assistance projects in Third Countries. Where required, they shall also consult each other on, and coordinate such activities.



9. The Parties shall support the identification of needs for EU-funded Training and Technical Assistance Projects in Third Countries.
10. The Parties may provide mutual training to their staff (including EU Delegation staff) and cooperate with regard to addressing specific training needs of members of the diplomatic corps of EU Member States in Third Countries.

Country of Origin Information (COI) and Transit information

11. EEAS shall facilitate cooperation of EASO with relevant EU Delegations and CSDP Missions/Operations, including as appropriate in support EASO fact-finding missions for Countries of Origin. As an example, depending on its capacity, a Delegation may provide EASO with contacts to local experts (for COI) or contact persons in hospitals (for MedCOI). Such information exchange, aimed at assisting EASO with its activities related to Country of Origin Information, could include, *inter alia*, information on the Human Rights situation, health care system, and security situation in relevant Third Countries.

Logistical, security-related and other horizontal support

12. The Parties shall exchange expertise and information, in particular, analytical or situational reports, during planning, conducting and evaluation of EASO activities/missions in Third Countries, including fact-finding missions for the purpose of collecting COI.
13. Depending on their capacity, EU Delegations may provide logistical support to facilitate EASO missions and activities in Third Countries to which the Delegations are accredited. They shall facilitate EASO activities and, where relevant, EASO presence in Third Countries. This may include, *inter alia*, support with the negotiation of working and/or hosting arrangements with the relevant Third countries.
14. The EEAS may facilitate EASO cooperation with Third Parties through institutional support for the deployment and co-location of EASO Staff or other categories of experts within relevant EU Delegations. The modalities of said support shall be outlined by Administrative Arrangements for co-location or, if the case may be, via the means of a specific Service Level Agreement between EASO and the EEAS.
15. A possible provision by EEAS of practical security support to EASO, in particular for the latter's



missions to Third Countries of high security risk, will have to be subject of (a) separate Service Level Agreement(s).

Thematic cooperation and ad hoc joint projects

16. Taking due account of resources and financial rules of each Party, short-term assignments and joint project work on matters of common interest in particular in specific migration situations will also be considered, to be carried out both at the Parties' Headquarters and in EU Delegations in Third Countries.

Chapter IV – Final provisions

This Working Arrangement may be amended in writing, at any time by mutual consent between the Parties.

This Working Arrangement shall enter into force on the day following the date of signature.

For EASO

Nina Gregori
Executive Director

Done at

Valletta Harbour, Malta.

12th July, 2021

For EEAS

Stefano Sannino
Secretary General

Done at

13th September, 2021



ANNEX I: Contact points

Cooperation areas	EASO	EEAS
Institutional support, Implementation of the Working Arrangement, Senior Management consultations	European and International Cooperation Unit	Global 4
Cooperation in Third Countries	External Dimension Unit, Operational Support Centre	Global 4, DG.BA, EU Delegation in third countries
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance in Third Countries	External Dimension Unit, Operational Support Centre	EU Delegation in third countries
Country of Origin Information (COI) and Transit information	Third Country Research Unit, Asylum Knowledge Centre	EU Delegation in third countries INTCEN
Logistical, security-related and other horizontal support	Third Country Research Unit, Asylum Knowledge Centre + Human Resources and Security Unit, Administration Department	EU Delegation in third countries, DG.BA
Thematic cooperation and ad hoc joint projects	European and International Cooperation Unit + External Dimension Unit, Operational Support Centre	EU Delegation in third countries, Global 4