



Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2017

January 2019

The opinion on this report was adopted by the Management Board on 10 January 2019.

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List of abbreviations

AD	Administrator
AEAJ	Association of European Administrative Judges
AIP	Asylum Intervention Pool
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AS	Asylum Service, Greece
AST	Assistant
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Germany
BIA	Best Interest Assessment
BOISTO	Informal strategy meeting of agencies
CA	Commitment appropriations (<i>used in a financial context</i>)
CA	Contract agent (<i>used in a human resource context</i>)
CCME	Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CivCom	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, Council of the EU
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COI	Country of Origin Information
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSN	COI Specialist Network
CSO	Civil society organisation
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management, Turkey
DPO	Data protection officer
EAIPS	EASO asylum intervention pool system
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDPS	European data protection supervisor
EEAS	European External Action Service
EJTN	European Judicial Training Network
EMAS	Emergency Assistance Grant Scheme
EMN	European Migration Network
EMN REG	European Migration Network Return Expert Group
EPRA	European Platform of Reception Agencies
EPS	Early warning and Preparedness System
ERA	Academy of European Law
EU	European Union
EU+	EU Member States and associate countries
EU-FRANK	Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge project
eu-LISA	European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EUNAVFOR MED	European Union Naval Force Mediterranean
Europol	European Police Office
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
EURTF	European Regional Task Force
FG	Function group
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FTE	Full-time equivalent
fYRoM	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDISC	General Directors' Immigration Service Conference
GPS	Group for the Provision of Statistics
IA	Inclusion Advanced training module
IARLJ	International Association of Refugee Law Judges
IAS	Internal Audit Service of the Commission
IC	Interviewing Children training module
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICOP	IDS Country Operations Platforms
ICS	Internal control standards
IDS	Information and Documentation System
IGC	Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
ILGA-Europe	International Lesbian and Gay Association - Europe
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPCR	Integrated Political Crisis Response
IPSN	Tool for identification of persons with special needs
ISAA	Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis
IT	Interview Techniques training module
IVP	Interviewing Vulnerable Persons training module
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
LAL	List of available languages
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, European Parliament
MARRI	Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
MedCOI	Medical Country of Origin Information
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
NCP	National Contact Point
NCPA	National COI Portal Administrator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NJTB	National Judicial Training Bodies
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OVT	Origin verification tool

PA	Payment appropriations
PC	Practical Cooperation
PMG	Politico-Military Group, Council of the EU
PSP	Private Sponsorship Programme
PVLMM	Post Visa Liberalisation Monitoring Mechanism
Q&A	Questions and answers
QIEE	Asylum Systems Quality Initiative in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus
RDPP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
RIS	Reception and Identification Service, Greece
SCIFA	Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum
SNE	Seconded national expert
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRSS	Structural Reform Support Service
StratNet	Strategic COI Network
TA	Temporary agent
TGEU	Transgender Europe
THB	Trafficking in human beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EASO Management Board's analysis and assessment

THE MANAGEMENT BOARD,

HAVING REGARD to Regulation (EC) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010,

HAVING REGARD to the Financial Regulation of the European Asylum Support Office (hereinafter referred to as EASO) and in particular Article 47 thereof,

HAVING REGARD to EASO's work programme 2017 first adopted by the Management Board on 18 November 2016, adjusted on 15 December 2016, and subsequently amended and re-adopted on 13 June 2017 and on 26 September 2017,

HAVING REGARD to the EASO's consolidated annual activity report 2017 presented to the Management Board by written procedure on 13 December 2018,

HAVING REGARD to the Communication from the Commission C(2014) 9641 final on the guidelines and the template for the Consolidated Annual Activity Report for decentralised agencies,

HAS analysed and assessed the Executive Director a.i.'s consolidated annual activity report on the achievements and results for 2017, the Management Board acknowledges the Agency's performance and, in particular:

1. General observations

- Recognises the challenges faced by EASO during 2017 because of the continued migration crisis that placed pressure on the asylum and reception systems of a number of Member States and required enhanced support and assistance of EASO.
- Appreciates that EASO had to deliver more than was originally planned for 2017 as evidenced by the amendments to the work programme and to the budget that were necessary.
- Welcomes the achievements versus the objectives and activities in the Work Programme reported in Part I and the results achieved.
- Welcomes the budget increase that was made available to EASO by the European Commission for the provision of support and assistance, particularly in the context of the 'Action plan on measures to support Italy, reduce pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase solidarity' of 4 July 2017.
- Reiterates its support for the ongoing implementation of the re-organised Agency structure that was agreed in 2016 in order to meet current and future demands.
- Notes that EASO's continued growth as an Agency requires internal resources for the recruitment of new staff, management of finances and procurement, and the provision of the required infrastructure.
- Notes the internal actions being taken by EASO in preparation for its transformation into a fully-fledged European Union Agency for Asylum with an enhanced mandate and expanded tasks, as well as the regular reports being provided by the Agency to the Management Board.
- Notes that, in the last quarter of 2017, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) launched an investigation on the then Executive Director and several members of staff for facts of breach of procurement procedures resulting in unjustified expenditure for EASO, mismanagement, abuse of position regarding human resources issues, harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards staff members, as well as breaches of data protection rules. The Chair of the Management Board received the report in October 2018 and shared it with all of the members of the Management Board. The findings of the report were presented by OLAF and discussed in the Management

Board meeting which took place on 26-27 November 2018. As a result of the discussion, the Management Board agreed on a way forward in order to fully address the findings and recommendations of the report.

- Notes that, in parallel, EASO is implementing a comprehensive Governance Action Plan which was put forward by the Executive Director a.i. and endorsed unanimously by the Management Board in September 2018. The Plan is aimed at ensuring that governance and administrative procedures at EASO are again carried out to the highest standards, while also rebuilding internal capacity and restoring trust in the Agency, both internally and externally.
- Notes that the European Parliament did not grant to EASO the discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agency for the financial year 2016.
- Notes that in the opinion of the European Court of Auditors the accounts of the Agency for the year ended 31 December 2017 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at 31 December 2017, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.
- Notes the adverse opinion of ECA in their 2017 report due to material and systematic instances of non-compliance of payments with the Office's Financial Regulation and other applicable rules and provisions, mainly related to public procurement and recruitment procedures underlying payments.

2. Specific observations on EASO's achievements in 2017

- Welcomes EASO's implementation of measures agreed in the operating plans for Italy and Greece, as well as measures in the special support plans for Bulgaria and Cyprus.
- Notes that:
 - 777 experts from Member States and individual experts were deployed in Italy, Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus, supported by 202 contracted interpreters and cultural mediators and 178 contracted EASO interim staff;
 - During 2017, 8,808 persons had been relocated from Italy and 14,430 persons from Greece by the respective national asylum authorities with EASO's support;
 - 10,726 applications for international protection were registered in Italy with EASO's support;
 - 9,134 interviews were performed by EASO asylum support teams in Greece under the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, as well as 645 vulnerability interviews and 2,274 vulnerability assessments in the framework of admissibility and eligibility procedures and the merged workflow.
- Recognises the important contribution made by EASO statutory staff, experts and interpreters from EU+ countries, and contracted interim support staff, interpreters and cultural mediators working in difficult and challenging conditions in the hotspots.
- Acknowledges the difficulties faced by EASO in receiving sufficient numbers of nominations for experts to be deployed in the hotspots that had to be supplemented by contracted interim support staff.
- Recognises that EASO has further strengthened its preparedness in dealing with asylum-related crises in the Member States, building on the lessons learned in 2016, through procurement procedures for framework contracts for the provision of goods and services required for operations.

- Notes the effort made in the development of an electronic EASO Asylum Intervention Pool System, including the support provided by a select number of Member State institutions for testing of the system, and welcomes the release of the first production version in the first quarter of 2018.
- Is satisfied with the launch of the IDS Country Operations Platforms that provide essential information for deployed experts on the operational working context and conditions in Italy, Greece and Cyprus, and encourages EASO to ensure that timely access is provided to experts prior to their deployment.
- Notes with satisfaction that EASO produced 19 COI reports, organised 24 meetings of specialised COI networks, and prepared for a gradual transfer of MedCOI activities in line with an action plan established in consultation with the Commission and Member States.
- Notes that 29 EU+ countries were participating in the EPS monthly exchange and encouraged participants to improve compliance on return indicators.
- Notes that EASO was producing 11 types of weekly, bi-monthly or quarterly reports for the dissemination of information and provision of analyses.
- Notes the further development of the IDS with the creation of 624 content pages, addition of case law references and a dedicated case law resource, and the increase in number of active users.
- Is satisfied that the annual report on the situation of asylum in the Union was completed successfully and was well received at the public launch.
- Appreciates the successful training delivery to 5,947 participants in 362 training sessions, including train-the-trainer sessions in Malta and in Member States as well as national training on the e-learning platform.
- Notes EASO's continued commitment to developing training material for Member State experts deployed in EASO operations, and the provision of training to contracted interim support staff and interpreters.
- Welcomes the continued development of new training modules, and the updating and upgrading of existing modules.
- Notes that the implementation of the 13 certified and accredited EASO training curriculum modules has been concluded.
- Welcomes the activities in the area of asylum processes, including the Quality Matrix, the establishment of an Exclusion Network, the development of a new practical guide and of a quality assurance tool, and the launch of new products promoting the use of practical tools.
- Is satisfied that activities on vulnerable groups were undertaken, including development of practical cooperation tools, organisation of two conferences on children and on trafficking in human beings and international protection, as well as organisation of thematic activities.
- Notes the ongoing activities in the area of cooperation with members of the courts and tribunals, including the development of professional development materials and organisation of 13 professional development events and workshops.
- Notes the following activities within the context of the Dublin network: 4 queries, 3 periodic reports, two meetings of the Dublin Steering Group and one expert meeting organised jointly with the European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA). A working group for the development of a practical guide on the implementation of the Dublin Regulation was also set up.
- Notes the following activities within the Reception network: 4 meetings and one guidance note on Contingency planning in reception, 2 thematic workshops, 2 reception contact point meetings,

and launch of the development of the EASO Guidance on Reception standards for Unaccompanied Children,

- Notes with satisfaction the development of an EASO methodology for the development of country guidance and the production of two country guidance notes, and reiterates its commitment to endorse the methodology and the notes by mid-2018 on conclusion and evaluation of the pilot project.
- Notes the high level of activities in the area of the external dimension with third country support activities for the Western Balkans, including in the context of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, and activities for North African countries.
- Notes the ongoing bilateral support provided to Cyprus and to Slovenia in the context of support activities for countries that have no prior experience with resettlement.
- Notes the preparatory work for a pilot project in support of Member States active in the field of resettlement in Turkey and welcomes the results of a feasibility study concluded in 2018.
- Appreciates the increase in the Consultative Forum membership to 135 organisations, EASO's engagement with civil society representatives and their involvement in more than 160 meetings and activities, and the successful organisation of the annual plenary meeting of the Consultative Forum in Brussels.
- Notes the high level of EASO's communication activities and stakeholder engagements that seek to inform interested parties on the activities of EASO and asylum-related matters.
- Notes the achievements of social media monitoring activities and regular reporting.
- Recognises the work and achievements of the EASO networks and groups, and meetings of national contact points.

3. Specific observations on EASO management, external evaluations and internal controls

- Notes the two budget amendments that were required during 2017 to account for the Associate Countries' contributions and additional budget funds provided from the EU Budget to meet the workload demand, thus increasing the commitment appropriations (CA) from €69.2M to €82.98 M and the payment appropriations (PA) from €69.2M to €75.4M.
- Notes that EASO managed a total of €110.8M of CA and €86.5M of PA, executing 93.34% and 87.15% respectively.
- Notes that the EU subsidy (C1) increased from €69.2M of CA and PA to €82.98M of CA and €75.4M of PA and EASO implemented 96.88% of the former and 92.03% of the latter (compared with 99% and 86% respectively in 2016).
- Notes that EASO carried forward €19.6M from 2016 and paid 90.36% of this amount in 2017. An amount of €201,265.36 was carried forward again to 2018.
- Notes that the final amount of the EMAS grant provided in 2016 was established at €8.05M out of a pre-financing of €19.95M that was intended to temporarily address the budget shortfall in 2016 until the EU contribution could be increased later that year. Moreover, notes that EASO reimbursed the remaining amount of €11.90M to the European Commission in December 2017.
- Notes that the total amount carried forward from 2017 to 2018 is €26.4M in CA and €3.7M in PA, as commitments carried forward on Title 3 are differentiated appropriations and only the CA can be automatically carried over whereas the PA has to be cancelled.

- Notes that the Executive Director effected 15 budget transfers during 2017, of which 13 were within budget titles and two between titles, and is satisfied that the transfers between titles were within the 10% threshold laid down in Article 27(1)(a) of the Financial Regulation.
- Notes that, in the area of procurement, there was a highly significant reduction in direct awards based on recorded exceptions (9.5% of the total procurement procedures) during 2017, compared with 34.7% exceptionally negotiated procedures and 43% direct awards based on recorded exceptions reported in 2016.
- Notes that in 2017 EASO processed 8,380 payments (compared with 4,861 in 2016), of which 1,945 were made after the legal deadline (23% compared with 41% in 2016), and €10,010.96 were paid in late interest on 13 invoices booked in 2017. The Board acknowledges the actions taken to reduce late payments, welcomes the improvement registered by the fourth quarter of 2017 when the late payment rate fell to 10% on average, and calls upon the Agency to maintain the downward trend in late payments.
- Notes that at the end of December 2017, EASO had 198 staff members appointed and in service of which 125 were temporary agents, 68 were contract agents and 5 were seconded national experts.
- Emphasises the importance of allocating sufficient resources to recruitment of staff to fill the increasing number of new posts and fill management vacancies at Head of Department, Head of Unit and Head of Sector level in the revised organisational structure.
- Notes that ex post controls were implemented by external contractors in 2017 and the benefit such controls will have towards providing assurance to EASO management on compliance with applicable rules and procedures as well identification of any weakness requiring rectification.
- Notes that, during 2017, 19 exceptions with a total value of €10,253,929.38 were documented mainly relating to the urgent provision of goods or services for the hotspots and regional offices in response to the asylum crisis; this value represents 12.2% of the total subsidy from the EU Budget. Moreover, notes that, during 2017, 76 non-compliance events were recorded with a total value of €1,204,874.57; moreover, notes that there is a process in place for the EASO Management Team to analyse the causes and identify improvement actions for implementation.
- Notes that all actions resulting from the 2016 audit by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the Commission were implemented according to the agreed action plan and a follow up audit engagement was carried out by the IAS in July 2018. At the time of writing the report was not yet available. Moreover, notes that the IAS carried out its three-yearly strategic risk assessment exercise in 2017 and agreed the audit topics for the audit cycle 2018-2020 with the Executive Director.
- Notes the reservation of the Executive Director a.i. on the lack of an effective and efficient Internal Control and welcomes that for the various inefficiencies and gaps identified during the internal control self-assessment conducted in the third quarter 2018, corrective actions were discussed and agreed by EASO Management.
- Notes the extremely difficult situation the Agency was under during the reference period, namely the unprecedented expansion of tasks that EASO needed to carry out to support Member States and contribute in the implementation of EU-level initiatives, including relocation and EU TR statement, the budget increase, the exponential increase in payments as well as the increase in procurement procedures (increase in number and complexity).
- Notes that EASO had to manage multiple locations without many management positions being systematically in place (heads of department, heads of unit and heads of sectors).

CONCLUDES

Notes that the Executive Director a.i. was appointed in June 2018 which was subsequent to the events described in the Reservation section.

Notes that the Executive Director a.i. is not in a position to express an opinion on the assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions because of the significance of the matters described in the Reservation section of this report.

Express its concerns and the following recommendations:

- The Management Board recognise that under new ED a.i., EASO has put in place appropriate working arrangements and effective communication channels in order to facilitate EASO Management Board role on overseeing the Agency's governance, risk management and internal control practices. Particularly, the Agency assesses and communicates internal control state of play, as well as deficiencies and corrective actions in a timely manner to the Management Board and the Commission. These communication channels should be reviewed as necessary.
- With regard to the systemic nature of non-compliance in EASO procurement and HR procedures, the Management Board recognise that under new leadership EASO has started to take the necessary steps to ensure that compliance is front and centre in the culture and conduct of all its activities. As example, the Management Board welcomes the internal control self-assessment which had led to the identification of a comprehensive set of corrective actions and recommend to be kept up-dated on the state of implementing quarterly.
- The Management Board believes that the first and more urgent corrective actions regarding the internal control are:
 - implement an internal control framework that is fully compliant with the regulatory framework,
 - appoint an internal control coordinator,
 - definition of the roles of the Management Board, the Executive Director, the Internal Control Coordinator and management on Internal Control in the new Internal Control Framework,
 - conduct an overall assessment of presence and functioning of all internal control components at least once a year and report the outcome to the Management Board,
 - to take appropriate action to define the monitoring criteria and baselines for the minimum standards (both principles and characteristics), taking into account their specificities and risks,
 - and to improve the awareness and understanding of them by all staff, in particular through training, guidance and support activities.
- Regarding the deterioration and inadequacy of the HR situation in EASO, the Management Board recommends reinforcing the agency's staff, in line with the Recruitment Plan elaborated by the Executive Director a.i. as staff is key towards overcoming systemic, structural, and internal control shortcomings, as well as putting in place improved policies, procedures and processes.

On the other hand, the Management Board expresses its satisfaction by EASO's overall performance in 2017 and thanks the staff for their commitment and achievements throughout the year.

In the light of the above, the Management Board adopts this opinion and requests that the EASO Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2017 be forwarded, together with the analysis and assessment, to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors.

Introduction

EASO's mission and guiding principles

EASO's mission is to contribute to the implementation and development of the CEAS by providing support and facilitating, coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation among EU+ countries as an independent centre of expertise on asylum.

In fulfilling its mission, EASO observes the following principles:

- providing comprehensive and timely support to requesting Member States;
- stimulating quality and efficiency of the asylum and reception systems of Member States;
- acting as an independent and impartial centre of expertise;
- providing accurate and up-to-date data, analysis and assessments on asylum-related matters;
- supporting Member States in taking up their responsibilities in the field of asylum and in showing solidarity with Member States whose asylum systems are under pressure;
- facilitating and stimulating joint and common practical cooperation measures in the field of asylum, thereby fostering mutual trust among Member States;
- providing evidence-based input to EU policymakers on asylum;
- cooperating with EU institutions, EU agencies and bodies, international organisations and civil society.

EASO's legal basis and activities

EASO was established by Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The Regulation makes provisions for the organisation of EASO and establishes its duties. Other duties of the Agency stem from the asylum *acquis*.

EASO conducts a number of activities within the legal framework, namely:

- **permanent support:** supporting and stimulating the common quality of the asylum process through common training, common asylum training material, common quality and common Country of Origin Information (COI);
- **special support:** tailor-made assistance, capacity building, relocation, specific support and special quality control tools;
- **technical and operational assistance:** organising and providing assistance to Member States subject to particular pressures on their asylum and reception systems;
- **information and analysis:** sharing and merging information and data, analyses and assessments at EU level, including EU-wide trend analyses and assessments;
- **third-country support:** supporting the external dimension of the Common European Asylum System, supporting partnerships with third countries to reach common solutions, including by capacity building and regional protection programmes, and coordinating Member States' actions on resettlement.

The conditions and challenges under which EASO operates are described in more detail in section II.2.: Major developments. In summary, the year 2017 was yet again an important year for the Agency as it faced continued challenges brought about by the number of applicants for international protection in the EU+ that placed pressure on the asylum procedures of EU+ countries, particularly those facing substantial and/or sudden increases in arrivals.

As broad political agreement was reached in June 2017 in the inter-institutional discussions on a draft Regulation transforming EASO into a full-fledged Agency, the European Union Agency for Asylum, EASO embarked on preparatory activities to plan for its potential future role and responsibilities. In

September 2018 the European Commission proposed targeted changes to the proposed EUAA Regulation that need to be negotiated by the two co-legislators.

Organisation and administrative structure

The administrative and management structure of EASO comprises of the Management Board as well as the Executive Director and the staff of the Agency.

The Executive Director, in exercising the responsibilities laid down in Article 31 of the EASO Regulation, is supported by the Executive Office, including the Accounting Officer, the Communications and Stakeholders Unit, the Liaison Officers to the EU Institutions and to Frontex, and the Policy Advisor.

The Department of Asylum Support contributes to the implementation of the CEAS by providing support with the aim of enhancing the capacities of EU+ countries to implement the CEAS through common training, coordinated practical cooperation and through the development and monitoring of operational standards and guidance.

The Department of Operations develops and implements a comprehensive approach for EASO activities in the field of operations, bringing together situational and country of origin information and intelligence, operational planning and intra and extra-EU operational support under one coordinated framework. Operations is underpinned by operational protocols and tools and a planning and evaluation mechanism to ensure optimal results.

The Department of Administration provides support systems and services to the core areas of work and support the ED and EASO staff on the legality, regularity and sound financial management implementation of the SPD and budget as adopted by the Management Board.

The organisational chart is presented in Annex III.

EASO conducts its activities from the headquarters in Valletta Harbour, Malta, from three operational offices in Rome, Athens and Nicosia, and a liaison office in Brussels.

Organisational accountability

The Management Board shall ensure that the Agency performs the duties assigned to it. It shall be the Agency's planning and monitoring body.

The Executive Director is independent in the performance of his duties and is accountable to the Management Board for his activities. He reports to the European Parliament and to the Council on the performance of his duties when invited to do so.

The managers and staff of EASO are held to account in the exercise of their duties in accordance with their respective reporting lines within the organisational structure.

Executive summary

Migration continued to be a key policy priority in the European Union during 2017. Efforts made by the EU and its Member States to manage migration were yielding positive results in the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, rising numbers on the Central Mediterranean route led to the European Commission's 'Action plan on measures to support Italy, reduce pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase solidarity' of 4 July 2017¹. In this context, EASO was to further increase the number of mobile teams in Italy supporting the processing of applications.

On 27 September 2017, the Commission issued a communication to the EU Institutions on the Delivery of the European Agenda on Migration². It noted that the migratory pressure on Italy and Greece remained high, due to the accumulated backlog from the influx during 2016 and first half of 2017. The Commission also reiterated that the assistance provided by EASO to Italy and Greece should continue and, where needed, be further reinforced.

The Commission recommendation on enhancing legal pathways for persons in need of international protection³ that was also issued on 27 September invited Member States to resettle in fulfilment of their pledges, in close cooperation with UNHCR and with support from EASO as appropriate.

Moreover, in the abovementioned communication, the Commission invited EASO to coordinate a pilot project on private sponsorship schemes with interested Member States and engaging a wide variety of relevant civil society organisations, international organisations, and potential private sponsors in cooperation with the Member States.

By the end of September 2017, over 29,000 persons had been relocated under an EU-coordinated effort that started in 2015 thus contributing to significantly reducing the pressure on the asylum systems of Italy and Greece. As the Council Decisions of 2015 applied to migrants in clear need of international protection arriving in the territory of Italy and Greece until 26 September 2017, there was an immediate priority to ensure that all the remaining eligible persons were relocated swiftly. The Commission communication called upon EASO to continue providing and, where needed, further reinforce assistance to Italy and Greece.

In the light of the operating and special support plans signed with the respective authorities of Italy, Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus and the ongoing developments in the area of migration, EASO was highly active in supporting Member States in dealing with continued pressure on their asylum procedures, as well as in capacity building. The sustained high level of operational activities were delivered by EASO staff with the support of Member State experts, contracted interim staff and contracted interpreters and cultural mediators.

EASO also delivered well on its other core business areas, namely on information and analysis, permanent support, external dimension and horizontal activities.

Throughout 2017 EASO engaged closely with its stakeholders: the Management Board, Member States, Commission, Council, European Parliament, Justice and Home Affairs EU agencies, non-governmental organisations and civil society. The seventh annual plenary meeting of the EASO Consultative Forum, held in Brussels, brought together participants from EU+ and non-EU countries.

As broad political agreement was reached in June 2017 in the inter-institutional discussions on a draft Regulation transforming EASO into a full-fledged Agency, the European Union Agency for Asylum, EASO embarked on preparatory activities to plan for the potential future role and responsibilities.

¹ SEC(2017) 339.

² COM(2017) 558 final.

³ C(2017) 6504.

The following table summarises the major achievements.

EASO's main results in 2017
Operational support in Italy • 1 operating plan, including 1 amendment, signed and implemented • 371 experts deployed for implementation of measures; supported by 78 contracted cultural mediators and 30 contracted EASO interim staff • 226 Italian national authority participants in capacity-building support measures • 8,808 persons relocated by the National asylum authorities with EASO's support • 43,621 persons reached by EASO information provision • 10,726 applications for international protection registered with EASO's support
Operational support in Greece • 1 operating plan signed and implemented • 376 experts deployed for implementation of measures, 308 of whom were for implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement; supported by 124 contracted interpreters and 148 contracted EASO interim staff • 139 Greek national authority participants in capacity-building support measures • 14,430 persons relocated by the National asylum authorities with EASO's support • 9,134 interviews performed by asylum support teams under the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, as well as 645 vulnerability interviews and 2,274 vulnerability assessments in the framework of admissibility and eligibility procedures and the merged workflow
Operational support for other EU Member States • 6 support measures under implementation in Bulgaria: 4 experts deployed; 35 Bulgarian national authority participants in capacity-building support measures • 7 support measures under implementation in Cyprus: 26 experts deployed, supported by 12 contracted interpreters and 14 contracted EASO interim staff; 15 Cypriot national authority participants in capacity-building support measures; 372 interviews conducted and 304 concluding remarks drafted on applications for international protection
Support tools for operations and relocation • Matching tool in support of relocation was launched in production with a final version due in Q1 2018 • Development of the EASOs Asylum Intervention Pool System nearing completion prior to its launch in Q1 2018 • 1 practical guide for experts and 3 web-based platforms with country-specific information developed
Country of Origin Information (COI) • 19 COI reports produced • 24,711 downloads from public COI portal • 24 meetings of specialised COI networks • 59 COI queries processed

EASO's main results in 2017

Early Warning and Preparedness System

- 30 EU+ countries provided monthly data for the Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS Stage III)
- 11 types of weekly, bi-monthly or quarterly reports produced, including on the situation of asylum in the EU+, operational activities, Analytical Briefs for JHA Council meetings, asylum trends, first-instance determination, resettlement overviews, Dublin implementation, reception and post-visa liberalisation monitoring mechanism

Information and Documentation System

- 624 content pages covering several topics created, 147 pages validated
- National case law collected from 30 EU+ countries; dedicated case law resource on IDS launched
- 497 active users by the end of 2017
- 29 EU+ countries members of the IDS network

Training

- 16 train-the-trainer sessions delivered at EASO (Malta), 248 trainers participated
- 15 regional train-the-trainer sessions delivered in 2 countries, 240 trainers participated
- 331 national training sessions administered on EASO e-learning platform, 5,459 national staff trained
- 15 operational and asylum-related training sessions with 428 participants, including Member State experts and EASO staff
- 11 modules of the EASO training curriculum finalised, under development, reviewed or being upgraded
- Implementation of the 13 certified and accredited EASO training curriculum modules concluded

Asylum processes

- 1 Quality Matrix meeting, 1 Quality Management meeting, and 2 Exclusion Network meetings organised
- 1 practical guide on qualification for international protection and 1 quality assurance tool developed
- 5 products promoting practical tools launched

EASO activities on vulnerable groups

- 4th EASO annual conference on trafficking in human beings and international protection
- 5th annual conference on EASO activities on children
- 4 thematic activities organised
- 1 practical tool finalised and 2 under development

Cooperation with members of the courts and tribunals

- 6 sets of professional development materials finalised
- 6 professional development events, 6 training workshops and 1 annual planning and coordination meeting organised

EASO networks

- Dublin: 2 steering group meetings, 1 technical meeting and 1 meeting of the Dublin Expert Network held
- Reception: 3 coordination meetings, 2 Reception NCP meetings, 4 working group meetings and 2 workshops organised

EASO's main results in 2017

Country guidance for convergence

- 2 analyses on Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive and on Internal Protection Alternative
- EASO methodology for the development of Country Guidance under development
- 2 country guidance notes finalised and awaiting Management Board endorsement
- 2 Country Guidance Network meetings and 5 drafting team meetings held

Third country support and resettlement

- Western Balkans and Turkey: 10 IPA II Project activities implemented, 5 IPA regional activities organised, 11 IPA-related activities implemented, 11 capacity-building activities implemented in Turkey,
- North Africa: 4 RDPP North Africa-related activities and 4 meetings and workshops organised
- 2 bilateral resettlement support activities ongoing, and development of resettlement tools and training in close cooperation with EU-FRANK project

Consultative Forum

- More than 160 meetings and activities with engagement of civil society representatives
- Consultative Forum members increased to 135 organisations
- 227 participants in 7th plenary of the Consultative Forum in Brussels
- 1 thematic workshop, 1 informal planning meeting and 1 regional thematic meeting organised
- 9 consultations on EASO documents with registered civil society organisations, 332 contributions received

Communication and stakeholder relations

- EASO participation in around 190 external meetings with key stakeholders and organisation of around 140 EASO stakeholder meetings
- EASO Information Day on the EASO Training Curriculum and Practical Tools organised
- EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU launched publicly in Brussels in an event organised jointly with the Journalists Network Meeting
- Social media monitoring activities with production of weekly and monthly reports

PART I: ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

EASO's priorities in 2017

EASO defined its priorities for 2017 in the Work Programme 2017 that was adopted by the Management Board on 18 November 2016 and subsequently adjusted in line with the adopted EU budget. The work programme was amended twice to take into account significant changes that took place during 2017.

EASO's priorities in 2017 were:

- **Enhancing operational support**

- Increase operational support based on the emerging needs of Member States to fully implement the EU Asylum Acquis, in particular to those Member States subject to pressure on their asylum and reception systems due to extraordinary increases in applications for international protection;
- In parallel and in addition to the ongoing operations, be ready to deploy staff and experts and to provide the necessary support in terms of infrastructure or other services according to the needs on the ground and the requests of Member States;
- Complete the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece to other EU + countries;
- Develop support tools for operations and relocation;
- Improve the collection and analysis of operational data.

- **Information, analysis and knowledge development**

- Consolidate EASO's role as clearing house for national COI by coordinating national COI production, producing more common Country of Origin Information (COI) through the network approach and promote its effective use as through the COI portal;
- Boost the in-house production capacity of the COI team, in light of the Council Conclusions of 21 April 2016;
- Prepare a gradual transfer of MedCOI activities, as appropriate, according to an action plan, established in consultation with the Commission and Member States;
- Continue to produce information relevant for the possible designation of safe countries of origin;
- Develop further the EASO Information and Documentation System (IDS) as a new systematic monitoring tool on the CEAS, with input from various sources including the quality matrix mapping, national and European case law, and national legislation;
- Further develop the EASO Early warning and Preparedness System in order to foster the creation of an effective situational picture on migration to feed into policy making, response preparation, and future monitoring;
- Continue pursuing efforts to create an empirically-validated model of the functioning of asylum related migration through its research programme on push and pull factors.

- **Improving the quality of asylum processes and reception conditions**

- Continue mapping policies and practices in relation to the CEAS and developing tools and guidelines aiming to improve the quality of asylum processes and decisions, based on identified needs and best practices;
- Develop operational standards and indicators and corresponding assessment frameworks in view of the future monitoring function of EASO;

- Enhance support to quality management mechanisms at EU and national levels;
 - Support the better identification of vulnerable persons, including in the context of hotspots and while implementing relocation;
 - Consolidate the network of the national Dublin Units established in 2016, aiming to foster mutual cooperation and consistent application of the Dublin system, including for the purposes of relocation;
 - Strengthen the work of the network of the national reception authorities to foster the exchange of information and best practices as well as to further develop operational standards and indicators on reception conditions.
- **Training and professional development**
 - Further strengthen the role of common training and professional development in the field of asylum.
 - Further update and upgrade the EASO Training Curriculum in line with the EASO's module life cycle principle;
 - Roll out a new e-learning platform to enhance the existing e-learning possibilities;
 - Establish an International Sectoral Qualification, ensuring that certified asylum officials have the required level of knowledge, skills and competencies;
 - Provide thematic training sessions for specific groups;
 - Resume joint preparation of professional development materials for members of national courts and tribunals, in full respect for the principle of the independence of the judiciary.
- **External dimension**
 - In line with the 2016 Commission Communication and as appropriate and in coordination with the Commission and the EEAS, support the approach of renewed partnerships with Third Countries, through tailored 'compacts' that will be developed according to the situation and needs of each partner Third Countries;
 - Target activities geographically in line with the EASO External Action Strategy, with a continued focus on the Western Balkans, Turkey and North Africa;
 - Carry out activities in the Western Balkans through enhanced cooperation with EU Agencies and international organisations (e.g. Frontex, UNHCR and IOM) to respond to the needs in the region by providing capacity building, as well as operational support if appropriate, taking into account existing regional arrangements;
 - Follow up on the Valletta Summit Action Plan of November 2015 by providing training and improve quality of asylum processes, as appropriate, in the relevant Third Countries;
 - Support the implementation of the European resettlement scheme and other resettlement actions of EU+ countries, also through capacity building measures in Member States that have little or no experience of resettlement through a pilot project in a strategic third country.
- **Horizontal activities**
 - Strengthen synergies at horizontal level among all relevant stakeholders of EASO's cooperation network, including the UNHCR and the EU agencies, in particular the JHA agencies.
 - Further develop EASO's positive relationship with civil society through more targeted consultations, transparency and outreach activities.

EASO's key performance indicator

EASO's overall key performance indicator (KPI) represents the Agency's ability to meet the objectives set out in the annual work programme.

Consequently, EASO's KPI is represented by a qualitative indicator aimed at demonstrating the impact of EASO's support in the coherent implementation of the CEAS, taking into account:

- The tasks laid down in the EASO Regulation, the recast EU asylum *acquis* and other related EU documents and the progress of EASO in implementing activities to fulfil these tasks;
- The requests made by the EU+ countries, the Commission, the Council, the European Parliament and other EU institutions, agencies and bodies to develop and execute additional EASO activities in order to support the implementation of the CEAS;
- The evaluative opinions given by the EU+ countries, the Commission, the Council, the European Parliament, other EU institutions, agencies and bodies and other EASO partners on EASO's work.

On the basis of the achievements described below in this report and the results for specific indicators, EASO has satisfactorily met the objectives set out in the Work Programme 2017 (please see I.1 and Annex I for more information and analysis).

I.1 Operational support

I.1.1 Italy

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Provide support to Italy to implement the CEAS and to enhance the ARS to respond to high influx of mixed migration flows.	• Special Support Plan Phase 3 signed and implemented	• Special Support Plan Phase 3 signed and implemented	• Target achieved. An amendment of the Plan was signed in July 2017, extending EASO's support to protection of unaccompanied minors in cooperation with the Italian Ombudsperson for children and adolescents.
Implementation of activities in accordance with the special support plan signed with the Italian authorities (including amendments).	• Number of experts deployed • Number of support measures implemented • Number of national authority participants in support measures • Degree of adoption and implementation of the outputs of the support measures	• 100 • 4 • 150 • 85% of outputs used/adopted	• Target exceeded. 371 experts were deployed in total for the implementation of the operating plan. • Target achieved. 3 measures in total: ITA4 and ITA5 were implemented, ITA6 is being implemented. ITA8 could not be implemented, as measureable results were available too late in the year, as implementation of the measure took place mostly in Q4 2017. • Target exceeded. 226 national authority participants in support measures. • Target exceeded. 100% of outputs from support measures were used or adopted by the Italian authorities.
Coordinate the nomination of national contact points by MS.	NA	NA	NA
Facilitate exchange of information between the NCP and the competent authorities in Italy.	• Hotspot-Relocation Operating Plan	• Hotspot-Relocation	• Target achieved. In agreement with the Italian authorities, an operating plan, which combined all technical and operational assistance to Italy, was signed.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Support Italy with the identification of applicants that could be relocated to participating MS, giving priority to vulnerable applicants.	• Number of experts deployed	• Operating Plan implemented • 210	• Target exceeded. 371 experts were deployed in total for the implementation of the operating plan, 327 of whom were deployed for the implementation of relocation.
Support the Italian authorities with the issuance of the necessary decisions to relocate identified applicants, including notification to the applicants.	• Number of support measures implemented • Degree of adoption and implementation of the outputs of the support measures	• 3 support measures implemented • Presence of EASO Asylum Support Teams in all Hotspots, Hubs and Dublin Unit	• Target achieved. Measures ITA1, ITA2 and ITA3 were implemented. • Target achieved. 100% presence, i.e. full coverage by EASO asylum support teams in locations indicated by the Italian authorities.

I.1.2 Greece

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Participation of experts in support measures in Greece in accordance with the special support plan.	• Special support plans signed or implemented • Number of experts deployed	• 1 special support plan implemented • Maintain the number of deployed experts as in 2016 with the possibility of a 30% increase according to needs	• Target achieved. The special support plan and related measures were merged into a single plan, signed in December 2016, and in force until December 2017.
Upon expiry of the current special support plan, and upon request from and agreement with Greece, EASO will continue to provide and eventually step-up its support, as necessary, in the same and/or different areas of work.	• Number of foreseen special support	• 100% support measures implemented	• Target not achieved. 376 experts deployed for implementation of measures, 308 of whom were for implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (in 2016: 489 in total; 160 experts deployed for relocation-related activities and 329 for implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement) • Target achieved. 8 support measures (HEL2 and HEL5 to HEL11) were implemented.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
	measures implemented • Number of national authority participants in support measures	• 100 national authority participants in support measures	• Target exceeded. A train-the-trainers session on the EASO reception module with 16 participants, a workshop on Reception in Lesvos for 11 participants and in Chios for 7 participants, a workshop on the IPSN tool in Kos for 11 participants, a RIS Child Protection Officers briefing/training in Kos. The national authority organised several training sessions on the use of the newly developed templates for the assessment of vulnerabilities. 69 representatives of the Greek authorities took part in support measures, 21 participated in relevant meetings in Malta, 4 were on a study visit to Belgium.
Cooperate and coordinate the implementation of the EASO activities with all stakeholders active in Greece for the implementation of relocation, notably in accordance with the Relocation Protocol. Participation of experts in support measures in Greece for the implementation of relocation in accordance with the respective measures of the hotspot operating plan. Maintain and/or provide additional infrastructure, as well as the necessary services to facilitate the implementation of the measures of the hotspot	• Special support plans signed or implemented • Number of experts deployed • Number of foreseen special support measures implemented • Number of national authority participants in support measures	• 1 special support plan implemented • Maintain the number of deployed experts as in 2016 with the possibility of a 30% increase according to needs • 100% support measures implemented • 100 national authority participants in	• Target achieved. The special support plan and related measures were merged into a single special operating plan in force until December 2017. • Target not achieved. 51 experts were deployed to provide support for the implementation of the EU Relocation Programme (in 2016: 160 experts and MS interpreters were deployed in support of relocation activities) • Target achieved. 2 support measures (HEL1 and HEL3) were implemented. • Target exceeded. See above.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
operating plan relating to relocation.		support measures	
Cooperate and coordinate the implementation of the EASO activities with all stakeholders active in Greece for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement within the context of the Hotspot approach.	• Hotspot operating plans signed or implemented • Number of experts deployed	• 1 hotspot operating plan implemented • Maintain the number of deployed experts as in 2016 with the possibility of a 30% increase according to needs	• Target achieved. The special support plan and related measures were merged into a single special operating plan for 2017. • Target not achieved. 308 experts were deployed for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (in 2016: 329 experts were deployed for implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement)
Participation of experts in support measures in Greece for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement in accordance with the respective measures of the hotspot operating plan.	• Number of foreseen hotspot operating plan support measures implemented	• 100% support measures implemented	• Target achieved. 1 measure (HEL4) was implemented.
Maintain and/or provide additional infrastructure as well as the necessary services to facilitate the implementation of the measures of the Hotspot Operating Plan relating to the EU-Turkey Statement. EASO will also continue to take measures to ensure the security of MS experts and in this perspective renovate and equip buildings that have been leased in Lesbos and Chios, to provide additional	• Number of cases processed with the support of EASO experts		• Target achieved. EASO experts and interim caseworkers conducted 9,134 interviews, i.e. almost 68% of the total interviews conducted at the five hotspots under the border procedure during the reference period. 645 vulnerability interviews and 2,274 vulnerability assessments took place in 2017.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
office space for processing of applications. EASO will also take charge of the transportation of staff, experts and applicants between hotspots and these processing centres.			

I.1.3 Other EU Member States

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Implementation of the CEAS and response to high influx of mixed migration flows			
Provide operational support to requesting MS with certain identified and specific needs related to the implementation of the revised EU asylum acquis, in line with signed support plans, including under the hotspot approach and/or for the implementation of relocation, as appropriate.	• Number of new support plans signed • Number of support measures implemented • Level of satisfaction of the host EU+ countries	• 2 support plans signed • 30 support measures implemented • 80% on satisfaction surveys	• Target achieved. The special support plan for Cyprus was amended twice during 2017. The special support plan for Bulgaria was extended and an amendment and further extension was agreed until 31/10/2018. • Target achieved. 13 measures in total agreed for 2017 (instead of 30): 6 measures under implementation in Bulgaria, 7 in Cyprus. • Target achieved. The experts deployed for reception and backlog management were positively evaluated by the Cypriot authorities.

I.1.4 Development of support tools for operations

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing the Asylum Invention Pool for deploying Member State experts to provide operational support to asylum and reception systems			
Further develop EASO's AIP management, through the setting-up of an ICT-supported environment (AIP system).	• AIP ICT system developed and tested • Degree of satisfaction of EU+ countries with the AIP system	• 1 AIP system tested and developed • 80% on satisfaction surveys	• Target achieved. Version 1 of the EAIPS is under development. Selected AIP NCPs were invited to test the system and provide feedback. • Target N/A. Satisfaction will be measured after the release of version 1 of the EAIPS.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Finalise and develop manuals and handbooks to be used in operations, including the handbook on joint processing, the handbook on operational communication, manuals for the provision of operational support, and, in coordination with partners (including civil society organisations), the emergency blueprint.	• Number of manuals and tools developed • Number of users • Level of satisfaction of the users	• Existing tools maintained/ further developed • 2 new tools developed • 100% of staff and experts using tools • 80% on satisfaction surveys	• Target not achieved. 1 Practical Guide for Experts in EASO Operations was developed. • Target achieved. Three web-based platforms on IDS were made available, providing information on the working context and conditions for experts in Italy, Greece and Cyprus. The platforms were further enhanced with the launch of the integrated ICOPS, merging the three earlier versions. The newly released portal was made available to the NCPs. The platforms are available to all staff and deployed experts. • Target achieved. Positive feedback received from the NCPs.
Organise at least two EASO practical cooperation meetings related to operational support, including with the AIP NCPs in the EU+ countries.	• Number of meetings • Number of participants • Level of satisfaction of the participants	• 2 NCP meetings • 80% on satisfaction surveys	• Target achieved. 2 NCP meetings were held, with 35 and 34 participants. • Target achieved. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction.

I.1.5 Development of support tools for the hotspots and relocation

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Contributing to a well-functioning EU Relocation Scheme and the hotspot approach.			
Further develop tools and support processes to facilitate cooperation among EU MS participating in the EU Relocation Scheme, such as	• Number of tools developed	• 2 new tools	• Target exceeded. Tools developed: - Matching tool; - On-demand guidelines in support of the Relocation process (registration); - Argumentation tools in support of the Dublin Unit in Greece;

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
handbooks, manuals and ICT tools.			- Information on policies and practices on family reunification from Turkey by the MS gathered and shared with the Greek Asylum Service; - Information on the notion of incurable diseases; - List of COI references for top three nationalities arriving on the Greek islands; - A standard operating procedure for a new combined procedure of admissibility and in-merits assessment on the Greek islands developed together with the Greek Asylum Service; - Vulnerability Guidance Note developed for operations in the context of the Greek border procedure; - Interview guidance tools for use in hotspot operations developed for Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan; - EASO Helpdesk set up to support the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement; - Country-specific interview guidance documents for the top three nationalities.
Organise training sessions to support MS officials in relation to relocation and the hotspot approach.	• Number of training sessions delivered • Number of officials trained	• 15 sessions delivered • 300 officials trained	• Target exceeded. 60 training sessions were delivered. • Target exceeded. More than 1,700 participants attended.
Develop training material to support MS officials in relation to relocation and the hotspot approach.	• Number of meetings organised	• 2 meetings	• Target achieved. 2 meetings organised for the development of a trainers manual for operational training for interpreters.
Build practical tools providing information on origin verification for use also in the context of relocation (nationality determination) and the hotspot approach.	• Number of tools developed	• 2 new tools	• Target exceeded. COI tools in the form of factsheets have been developed to support the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement in the hotspots in Greece. A COI query system has been set up in Athens. Quality Feedback Guidance and a Vulnerability Guidance Note were developed for operations in the context of the Greek border procedure.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Establish and develop regular data collections on Relocation and the hotspot approach and produce related analytical reports.	• Number of reports issued • Number of recipients of the reports	• 12 reports issued • 100% of MS receiving reports	• Target exceeded. 40 weekly reports on hotspots and relocation were issued. • Target achieved. Reports are shared with all Member States.
Organise at least one EASO practical cooperation meeting on relocation of beneficiaries of international protection in synergy with the EC Annual Relocation Forum in 2017.	NA	NA	NA
Organise practical cooperation activities in relation to vulnerable groups to support MS officials in relation to relocation and the hotspot approach.	• Number of activities organised	• 15 activities	• Target not achieved. 2 training sessions were conducted in Italy and 3 in Greece; 7 operational training sessions were held for EASO experts deployed in Greece for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.

I.2 Information, analysis and knowledge development

I.2.1 Country of origin information (COI)

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhanced EU COI production and quality			
EU common planning table for COI production.	NA	NA	NA
Meetings/conferences on key themes or countries of origin.	NA	NA	NA
Production of COI reports, including through the existing networks, but increasingly using also in-house capacity,	• Number of COI reports • Use of reports	• 16	• Target exceeded. 19 reports produced (9 published, 10 finalised but not public), 2 reports pending publication. Total downloads: - 31/12/2016: 631;

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
based on the EASO COI Report methodology.			- 30/09/2017: 1,666; - 18/12/2017: 2,222.
Production of other types of products (e.g. methodologies, practical guides) on transversal issues related to COI.	NA	NA	NA
Input relevant for the designation of safe countries of origin.	NA	NA	NA
Development of a joint tool on origin verification.	NA	NA	NA
Strategic network meetings (heads of national COI units).	NA	NA	NA
Meetings of specialised COI networks.	• Number of meetings held	• 20	• Target exceeded. 24 meetings held.
COI queries.	• Number of COI queries answered	• 30	• Target exceeded. 59 queries answered.
Initiation of transfer of MedCOI.	NA	NA	NA
Possible COI Fact-Finding Mission.	NA	NA	NA
Practical cooperation meetings on countries or regions of origin, focusing on (use of) COI and national policy.	• Use of COI Portal and query system	• Increase in number of users/ consultations (+ 5,000)	• Target exceeded. Public COI Portal launched in Feb 2016: - Old, non-public portal had on average 10 users per day; - New public portal had as daily average: - o 80 users in April 2017; - o 98 users in June 2017; - o 89 users in September 2017; - o 110 users in December 2017. In total by 18/12/2017, there were 24,711 downloads.
Meeting/training on new tools for COI research.			

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Plan for gradual transfer of the MedCOI project, provision of COI on the availability and accessibility of medical treatment in countries of origin together with the necessary quality assurance activities.	NA	NA	NA

1.2.2 Early warning and Preparedness System (EPS)

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhanced and expanded EPS			
Gather regular data from EU+ countries according to indicators (Stage II, III and IV of EPS).	Number of key aspects covered by EPS	Stage IV EPS	Target achieved. An advisory group meeting on the expansion of the EPS collection to Stage IV focusing on second and higher instances took place. Agreement was reached to produce draft guidelines and share pilot data in order to set the scene for more comprehensive data sharing.
Organise GPS network meetings.	Quality and use of analytical products	Increased number of users	Target achieved. A revised dissemination proposal for EPS data and analytical products was consulted with the network. The dissemination guidelines were finalised and integrated with comments from the EPS community. The guidelines were adopted by the Management Board and are expected to raise the visibility of EPS analytical products by setting up transparent rules for distribution.
Data quality visits and deliverables.	NA	NA	NA
Produce weekly reports (numbers of asylum applications and main Countries of origin).	Number of analytical products	12 monthly, 6 bi-monthly, 4 quarterly	Target exceeded. Weekly reports were produced as follows: - 49 on the situation of asylum in the EU+; - 49 on operational activities in Greece; - 49 on state of play of relocation from Italy and Greece.
Produce monthly reports (implementation of CEAS).			

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Produce bi-monthly reports (Dublin implementation).		and ad hoc reports	Monthly reports: - 3 EASO Analytical Briefs produced for JHA Council meetings; - 10 public latest asylum trends reports; - 10 Monthly Trends and Analysis Reports focusing on first-instance determination; - 10 Resettlement overview reports. 5 PVLMM reports produced in collaboration with Frontex (due to discussion on the new suspension mechanism). 1 Annual PVLMM submitted to the Commission in October 2017. Bi-Monthly reports: - 1 bi-monthly report on Dublin implementation. Quarterly reports: - 3 quarterly reports on Dublin implementation; - 3 quarterly reports on Reception.
Produce quarterly reports.			
Produce ad hoc and tailored analytical reports.			
Provide input to meetings/presentations/query responses.	NA	NA	NA
Produce intelligence reports on countries of origin and transit.	NA	NA	NA

I.2.3 Information and Documentation System

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Further development of IDS			
Update system information regularly.	• Number of topic pages completed	• +1,000 topics covered	• Target exceeded. 1,500 topics created (50 topics for each of 30 countries). 624 content pages, each covering several topics, were created. 479 pages were partly or fully filled in. 147 pages have been validated.
Improve the system and expand the user base.	• Use of system	• Increased number of users	• Target achieved. An increase in the number of users has been registered: - 86 active users at the end of April 2017; - 180 active users at the end of July 2017;

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
			- 414 active users in early October 2017; - 497 active users by the end of 2017.
Collection of national and EU+ level case law.	• Number of case law references completed	• +1,000 topic pages incl. case law references	• Target exceeded. 1,500 topics created (50 topics for each of 30 countries. Case law references were organised by thematic area rather than topic page. Case law references were included on 69 pages.
Insertion of case law references in respective topic pages.	• Number of topic pages completed	• +1,000 topic pages incl. case law references, legislation and statistical data	• Target exceeded. 1,500 topics created (50 topics for each of 30 countries. 624 pages were created. 479 (77%) pages were partly or fully filled in. 147 pages were validated (26% of the total number of pages to be validated).
Validation of case law references with IDS network members.	NA	NA	NA
Insertion of statistical references in respective topic pages.	NA	NA	NA
Collection of national and EU+ level legislation.	NA	NA	NA
Insertion of legislative references in respective topic pages.	NA	NA	NA
Validation of legislative references with IDS network members.	NA	NA	NA
Liaising with EU+ countries to join IDS network.	• Number of EU+ countries in the IDS network	• 30	• Target not achieved. 29 EU+ countries in the IDS network.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Meetings of IDS network held.	Number of meetings of IDS network	2 meetings	Target achieved. 2 meetings were held.

I.2.4 Annual report on the situation of asylum in the EU

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Annual report published.	- Satisfaction of main audience - Number of paper publications	- Increased number and quality of inputs received through the consultation with EASO Consultative Forum and MB meeting 10% increase in downloads from the website	Target achieved. A survey on satisfaction with the Annual Report was launched in October 2017. 138 full responses were received indicating a high level of satisfaction of the audience (27% assessed the report as excellent, 60% as good). Target exceeded. Increase in downloads: +280% 2016: 81 2017: 308
Launch of the Annual Report organised.	NA	NA	NA (a public launch of the Annual Report was held)

I.2.5 Integration and further development of asylum information systems

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Extended COI Portal functionalities and integrated statistical information on countries of origin			
Develop country overview pages and a graphical navigation by map.	Number of additional major versions deployed	4 during the year	Target NA No additional versions were deployed as new maintenance contracts are not in place yet. Internal workaround solutions have been provided within EASO.
Develop a cooperation platform for COI specialists.			

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Include relevant statistical information and direct links to IDS.	Connected systems to the COI Portal	Encourage at least 1 more EU+ country to connect	Target exceeded. Discussions are ongoing with Romania, and held with Poland.
Public Interface improved and according to EASO corporate design.	Number of pages with statistical information	Relevant statistics made available for each EU+ country page	Target achieved. Visualisations for all intended areas (including access to procedure, first instance determination, second instance determination, pending cases/ reception, and content of protection) have been developed and made available online. Additional monthly statistics were developed.
IDS configuration ready for public access.			
Dynamic statistics integrated on EASO website.	Availability of dynamic statistics from EPS	Provide targeted, automated statistical information on a regular basis	Target achieved. The interactive relocation map was last updated. An interactive world map based on Eurostat data on the situation of asylum applicants in EU+ countries was released on the occasion of World Refugee Day. An interactive European map based on Eurostat data on the situation of asylum applicants in EU+ countries was released on the occasion of the launch of the Annual Report. Work was completed to prepare Eurostat data for use in visualisations.
COI news integrated on the relevant part of the EASO website.	Availability of relevant news content from the COI Portal	Automate COI news as feed to include on the relevant EASO webpage	Target achieved. The COI portal is available on the EASO website. The COI news is published on the homepage of the COI portal. Specific news is also published on the relevant parts of the EASO website.
Most recent COI document are automatically displayed on the relevant parts of the EASO website.	Availability of relevant documents from the COI Portal	Automate most recent COI documents as feed and include on the relevant EASO webpage	Target achieved. The COI portal is available on the EASO website. Specific documents are also promoted on the relevant parts of the EASO website (newsletter, etc.).

1.2.6 Research programme on pull and push factors

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Development of a model of asylum-related migration			
Design, launch and supervision of Research Programme Projects 4, 5, 6.	Design, launch, supervision of Lots	- Supervision of Project 3 - Design, launch, and supervision of Projects 4, 5, 6	Target achieved. Supervision of project 3 (feasibility study) is complete and products have been delivered. The design and launch of Project 4 (surveying asylum seekers) is ongoing in cooperation with MS. Project 5 (big data for early warning) has resulted in a small pilot with encouraging results, which will feed into a wider project in 2018 with firm deliverables. Project 6 will deliver outputs in Q2 2018.
Projects 3, 5, 6 completed.	Finalisation of Projects	Project 3, Project 5, Project 6	Target not achieved. Project 3 (feasibility study) was finalised in Q4 2017. Project 5 (big data for early warning) has finalised a small but successful pilot, which will be expanded in 2018.
Dissemination/cooperation contacts and meetings.	- Number of deliverables from the Research Programme - Number of outreach/ dissemination activities	- Project 3: review of existing surveys and feasibility report - Project 5: social media monitor interim report - Project 6: final report on pull factors - Project 7: interim report EASO model - At least 2 dissemination activities	Target achieved. Project 3 (feasibility study): 3 meetings were held with contractors at EASO premises; a draft final report was received and the contract was extended until November 2017 to include additional scenarios in the feasibility study. Project 5 (big data for early warning): the pilot report was delivered by a consultant in December 2017. Project 7 (modelling and forecasting): the project has been reprioritised. Target achieved. A joint EASO-OECD workshop was organised. A workshop on migration modelling for early warning was held.

I.3 Permanent support

I.3.1 Training

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Solidification of the EASO Training Curriculum			
Develop at least 1 training module.	• Number of training modules developed/ reviewed/updated/up graded in 2017 • Level of satisfaction with the new e-learning elements of the revised module	• 1 new module developed 1 update/ upgrade 2 preliminary reviews • 85% satisfaction rate	• Target exceeded. 2 new modules finalised, 2 modules being developed, 5 modules being upgraded, 2 modules under review. • Target NA. Following the pilot versions of revised modules, the level of satisfaction will be measured.
Preliminary review of at least 2 training modules by the EASO focal point.			
Update or upgrade of at least 1 module.			
Develop at least 1 training handbook.	• Number of handbooks developed/ reviewed/updated/up graded in 2017	• 2 handbooks preliminary reviewed 1 handbook updated/ upgraded 1 handbook developed	• Target achieved. 2 reviews completed, 2 upgrades in progress, 1 under development.
Preliminary review at least 2 training handbooks by the EASO focal point.			
Update or upgrade at least 1 handbook.			
Deployment of content and didactic experts to develop/ upgrade/update training modules and handbooks.	NA	NA	NA
Organisation of meetings to support the experts working on developments/ updates/upgrades of modules and handbooks.	• Number of training modules consulted with the members of the Reference Group	• 5 training modules consulted	• Target achieved. The Reference Group was consulted twice on the module Inclusion Advanced; for preliminary input in the context of the upgrade/update process of the modules on COI, Exclusion and Module for Managers; on the draft of the upgraded Interview Techniques Module; on the module on Interviewing Vulnerable Persons.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Organise an annual meeting with the Reference Group to strengthen the quality of the training material developed, updated or upgraded.	NA	NA	NA
Finalise the evaluation of EASO Training Curriculum and, if necessary, design an action plan for the implementation of its outcomes.	NA	NA	NA
Implementation of the certification and accreditation of EASO's Training Curriculum and creation of an International Sectoral Qualification for asylum officials trained by the EASO Training Curriculum			
Upload the certified and accredited modules, from the referencing to a first National Qualifications Framework, to the EASO Learning Management System for the EASO Training Curriculum.	Initiate the referencing of the EASO Training Curriculum to a second National Qualifications Framework	Initiation of the referencing to a second National Qualifications Framework	Target achieved. Implementation of 13 certified and accredited modules was concluded. This involved initial valid and reliable assessment of knowledge and skill-based learning outcomes in line with the learning-outcome-based standards set out in the EASO Assessment Strategy. A fully-fledged certification and accreditation of the EASO Training Curriculum and on-the-job training, with the complete referencing to a second National Qualifications Framework, will follow upon the evaluation of the initial pilot project.
Review of the existing Curriculum in order to inform an initial assessment against the requirements of the regulated National Qualifications Framework.			
Review of EASO plans for assessment of the modules in the context of the requirements of an Award under the National Qualifications Framework, including the appropriateness			

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
of the assessment criteria against the learning outcomes.			
Adaptation and refinement of an internal quality assurance procedure for the assessment of the Training Curriculum modules based on an understanding of (and alignment with) the current quality assurance approach for the Curriculum as a whole.			
Undertaking of indicative credit and levelling of the current modules to inform the Certification and Accreditation Working Group discussions on the design of the Award(s). Options for designing the award based on the current structure of modules.			
Implementation of the EASO Training Curriculum			
Delivery of at least 12 train-the-trainers sessions.	• Number of persons trained within train-the-trainers sessions • Number of persons trained within national training sessions • Number of train-the-trainers sessions delivered	• 300 • 4,000 • 30	• Target exceeded. 488 trainers were trained (248 in train-the-trainers sessions organised in Malta and 240 in train-the-trainers sessions organised regionally). • Target exceeded. 5,459 persons were trained within national training sessions. • Target exceeded. 31 train-the-trainers sessions were delivered: - 16 train-the-trainers sessions in Malta; - 10 regional train-the-trainers sessions organised by EASO; - Five regional train-the-trainers sessions organised by Germany.
Delivery of at least 2 regional train-the-trainers sessions.			
Provide coaching to EU+ countries in the implementation of the EASO training at national level.			

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
	• Number of national training sessions administered by EASO • Number of coaching sessions provided to national trainers • Level of satisfaction of trainees	• 300 • 2 • 85% satisfaction	• Target exceeded. 331 national training sessions were administered by EASO. • Target exceeded. 318 national trainers were supported by the EASO E-learning Team by opening the online studies and providing assistance in the form of a helpdesk. • Target exceeded. 94% satisfaction.
Develop an annual training report on the use of EASO training at EU and national level.	NA	NA	NA
Organise at least one NCP meeting.	NA	NA	NA
Facilitate communication between trainers participating in the trainers' network via the e-learning platform and the organisation of webinars and physical network meetings.	• Number of trainers and content experts participating in the trainers' network meetings	• 25	• Target not achieved. 17 representatives from 12 Member States.
Translated versions of module available on platform.	• Number of different language versions uploaded on the e-learning platform	• 25	• Target exceeded. 30 in total were uploaded: - 13 in English: certified versions update; - 5 in English: End of Protection, Inclusion Advanced, THB, Introduction to International Protection and Fundamental Rights Modules; - 5 in Russian: Module for Managers, Gender and SOGI module, Reception, Didactics and Inclusion; - 1 in Romanian: Dublin III Regulation; - 1 in Dutch: Reception; - 1 in Turkish: Evidence Assessment; - 3 in German: CEAS, Dublin III Regulation and Gender and SOGI Module;

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
	• Number of language translations of modules	• Min 40 translations	- 1 in French: Reception. • Target exceeded. 67 language versions were submitted for translation to CDT in total; 19 full language translations were completed.
Development of thematic training, training for Asylum Intervention Pool experts and a pilot training programme for EASO staff			
Deployment of experts for development of thematic training material.	NA	NA	NA
Organisation of expert group meetings to develop specific training material.	• Number of meetings organised for the development of thematic training material	• 4	• Target achieved. 4 meetings were organised.
Development of at least 1 thematic training material outside the framework of the curriculum.	• Number of training material developed	• 1	• Target exceeded. 4 training materials were developed.
Development of structured training for experts who are part of the AIP.	• Satisfaction level of the users	• 85% satisfaction	• Target exceeded. 97% satisfaction.
Development of a pilot training programme on asylum for EASO personnel.			
Analysis of EU+ Countries' individual training needs and design of training plans			
Organising and conducting field and study visits in training units of EU+ countries.	• Number of field/study visits • Number of training plans developed	• 2 • 2	• Target exceeded. 3 field visits were conducted. • Target exceeded. 3 training plans were developed.
Upon request, assist EU+ countries in the design and	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
implementation of a training plan.			

I.3.2 Asylum processes

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Collection and analysis of information about Member State's practices and policies on selected aspects of the CEAS			
Organisation of 1 thematic meetings on specific aspect of CEAS.	• Number of thematic meetings organised • Level of satisfaction with the thematic meetings	• 2 • 80%	• Target not achieved. 1 thematic meeting was organised. • Target exceeded. 89.4% satisfaction.
Publication of 1 thematic report.	NA	NA	NA
Facilitation of the work of the EASO Asylum Processes Network, including maintenance of the dedicated online platform.	NA	NA	NA
Organisation of the annual meeting of the EASO Asylum Processes Network.	NA	NA	NA
Achievement of common EU standards by developing common practical tools targeted at certain aspects of the asylum processes			
Development and publication of 2 practical tools.	• Number of practical tools developed and published • Number of common practical tools consulted with civil society and other organisations	• 1 • 1	• Target achieved. 1 tool was developed and finalised. • Target achieved. Consultation was held on 1 tool.
Promotion of the practical tools.	• Number of activities/products developed to promote the practical tools	• 2 or more	• Target exceeded. 5 products were developed.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Evaluation report on the implementation of the practical tools and guides.	NA	NA	NA
Organise an annual meeting with the Reference Group to strengthen the quality process of tools developed.	NA	NA	NA
Support to Member States in the quality management of national asylum processes			
Organisation of relevant activities related to quality management.	• Number of relevant activities • Satisfaction of participants in the relevant activities	• 1 • 80% or higher	• Target achieved. 1 meeting was organised. • Target exceeded. 96.2% satisfaction
Development of quality assurance tools.	• Number of quality assurance tools developed	• 1	• Target achieved. 1 tool was developed.
Identify and share practical tools and projects for supporting the quality in MS asylum decision-making process and other aspects of the CEAS.	• Updated List of Quality Projects and Initiatives published	• 1	• Target achieved. The list was published on the Asylum Processes Network restricted area of the EASO website.
Strengthening practical cooperation and exchange of information focused on exclusion-related matters			
Organisation of meetings of the EASO Exclusion Network.	• Number of meetings of the Network organised • Number of EU+ countries' NCP participating in the Network • Level of satisfaction with the meetings	• 2 • 30 • 80% and higher	• Target achieved. 2 meetings were organised. • Target not achieved. 18 National Contact Points were participating. • Target exceeded. 94% satisfaction.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Facilitating the work of the EASO Exclusion Network, including maintenance of the dedicated online platform.	Online restricted area created and maintained	Online area maintained up-to-date	Target achieved. The area was maintained fully up-to-date.
Facilitating the exchange of information within the EASO Exclusion Network, including through quarterly updates.	- Number of quarterly requests for input queries launched - Number of quarterly updates produced	4 3	Target achieved. 4 quarterly requests for input queries were launched. Target achieved. 3 quarterly updates were produced.

I.3.3 EASO activities on vulnerable applicants

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Better identification and adequate support provided to vulnerable applicants in asylum processes			
Organise an annual conference on children in asylum processes.	• Number of questionnaires sent and processed	• 1	• Target exceeded. 1 questionnaire sent to national authorities on the examination of applications for international protection raising SOGI-related considerations; 16 replies were received. 1 questionnaire sent to the national authorities on asylum procedures for children; 24 replies were received; the key findings were presented during the Annual Conference on EASO activities on children.
Organise a practical cooperation meeting on trafficking in human beings.			
Organise at least 3 thematic expert meetings on topics related to vulnerable groups.			
	• Number of thematic activities organised	• 5	• Target not achieved. 4 activities were organised.
	• Level of satisfaction with the activities	• 80% and higher	• Target exceeded. 89.5% satisfaction.
Development and publication of practical tools for better identification and adequate support for vulnerable applicants for international protection			
Development and publication of 2 practical tools.	• Number of practical tools developed and published	• 2	• Target not achieved. 1 tool was finalised, 2 tools are under development.
	• Number of common practical tools consulted with civil society and other organisations	• 2	• Target achieved. New edition of the Age Assessment publication was released for consultation (including with the EASO Network on Activities on Children

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
			and CSOs). Draft of the Practical Guide on Best Interests Assessments was released for consultation.
Promotion of the practical tools.	Number of activities/products developed to promote the practical tools	2 or more	Target achieved. 2 products were developed: leaflet and brochure (available on EASO website and printed).

I.3.4 Cooperation with members of the courts and tribunals

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Advancing the creation of professional development materials			
Develop and distribute at least two sets of Professional Development Materials for members of courts and tribunals, in the form of Judicial Analysis and/or Judicial Trainer's Guidance Note.	Number of professional development sets for members of courts and tribunals in EU+ countries developed and published	6	Target achieved. 3 sets were published, 3 sets were finalised and pending publication.
Publish the relevant materials developed under the auspices of the EASO Professional Development Series for members of courts and tribunals in 2017.	NA	NA	NA
Implementation of professional meetings for judicial trainers			
Organise Professional Development Meetings on subjects covered by the EASO Professional Development Series.	- Number of professional development meetings for judicial trainers organised - Number of participants in professional development meetings	6 150 members of courts and tribunals	Target achieved. 6 meetings were organised. Target exceeded. 175 participants attended (99 + 76 in training workshops).

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
	• Level of satisfaction of participants	• 80% or higher	• Target exceeded. 92.3% satisfaction on average.
Stimulating dialogue with judicial stakeholders in the field of asylum			
Organise an annual planning and coordination meeting.	• Number of stakeholders participating in the EASO Network of Court and Tribunal Members • Number of coordination and planning meetings of the Network organised • Number of (bi-lateral) meetings organised with National Judicial Training Bodies • Level of satisfaction with the work of the network	• Maintain the number of stakeholders as in 2016 • 1 • 5 • 80% and higher	• Target achieved. A full coverage was reached (all EU Member States, Switzerland, Norway, CJEU, ECtHR, IARLJ, AEAJ, EJTN, ERA, UNHCR). • Target achieved. 1 meeting was organised. • Target not achieved. 2 participations were held in NJTB events. • Target exceeded. 97% satisfaction of the network members at the annual event.
Quarterly newsletter updates shared with the Network.	NA	NA	NA
Organise training sessions and capacity-building activities.	• Number of sessions organised • Number of participants • Level of satisfaction	• 4 • 74 • 80% and higher	• Target exceeded. 6 sessions were organised. • Target exceeded. 76 participants attended. • Target exceeded. 88% satisfaction on average.

I.3.5 Dublin Network

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing cooperation and information sharing among national Dublin Units participating in the network			
Organise regular meetings of the Steering Group and of the Dublin Expert Network and any other events agreed in the framework of the Network.	• Number of meetings organised • Number of participants • Level of satisfaction of the participants • Number of Dublin-related practical tools identified and developed	• 5 meetings 32 participants • 80% and higher • 1	• Target achieved. 2 meetings of the Steering Group: 40 and 34 participants, respectively; 1 technical meeting: 8 participants; 1 meeting of Dublin Expert Network: 23 participants. • Target exceeded. 93.6% satisfaction on average. • Target achieved. 1 practical tools under development.
Maintain an online platform for the purposes of the Network, which would facilitate communication within the Network and sharing of information and expertise (including through queries).	• Number of queries submitted by Dublin units and responded within the network	• 15% higher than 2016	• Target achieved. 4 queries were submitted, 4 query reports were produced.
Coordinate and facilitate the regular reporting by the Dublin NCPs.	• Number of quarterly requests for input launched	• 4	• Target achieved. 4 inputs were launched.
Prepare and share with the Network a periodic update report on Dublin-related developments, including statistical information, updates from the MS, updates on EASO activities, etc.	• Number of quarterly updates produced	• 3	• Target achieved. 3 quarterly updates were produced.

I.3.6 Reception

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing practical cooperation and promoting best practices in the field of reception			
Further develop the new dedicated network of reception authorities and work in cooperation with the partners involved, in particular EPRA.	• Number of meetings organised • Number of participants • Level of satisfaction of the participants	• 3 meetings organised • 80% on satisfaction surveys	• Target exceeded. 3 coordination meetings. • Target exceeded. 2 plenary meetings: - 29 participants, 94.6% satisfaction; - 31 participants, 83.5% satisfaction; 1 workshop on Reception and Society, 81.25% satisfaction. 1 workshop on Reception of Unaccompanied children, 73.5% satisfaction and 62.5% evaluated the field visit as excellent.
Organise EASO practical cooperation meetings on reception systems and conditions.			
Organise at least one EASO practical cooperation meeting in contingency planning and preparedness for possible influxes of asylum seekers in the reception context.	NA	NA	NA
Development of tools.	• Number of practical tools, including guidance material on operational standards and indicators, developed and published	• 1 Practical tool developed and published	• Target achieved. 1 practical tool was translated into additional languages and published, 1 was finalised and submitted for publication.
Further develop standards and indicators for reception systems	NA	NA	NA

I.3.7 Integration and return

The activity was de-prioritised by EASO in view of Frontex's mandate on return. The change was reflected in amendment 1 to the EASO Work Programme 2017 adopted by the Management Board on 13 June 2017.

In relation to data collection, EASO continued its cooperation with DG HOME, EMN REG, Frontex and Eurostat towards harmonising and improving the quality of return data at EU level.

I.3.8 Country guidance for convergence

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Information-collection and analysis of divergences in country-specific national decision practices			
Compilation of questionnaire outcomes.	• Number of questionnaires	• 2	• Target exceeded. 3 were compiled: 1 questionnaire on Iraq, 2 on Afghanistan.
Production of specific analyses (on COI, on specific elements of the CEAS) in support of the assessment work of the Country Guidance Network.	• Number of EASO analyses made in support of the assessment work of the Network (COI/ Horizontal)	• Up to 4	• Target achieved. 2 analyses were produced on Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive and on Internal Protection Alternative.
Joint development of country-specific guidance based on joint EASO COI, EASO horizontal guidance/tools and other relevant input			
Adoption of an EASO methodology for the development of Country Guidance.	• Number of methodologies for the development of Country Guidance	• 1	• Target not achieved. The methodology is expected to be formalised after the finalisation and evaluation of the pilot project in June 2018.
Development/Update and publication of 2 Country Guidance Notes.	• Number of Country Guidance Notes to be developed or updated and adopted by the EASO Management Board	• 2	• Target achieved. 2 notes were finalised.
Organisation of meetings of the Country Guidance Network and Country Guidance drafting teams to steer the	• Number of Country Guidance Network meetings and level of satisfaction	• 2	• Target achieved. 2 meetings were held: - In June 2017, with an overall satisfaction level of 81.4%; - In September 2017, with an overall satisfaction level of 82.8%.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
development of the Country Guidance.	Number of drafting team meetings	Up to 4	Target exceeded. 5 meetings were held.

1.3.9 Other tools for permanent support

1.3.9.1 EASO queries

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Consolidating and further developing the EASO query system			
Manage the procedure of requesting, sending and responding to queries and keep an archive of past queries.	- Number of queries addressed - Average time to address the query - Use of the query reports - Degree of satisfaction of MS	Up to 25 queries	Target achieved. 23 queries were finalised. Query reports are used internally by EU+ countries and in the framework of the Joint Action Plan for the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement. Member States have given positive feedback on the queries.

1.3.9.2 List of available languages

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing access of all Member States to interpretation services across the EU			
Review, update and monitor the LAL for interpretation.	- Number of contacts established between EU+ countries to use the LAL - Data gathered on the languages most requested for interpretation	80% of MS provide information for updated LAL Data available on top 5 requested languages	Target not achieved. EASO facilitated contact between 2 requesting Member States and respective source EU+ countries on a wide range of languages, following a consultation of the LAL. Bilateral contacts between the respective EU+ countries followed. The demand for practical use of the tool was low in 2017, resulting in an update rate of 10%. The low level of responses is due to the low relevance and practical applicability of the tool in the current operational context. A review of the tool is planned for 2018.
Organise at least one EASO practical cooperation meeting with EU+ countries to discuss technical solutions for	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
increased use of the LAL as well as subsequent provision of technical tools.			
Use the technical solution to facilitate use of the list of available languages.	• Technical solution used; Degree of satisfaction of EU+ countries with the pilot technical solution	• Two technical solutions used in EU+ countries	• Target not achieved. No technical solutions were explored/used during the reporting period.

1.3.9.3 Information and communications technology

The activity relating to developing and implementing technical solutions which can contribute to improving the flexibility and efficiency of national asylum and reception systems in the EU+ was de-prioritised by EASO. The change was reflected in amendment 1 to the EASO Work Programme 2017 adopted by the MB on 13 June 2017.

1.4 External dimension

1.4.1 Third country support

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Western Balkans and Turkey			
• Implement support measures in relevant Western Balkan countries and Turkey in line with, and as appropriate to complement, roadmaps/action plans developed and funded under the IPA Programme. • Capacity building activities including trainings, tailor-made seminars, Technical Assistance and on-the-job training, study visits etc.	• Number of IPA related activities with EASO involvement implemented • Number of capacity building activities implemented • Level of satisfaction of the partner countries involved • Number of other support measures implemented	• 10 support measures and/or capacity building activities implemented • 80% on satisfaction surveys • 85% of proposed procedures put in place	• Target exceeded. 11 IPA-related activities implemented under External Dimension, complementary to the IPA project; 11 capacity building activities implemented in Turkey. • Target achieved. A high level of satisfaction was reported by participants (above 80%). • Target achieved. Activities under the regional IPA II Project on protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey: 10 activities implemented;

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
		At least 2 countries supported have taken clear steps to establish/adjust the national asylum systems and practices	5 regional activities organised; Participation of 4 officials from Serbia and 4 officials from the fYRoM in EASO Train-the-trainers sessions on the Reception Module in Brussels and on COI in Malta. Target achieved. Establishment of a National Roadmap for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.
Operational support as and when necessary to support activities such as SOPs for dealing with different types of migrant groups	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
North Africa			
- Implement support measures in North Africa, particularly in Morocco and Tunisia, to follow up on lessons learnt from the EASO implemented ENP and Partnership Instrument project, in line with, and as appropriate to complement, roadmaps/ action plans developed under the RDPP North Africa Programme. - Capacity building activities including trainings, tailor-made seminars, Technical Assistance and on-the-job training, study visits etc.	- Number of RDPPs and or complementing activities with EASO involvement - Number and sort of support measures implemented - Number of meetings, trainings and workshops	10 support measures and/or capacity building activities implemented	Target not achieved. 2 RDPP North Africa-related activities were organised, 2 meetings were held, 3 capacity building activities were organised.
Organise EASO practical cooperation workshops/meetings with the EU+ countries' /third countries.	- Number of participants - Level of satisfaction of the participants/ stakeholders - Use of the output of the meeting	80% on satisfaction surveys 85% of proposed procedures put in place	Target exceeded. A high level of satisfaction reported in the Communication Skills workshop (90%) and the Negotiation Skills workshop (91%). 2 External Dimension Network meetings were held, 1 communication Skills workshop, 1 negotiation skills workshop. 13 participants representing 11 MS and 20 participants representing 10 MS, UNHCR and DG HOME. Target achieved. Use of the outputs of the meeting: 1 Information sharing tool on activities implemented by EASO and MS in third countries shared, further developed and presented; 3 EASO calendars shared; - The External Dimension Network web platform created in Yammer, further developed and presented; 1 format of country factsheet developed.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
		At least 2 countries supported have taken clear steps to establish/adjust the national asylum systems and practices	Target NA.
Implement support measures, as appropriate, to contribute to the Commission's 'compact' approach in strategically targeted Third Countries and in coordination and cooperation with the Commission and other relevant stakeholders including UNHCR.	NA	NA	NA
Where necessary, support activities, such as standard operating procedures, for dealing with different types of migrant groups, though focusing on persons in need of international protection.	NA	NA	NA

I.4.2 Resettlement

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Contributing to the enhanced implementation of European resettlement schemes			
Implement at least one support activity with EU MS and participating Associate Countries, which have no prior experience with resettlement.	Number of activities specifically targeting EU+ countries which have limited prior experience with resettlement organised	3 support measures implemented	Target achieved. 3 bilateral support initiatives are ongoing: - Cyprus: contacts were established, 1 scoping mission was held in early September, and a formal request was received in October 2017. - Slovenia: 1 scoping mission was held in early October 2017 and contacts were ongoing to formalise support for 2018. 3 meetings with Maltese authorities took place between May and October 2018. Upon request, a relevant document and facilitated contacts between Malta and other EU+ MS resettling from relevant third countries.
Facilitate resettlement, by developing a pilot project in a third country.	Number of EU+ countries participating in the pilot project	10 EU+ countries	Target NA. Preparatory work for the pilot project is ongoing. EASO is undertaking a feasibility assessment of logistic support for resettlement to be offered in Turkey.
Develop and promote use of methodologies and tools for strengthening EU+ countries' ability to resettle refugees and promote cooperation under the European Resettlement schemes.	Number of methodologies and tools developed/use promoted, also in cooperation with ongoing EU projects in this field (e.g. EU-FRANK)	Tools used to support EU+ countries	Target achieved. Development of tools and training is ongoing, in close cooperation with the EU-FRANK project.
Continue regular data collections on Resettlement and produce related analytical reports.	- Number of reports on resettlement data issued - Number of recipients of the reports	6 reports issued. - Received by all EU+ countries.	Target exceeded. 8 Monthly Resettlement overview reports have been issued. Target achieved. Made available to GPS members in 30 EU+ countries and DG HOME on the restricted area of the web.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Organise at least one EASO practical cooperation expert meeting on resettlement in synergy with the other various EU and international initiatives on resettlement.	Number of activities undertaken to support the European Resettlement scheme.	80% on satisfaction surveys.	Target exceeded. A high level of satisfaction was reported by the participants in the EASO Resettlement Workshop (85%)

I.5 EASO's horizontal activities

I.5.1 Civil society and Consultative Forum

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing multidimensional beneficial synergies between EASO and civil society actors			
Contribute to the activities of the Consultative Forum of other JHA Agencies, of the European Migration Forum and other similar bodies.	NA	NA	NA
Participate in civil society networks in the field of asylum, at EU and national levels identifying developments relevant for EASO, reviewing and channelling inputs, providing contributions where appropriate.	NA	NA	NA
Organize internal and external consultations on the role of civil society in EASO's work with a view to elaborate proposals to increase the involvement of civil society.	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Acknowledge, report and promote EASO cooperation with civil society.	NA	NA	NA
Engage with civil society representatives in EASO meetings and activities.	• Number of meetings/ activities with civil society representatives	• 36	• Target exceeded. More than 160 meetings and activities were held.
External study to evaluate the lessons learnt from the functioning of the Consultative Forum since its establishment and make a proposal for the setup of the revised Consultative Forum.	NA	NA	NA
Draft the proposal for the setup (composition and working methods) of the new EASO Consultative Forum as per proposal of Regulation.	• Degree of relevance and viability of the revision of the Consultative Forum.	• High relevance and suitability	• Target achieved. The revision of the Consultative Forum is ongoing.
Coordinate the work of the Secretariat of EASO Consultative Forum.	• Number of new working contacts established with CSOs in the field of international protection	• 20	• Target not achieved. 15 new contacts were established.
Organise the meetings of the EASO Consultative Forum according to its revised structure.	NA	NA	NA
Organise thematic/information meetings in MS for CSOs operating in areas relevant to the work of EASO.	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Provide at least 2 targeted training sessions on relocation and the EU legal framework to relevant CSOs providing support to applicants for international protection in Greece and Italy.	NA	NA	NA
Test the viability through pilot activities for the participation of CSOs in the delivery of support activities in MS.	NA	NA	NA
Explore ways to build synergies with relevant CSOs operating in Greece and Italy for timely referral of vulnerable groups.	NA	NA	NA
Consult relevant civil society organisations regarding key EASO documents, such as the Work Programme, the Annual Report on the Situation of asylum in the EU and the Annual Activity Report.	• Number and sort of consultations with civil society conducted • Number of organisations consulted • Number of contributions received • Use of the contributions received	• 12 consultations 120 organisations 75 contributions	• Target achieved. 7 consultations restricted to Consultative Forum members; 135 member organisations consulted (as well as one open consultation); 44 contributions received. 2 consultations restricted to select CSOs (e.g. UNHCR, IOM, ECRE and International Rescue Committee); a total of 5 contributions received. 1 open consultation on the satisfaction with the Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum; 138 responses received.

1.5.2 EASO communication and stakeholder relations

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Enhancing the reputation of the Agency and strengthening the credibility with key stakeholders			
Organise and participate in external meetings.	NA	NA	NA

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Organising regular meetings with key stakeholders, also in the margins of events, such as the Council meetings, European Parliament and other fora.	• Number of meetings with key stakeholders, including MS and MEPs	• 35	• Target exceeded. Around 140 meetings were organised.
Coordination of VIP visits and other visits to EASO.	• Number of VIP visits and other visits to EASO	• 20	• Target exceeded. More than 60 VIP visits and other stakeholder visits to EASO were held.
Organising of meetings with relevant EU MS.	NA	NA	NA
Organising briefings with Expert Public (such as journalists) at EASO.	• Number of briefings with Expert Public	• 3	• Target exceeded. More than 10 briefings with the expert public were organised.
Promotion of EASO's work, tools and activities			
Production of adequate EASO merchandise tailor-made for specific EASO audience.	NA	NA	NA
Organising the EASO Information Day in MS.	NA	NA	NA
Organising the Communication Multipliers Meeting.	NA	NA	NA
Organising the Journalist Network Meeting.	NA	NA	NA
Organising thematic press conferences.	• Number of press conferences/meetings	• 4	• Target exceeded. 9 press-related meetings were organised.
Continuously monitoring the EASO Web and enhancing EASO's presence on Social Media.	• EASO Website and Social Media	• 100% increase in monthly page views; 200% increase in	• Target exceeded. Traffic on the EASO website increased by 78% compared to the same period in 2016. Page views increased significantly to more than 930,000 and weekly visitor numbers exceed 9,400. The number of Facebook page likes increased by 250% compared to the 4,862 page likes in 2016.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
		Twitter and Facebook following	Followers on Twitter reached 178,000, increasing by 385% compared to the 3,707 followers in 2016.
Ensuring quality in the production of Translations and Publications.	Number of translations and publications	88 dossiers translated in various languages and 50 publications dossiers	Target achieved. 116 translations and 39 publications were produced.
Introduction of a Press Monitoring Tool.	NA	NA	NA
Organising strategic press interviews.	Number of press interviews	150	Target exceeded. 170 press interviews at EASO premises were organised (on the phone or by email).
Providing timely replies to information requests.	NA	NA	NA
Organising press visits.	Number of press visits in MS	4	Target not achieved. 3 press visits in Italy were organised.
Wider dissemination of EASO's newsletter.	Number of EASO newsletters	10	Target exceeded. 11 issues of the newsletter were published.
Production of weekly Social Media Monitoring Reports.	Number of Social Media Monitoring Reports	52	Target exceeded. 85 weekly reports on the outcome of monitoring of migration and asylum-related topics were produced, 7 monthly reports were produced.
Organisation of EASO Management Board meetings			
Organise EASO Management Board Meetings.	Number of meetings with the EASO MB Members	3	Target exceeded. 4 Management Board meetings were held; bilateral meetings with Management Board Members were also held in the margins of country visits and/or to discuss pertinent issues with Luxembourg, France, Ireland and Bulgaria.

Planned activities	Indicators	Targets	Results
Regularly inform the EASO MB Members on current developments.	NA	NA	NA
Improve the restricted area on the MB website by streamlining information in a more coherent and organised manner.	NA	NA	NA
Develop regular consultations with the EASO MB Members of pertinent issues affecting the management of EASO.	NA	NA	NA

PART II (a): MANAGEMENT

II.1 Management Board

The Management Board shall ensure that the Agency performs the duties assigned to it. It shall be the Agency's planning and monitoring body.

It is composed of 31 members and observers (i.e. one member from each Member State, except for Denmark, which is invited to attend as an observer, two members of the European Commission and one non-voting member of UNHCR). Moreover, representatives of the associate countries (i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) are invited to attend the meetings of the Management Board as observers.

Four Management Board meetings were held on 7 February, 13-14 June, 26-27 September and 27-28 November 2017.

Frontex was regularly invited to take part in relevant items on the Management Board meeting agendas in 2017, in particular with regard to the situation of asylum in the EU and the operations in Italy and Greece. Moreover, on 8 February 2017, the first joint EASO - Frontex Management Board meeting took place in order to discuss current and future cooperation and coordination between the two agencies in relation to their work in the hotspots and information sharing.

The Management Board meeting of September 2017 saw the establishment of a Preparatory Group for a pilot period until 31 December 2018, aimed at facilitating the work of the Management Board and making discussions at the Management Board more effective. The first meeting of the Preparatory Group took place on 14 November 2017 in Vienna.

During 2017, the Management Board adopted the following documents and decisions:

- EASO Annual General Activity Report 2016;
- EASO Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016;
- Annual Report 2016 on the situation of Asylum in the EU, as well as a separate chapter on Dublin;
- First and second amendments to the Work Programme and Budget for 2017;
- Single programming document 2018-2020, and work programme, budget and establishment plan 2018;
- Communication and stakeholders plan 2018;
- Decision No 32 on the Final Annual Accounts 2016;
- Decision No 33 on Terms of Reference of the Preparatory Group of the EASO Management Board;
- Decision No 34 on the Internal Control Framework of EASO.

The Management Board also endorsed the following documents:

- Dissemination guide for EASO data, analysis and intelligence;
- The general approach, methodology and interpretation of legal concepts for the country guidance pilot on Afghanistan.

In 2017, the EASO Management Board continued its strategic discussions on the practical management of the CEAS, and the European Agenda on Migration, and various themes related to the situation of asylum in the EU. Trends, challenges and best practices were discussed by members, representatives and observers.

The Management Board discussed progress related to the implementation of the activities in the framework of the European Agenda on Migration, relocation decisions (in Greece and Italy), implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, and the support measures for Bulgaria and Cyprus. The Agency also reported on progress made on the development of the EASO asylum intervention pool

system, the progress and achievements made in Greece as a follow up to the consultancy provided by McKinsey, the implementation of the Commission recommendation on a gradual resumption of Dublin transfers to Greece, and the way forward for MedCOI activities. In addition, the Management Board shared its views on EASO's External Dimension activities.

During 2017, particular attention was given to the Commission's legislative proposals related to the reform of the Common European Asylum System, including a focus on the Agency's preparedness for its new mandate. In this context, the Management Board discussed the future mission, values, vision and new EUAA visual identity, as well as the governance aspect and future role and tasks of the Management Board that are expected under the new mandate for the Agency. Furthermore, the Management Board held several discussions on the variation in recognition rates and the country guidance pilot on Afghanistan in view of the Agency's future extended role in this domain.

Several members of the Management Board and EASO undertook a Health and Security Mission to the Greek hotspots and the findings from this mission were discussed and followed up during Management Board meetings.

The Management Board received on a regular basis budget execution reports, weekly updates on the security situation in the Greek hotspots, social media monitoring reports, weekly reports on relocation, queries and query reports, resettlement overviews, EASO vacancy announcements, and weekly and monthly trend analysis reports containing updates on the situation of asylum in the EU. Several Country Intelligence and COI reports were also shared with the Management Board.

II.2 Major developments

Operational activities in the first half of 2017 were largely determined by EU policy decisions made in the preceding years. The European Agenda on Migration⁴, adopted on 13 May 2015, gave the strategic direction and outlined a series of steps that the EU should take to build a coherent and comprehensive approach to reap the benefits and address the challenges deriving from migration. The EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 gave EASO a mandate to support the implementation of several measures in Greece, in particular the admissibility procedure, and subsequent Council Conclusions increased the focus on operational support.

Migration continued to be a key policy priority in the European Union during 2017. Efforts made by the EU and its Member States to manage migration were yielding positive results in the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, rising numbers on the Central Mediterranean route led to the European Commission's 'Action plan on measures to support Italy, reduce pressure along the Central Mediterranean route and increase solidarity' of 4 July 2017⁵. In this context, EASO was prepared to increase the number of mobile teams supporting processing of applications.

On 27 September 2017, the Commission issued a communication to the EU Institutions on the Delivery of the European Agenda on Migration⁶. It noted that the migratory pressure on Italy and Greece remained high, due to the accumulated backlog from the influx during 2016 and first half of 2017. The Commission also reiterated that the assistance provided by EASO to Italy and Greece should continue and, when needed, be further reinforced.

The Commission recommendation on enhancing legal pathways for persons in need of international protection⁷ that was also issued on 27 September invited Member States to resettle in fulfilment of their pledges, in close cooperation with UNHCR and with support from EASO as appropriate.

⁴ COM(2015) 240 final.

⁵ SEC(2017) 339.

⁶ COM(2017) 558 final.

⁷ C(2017) 6504.

Moreover, in the abovementioned communication, the Commission invited EASO to coordinate a pilot project on private sponsorship schemes with interested Member States and engaging a wide variety of relevant civil society organisations, international organisations, and potential private sponsors in cooperation with the Member States.

By the end of September 2017, over 29,000 persons had been relocated under an EU-coordinated effort that started in 2015 thus contributing to significantly reducing the pressure on the asylum systems of Italy and Greece. As the Council Decisions of 2015 applied to migrants in clear need of international protection arriving in the territory of Italy and Greece until 26 September 2017, there was an immediate priority to ensure that all the remaining eligible persons were relocated swiftly. The Commission communication called upon EASO to continue providing and, when needed, further reinforce assistance to Italy and Greece.

The significant increase in EASO's operational activities required additional financial resources that were made available by the Commission in the third quarter of 2017. These resources were allocated to key areas, namely to operations in Greece and for increased operational support to Italy in the context of the action plan for the Central Mediterranean.

The re-organisation of the Agency agreed by the Management Board in 2016 continued to be implemented during 2017 with the recruitment of new staff and the appointment of new managers.

II.3 Budgetary and financial management

II.3.1 Implementation of appropriations

The distribution of appropriations by budget title, the rate of implementation and type of funds are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Revenue in 2017

Details relating to the initial budget as voted and each of the two amending budgets in 2017 are provided in Annex VI.

Budget line	Description	Voted Budget (€)	Total amendments during 2017 (€)	Final actual appropriations (€)
2000	EU Contribution (Commission subsidy - Titles 1, 2 and 3)	69,206,000.00	6,170,000.00	75,376,000.00
3000	Associate countries contributions	-	3,805,492.17	3,805,492.17
4000	Other contributions	-	0.00	0.00
5000	Administrative operations and miscellaneous income	-	3,989.52	3,989.52
	Total revenue	69,206,000.00	9,979,481.69	79,185,481.69

- **Budget execution of income appropriations per fund source**

Income appropriations					
Budget title	Fund source	Description	Current budget (€)	Revenue received (€)	Remaining balance (€)
2	IC1	EU contribution (Commission subsidy - titles 1, 2 and 3)	75,376,000.00	75,376,000.00	0.00

Income appropriations					
Budget title	Fund source	Description	Current budget (€)	Revenue received (€)	Remaining balance (€)
3	IR1	Associate countries contributions	3,805,492.17	3,833,174.57	0.00
4	IR1	Other contributions		399,882.44	0.00
	IR11			2,247.73	0.00
	IC4	Miscellaneous income		7,938.30	0.00
5	IC1	Administrative operations	3,989.52	7,012.36	0.00
	IC1	Miscellaneous income		14,922.00	0.00
	IC4			1,555.07	0.00
		Total income	79,185,481.69	79,642,732.47	0.00

Notes:

1. Miscellaneous income was not budgeted.
2. Title 5 administrative operations includes income from interest.
3. All miscellaneous income relates to recovery of expenses.

- **Associate countries' contributions**

- **Principality of Liechtenstein**

The European Union signed an arrangement with the Principality of Liechtenstein for its participation in EASO's activities, which entered into force on 1 January 2016. Pursuant to Article 3.1 of the Arrangement, Liechtenstein will contribute an annual sum to EASO calculated in accordance with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a percentage of the GDP of all participating States in accordance with a formula laid down in Annex. For 2017, the contribution agreed by EASO and the Principality of Liechtenstein amounted to €27,682.40.

- **Kingdom of Norway**

The European Union signed an arrangement with the Kingdom of Norway for its participation in EASO's activities, which entered into force on 1 June 2014. Pursuant to Article 3.1 of the Arrangement, Norway will contribute an annual sum to EASO calculated in accordance with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a percentage of the GDP of all participating States in accordance with a formula laid down in Annex. For 2017, the contribution agreed by EASO and the Kingdom of Norway amounted to €1,333,386.03.

- **Swiss Confederation**

The European Union signed an arrangement with the Swiss Confederation for its participation in EASO's activities, which entered into force on 1 March 2016. Pursuant to Article 3.1 of the Arrangement, Switzerland will contribute an annual sum to EASO calculated in accordance with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a percentage of the GDP of all participating States in accordance with a formula laid down in Annex. For 2017, the contribution agreed by EASO and Switzerland amounted to €2,472,106.14.

- **Grants**

- **EMAS grant**

On 18 March 2016, the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan was adopted. The plan foresaw a number of new activities for EASO implying an exponential increase of the operational expenditure for the Agency, well above any previous budget estimates.

To cover those costs, on 6 June 2016 an Emergency Assistance (EMAS-AMIF) agreement⁸ between EASO and the European Commission was signed and a pre-financing of €19.95 M was incorporated in the EASO budget via a budget amendment (Amendment 2/2016).

On 12 October 2017 the final amount of the grant was established at €8.05 M. EASO reimbursed the remaining amount of €11.90 M to the European Commission on 15 December 2017. According to the European Commission, “despite the low consumption rate of the budget, it is considered that the objectives of the project were met”.

- IPA grant

EASO signed a Cooperation Agreement with Frontex within the framework of a grant agreement with the Commission for the implementation of the ‘Regional Support to protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey, Component 1’ and received €399,882.44 in first pre-financing during 2017.

Expenditure in 2017

In December 2016, the Budgetary Authority decided to increase the EASO initial budget 2017 from €66.2 M, as foreseen in the draft EU general budget 2017, to €69.2 M. Therefore, EASO’s initial budget 2017 adopted by the Management Board on 15 December 2016 amounted to €69.2 M of CA and PA, which were fully financed by the EU subsidy. The budget was amended twice and by the end of the financial year reached a total of €86.8 M of CA and €79.2 M of PA (including *ad hoc* grants and contributions from the associate countries).

All details about the budget as voted and the two amending budgets are provided in Annex II.

Contribution from the general budget of the European Union (EU subsidy)

In 2017 the EU subsidy⁹ increased from €69.2M of CA and PA to €82.98M of CA and €75.4M of PA (CA +20%, PA +9%). EASO implemented 96.88% of the former and 92.03% of the latter.

Budget title	CA budgeted (€)	CA executed (€)	CA (%)	PA budgeted (€)	PA executed (€)	PA (%)
Title 1	16,345,514.13	15,971,138.07	97.71	16,345,514.13	14,999,104.89	91.76
Title 2	7,888,229.12	7,380,070.65	93.56	7,888,229.12	4,641,149.26	58.84
Title 3	58,756,246.27	57,052,930.70	97.10	51,146,246.27	49,735,496.53	97.24
Total	82,989,989.52	80,404,139.42	96.88	75,379,989.52	69,375,750.68	92.03

Although EASO was faced with a situation of pressure stemming from the increasingly high levels of operational activities, the Agency almost committed in full the commitment appropriations and reached a high ratio of payment appropriation execution, particularly as regards the operational budget. The implementation of the contribution from the EU general budget (C1) at the level of CA and PA is considered to be very high, even more so if one takes into account that the EU contribution to EASO budget 2017 is almost €45.9 M higher than in 2016.

The following tables show the overall budget execution in 2017 for all fund sources, including the credits from associate countries, grant agreements and carry overs from previous year(s).

⁸ Grant agreement reference number HOME/2016/AMIF/AG/EMAS/0037

⁹ C1 credits

In 2017, EASO managed a total of €110.8 M of CA and €86.5 M of PA, executing 93.34% and 87.15% respectively.

Budget title	Description	CA budgeted (€)	CA implemented (€)	CA (%)	PA budgeted (€)	PA consumed (€)	PA (%)
Title 1	Staff expenditure	16,998,943.47	16,455,062.40	96.80	16,998,943.47	15,416,530.12	90.69
Title 2	Infrastructure and operating expenditure	12,172,442.95	11,062,905.77	90.88	12,172,442.95	7,570,047.11	62.19
Title 3	Operational expenditure	79,084,581.94	73,465,416.40	92.89	54,777,254.15	50,222,930.45	91.69
Title 4	Other external projects (grants)	2,561,238.73	2,451,451.98	95.71	2,561,238.73	218,114,745	85.16
	Total expenditure (including carry overs)	110,817,207.09	103,434,836.55	93.34	86,509,879.30	75,390,655.13	87.15

The following tables show the budget execution per budget title and fund source for CA and PA. The fund sources are:

C1: funds from the EU general budget;

C4: amounts recovered in 2017;

C5: amounts recovered in previous years;

C8: automatic carry overs from previous year(s);

R0: associate countries' contributions and grants.

• **Budget execution of commitment appropriations per fund source**

Budget title	Fund Source	CA budgeted (€)	CA implemented (€)	CA (%)
Title 1 – Staff expenditure	C1	16,345,514.13	15,971,138.07	97.71
	C8	437,208.40	337,442.99	77.18
	R0	216,220.94	146,481.34	67.75
Total Title 1		16,998,943.47	16,455,062.40	96.80
Title 2 – Infrastructure and operating expenditure	C1	7,888,229.12	7,380,070.65	93.56
	C4	1,555.07	1,476.91	94.97
	C8	2,484,820.40	2,243,396.78	90.28
	R0	1,797,838.36	1,437,961.43	79.98
Total Title 2		12,172,442.95	11,062,905.77	90.88
Title 3 – Operational expenditure	C1	58,756,246.27	57,052,930.70	97.10
	C4	7,938.30		

Budget title	Fund Source	CA budgeted (€)	CA implemented (€)	CA (%)
	C5	2,820.00	2,820.00	100.00
	C8	16,694,507.79	15,345,451.43	91.92
	R0	3,623,069.58	1,064,214.27	29.37
Total Title 3		79,084,581.94	73,465,416.40	92.89
Title 4 – Other external projects	R0	2,561,238.73	2,451,451.98	95.71
Total Title 4		2,561,238.73	2,451,451.98	95.71
Total CA		110,817,207.09	103,434,836.55	93.34

- Budget execution of payment appropriations per fund source**

Budget title	Fund Source	PA budgeted (€)	PA consumed (€)	PA (%)
Title 1 – Staff expenditure	C1	16,345,514.13	14,999,104.89	91.76
	C8	437,208.40	337,442.99	77.18
	R0	216,220.94	79,982.24	36.99
Total Title 1		16,998,943.47	15,416,530.12	90.69
Title 2 – Infrastructure and operating expenditure	C1	7,888,229.12	4,641,149.26	58.84
	C4	1,555.07		
	C8	2,484,820.40	2,243,396.78	90.28
	R0	1,797,838.36	685,501.07	38.13
Total Title 2		12,172,442.95	7,570,047.11	62.19
Title 3 – Operational expenditure	C1	51,146,246.27	49,735,496.53	97.24
	C4	7,938.30	1,879.05	23.67
	R0	3,623,069.58	485,554.87	13.40
Total Title 3		54,777,254.15	50,222,930.45	91.69
Title 4 – Other external projects	R0	2,561,238.73	2,181,147.45	85.16
Total Title 4		2,561,238.73	2,181,147.45	85.16
Total PA		86,509,879.30	75,390,655.13	87.15

II.3.2 Commitments for actions extending for more than one financial year

Not applicable.

II.3.3 Budget transfers

Article 27 of EASO's Financial Regulation states:

"1. The Executive Director may transfer appropriations:

a) From one title to another up to a maximum of 10% of the appropriations for the year shown on the line from which the transfer is made;

b) From one chapter to another and from one article to another without limit.

...

"4. The Executive Director shall inform the Management Board as soon as possible of all transfers made..."

In 2017, 15 budget transfers were executed, of which 13 were within budget titles and two between titles.

More details on budget transfers are provided in Annex II.

II.3.4 Amending budgets

The initial EASO budget 2017 was adopted on 15 December 2016 and amounted to €69.2 M corresponding to the EU subsidy.

EASO amended its budget twice during the year. The associate countries' contribution and revenue from bank interest amounting to €3.8 M was adopted by the Management Board on 13 June 2017.

The operational environment continued to be dynamic during 2017 with ever-increasing EASO activities. The high level of activity in the area of migration once again placed an unforeseen strain on EASO's operational budget (Title 3). Following a detailed mid-year review of the budget conducted in June, the outcome was a shortfall in funds for operational expenditure. A second amendment was adopted by the Management Board on 15 September 2017 to include €13.78 M in CA and €6.17 M in PA, as additional contribution from the EU Budget.

Details of budget amendments in 2017 are provided in Annex II.

II.3.5 Appropriations carried forward from 2017 to 2018

Automatic carry forward are appropriations that were committed in previous year(s) and not paid by 31 December 2017.

The total amount carried forward from 2017 to 2018 is €26.4 M in CA and €3.7 M in PA.

As commitments carried forward on Title 3 refer to differentiated appropriations, only the CA are automatically carried over whereas PA are cancelled. Payments under differentiated appropriations will consume 2018 PA.

The fact that additional C1 funds were made available to EASO in the second budget amendment in mid-September justifies the cancellation of appropriations. The main cancellation of CA was on Title II where, contrary to what was expected, EASO did not manage to reach an agreement in 2017 with Transport Malta, the owners of the headquarters, for the lease of additional premises within the complex. This had a direct impact not only on rental costs but also on other related costs, such as building maintenance and security.

Overview of Automatic carry-forward (C8) per budget title

Budget Title	CA budgeted (€)	PA budgeted (€)
Title 1	972,033.18	972,033.18
Title 2	2,740,398.30	2,740,398.30
Title 3	22,663,826.55	0.00
Total	26,376,258.03	3,712,431.48

II.3.6 Appropriations carried forward from 2016 to 2017

EASO carried forward €19.6M from 2016 and paid 90.36% of this amount in 2017. An amount of €201,265.36 was carried forward again to 2018.

II.3.7 Procurement types (Procurement)

In 2017, EASO launched the types of procurement procedures listed in the table below. There has been a significant reduction in direct awards (9.5% of the total) during 2017 compared with 34.7% exceptionally negotiated procedures and 43% direct awards based on recorded exceptions reported in 2016.

Type of procedure	Number	Percentage (%)
Open	19	9.5
Negotiated below €135,000	11	5.5
Negotiated below €60,000	19	9.5
Negotiated below €15,000	65	32.5
Payment against invoice (<€1,000)	60	30
Competitive procedure with negotiation (RAP Article 135)	2	1
Negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice (RAP Article 134)	5	2.5
Direct award based on recorded exception ¹⁰	19	9.5
Total	200	100

II.3.8 Interest on late payments

In 2017, EASO processed 8,380 payments, of which 1,945 were made after the legal deadline (23%). The late interest for 2017 as reported in the draft financial statements is €10,010.96 on 13 invoices booked in 2017.

The budget 2017 increased from an initial €69.2M to €79.2M (in PA). As a result of the increase on the operational activities of EASO in 2017 compared to 2016, the table below shows how this increase exponentially led to a significant increase in the number of financial transactions to be processed..

¹⁰ Refer to section IV.1 for more details on exceptions in 2017.

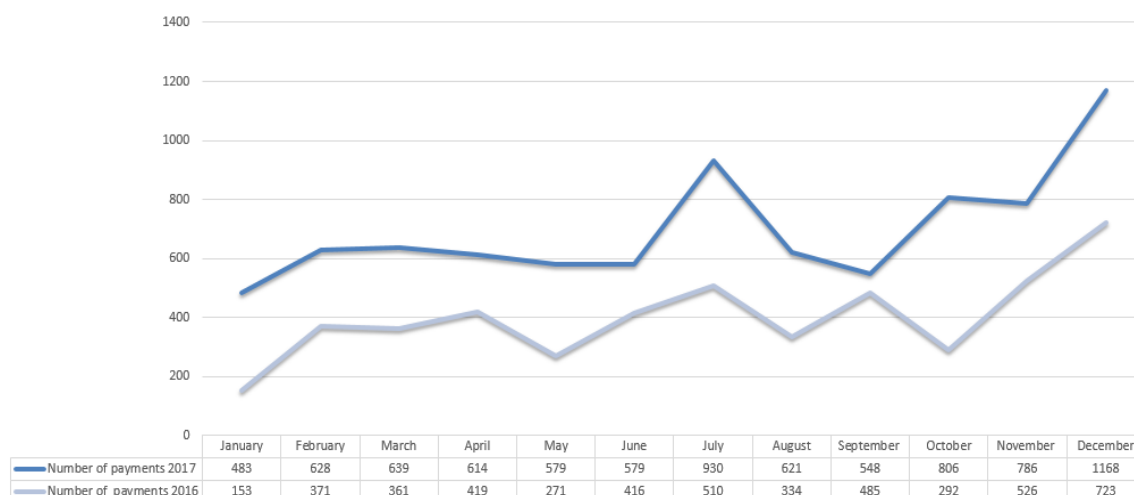


Figure 1: Monthly distribution of payments made in 2016 and in 2017.

Following the corrective action instituted for late payment on second half of 2017, there have been positive results in the last quarter 2017. The following actions were taken in the third and fourth quarters of 2017 to decrease the rate of late payments, particularly:

- Updating of the nomination and delegation procedure with updated nominated back-ups;
- Development of new checklists (e.g. for experts reimbursement, mission expenses);
- Improved reporting on monitoring of payment and budget execution;
- Reporting on payment files waiting between different actors;
- Daily monitoring of timeliness of invoices;
- Establishment of an internal Payments Committee and agreement of maximum throughput times for each step;
- A flat rate system for the simplification of reimbursements to candidates attending interviews;
- IT system for missions management upgraded and implemented;
- Based on a partial risk assessment of some financial transactions implemented by EASO Finance and Procurement Unit in the second half of 2017, the Agency concluded that, for some transactions in which ex-ante risk is low (even if ex-post risk is subsequently high) the verification and authorisation might be accomplished in EASO by the Responsible Authorising Officer and some financial circuits were simplified accordingly.

Monthly statistics on late payments in 2017 are provided in the table below.

Month	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
Payments	483	629	639	614	577	579	930	621	548	806	786	1,168	8,380
Late payments	312	313	123	249	116	103	274	96	90	74	84	111	1,945
% Late payments	65%	50%	19%	41%	20%	18%	29%	15%	16%	9%	11%	10%	23%

The increase in the budget in recent years has led in parallel to an increase in the number of payment transactions: from 4,861 payments in 2016 to 8,381 in 2017. The table below shows how despite this increase on the number of transactions, the measures taken on the second half of 2017 led to a significant decrease the rate of late payments, particularly in October, November and December 2017.

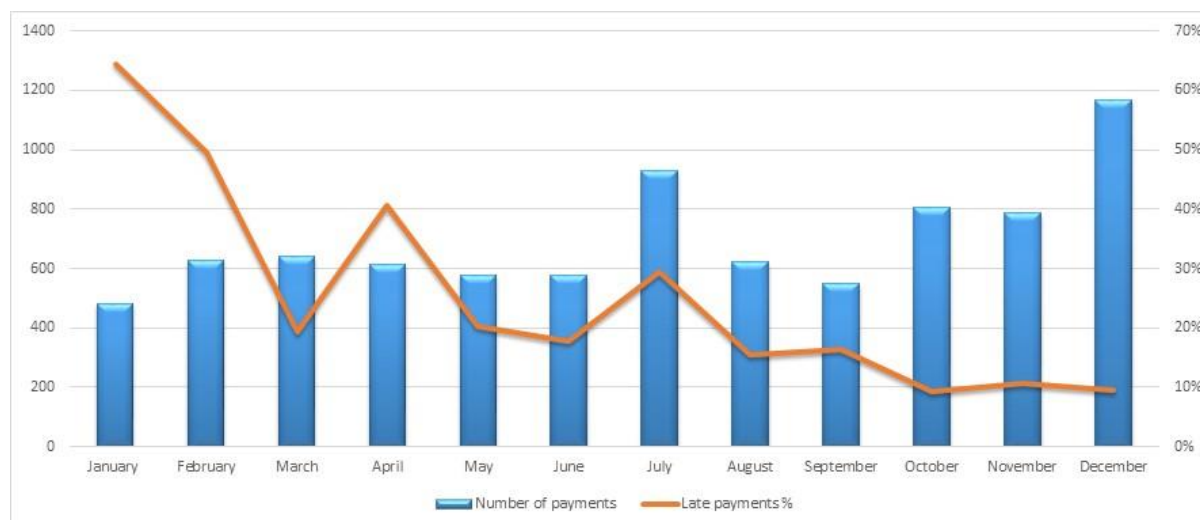


Figure 2: Monthly distribution of payments made in 2017 versus percentage of late payments.

II.3.9 Budgetary operations in 2017

EASO's budgetary operations in 2017 are reported above and in Annex VI.

II.4 Human resources management

II.4.1 Major developments

EASO's internal organisational structure is described in the introduction to this report.

64 new Establishment Plan posts for EASO in 2017 were approved by the Budgetary Authority. The Agency concluded 36 recruitment procedures in 2017, and several competitions for posts foreseen in the 2017 Establishment Plan are being finalised in 2018.

During 2017, EASO prioritised recruitment of managers to continue to fill vacant positions in the organisational chart. One Head of Department, three Heads of Unit and five Heads of Sector were appointed. Moreover, six staff members were appointed ad interim managers pending the launch of recruitment procedures to fill the vacancies.

On 31 December 2017, EASO had 198 staff members appointed and in service, 125 of whom were Temporary Agents, 68 Contract Agents and 5 Seconded National Experts. 27 nationalities were represented at the end of 2017. The top six nationalities were Italian (16%), Greek (12%), Belgian (10%), Maltese (9%), Polish (7%) and French (6%). The gender balance was 55% female and 45% male staff members.

The Agency has signed agreements with private/international schools in Malta to compensate for the lack of a European School in Malta. In November 2013, The Management Board adopted a Decision on the EASO contribution to school fees for children attending a private/international school in Malta and to support their integration in the local environment. The Decision foresees the provision of adequate financial support to staff members whose children attend these schools. At the end of 2017, EASO had ten service level agreements in place with education establishments offering pre-school care and six agreements with primary and secondary schools in Malta. In addition, two agreements were signed in other places of employment of EASO staff other than Malta, namely in Warsaw and Athens.

In accordance with paragraph 28 of the European Parliament's Discharge Report, '2011 discharge: performance, financial management and control of EU agencies' (P7_TA(2013)0134), the number of days of leave authorised to each grade under the flexitime leave scheme is reported in the table below.

Category	Grade	No. of staff in grade in 2017 ¹¹	Total no of flexitime recuperation days in 2017	Average no of recuperation days per staff member in grade
Temporary Agents	AD 16	0	0	0
	AD 15	0	0	0
	AD 14	1	0	0
	AD 13	0	0	0
	AD 12	3	0	0
	AD 11	0	0	0
	AD 10	8	2	0.25
	AD 9	1	0	0
	AD 8	13	1.5	0.12
	AD 7	22	31.5	1.43
	AD 6	23	24	1.04
	AD 5	28	17.5	0.63
	AST 8	0	0	0
	AST 7	0	0	0
	AST 6	0	0	0
	AST 5	0	0	0
	AST 4	3	10	3.33
	AST 3	27	33	1.22
	AST 2	2	0	0
	AST 1	0	0	0
Contract Agents	FG IV	26	22	0.85
	FG III	41	49	1.20
	FG II	3	0	0
	FG I	1	2	2
Seconded National Experts	SNE	4	4.5	1.13
Total		206	197	

II.4.2 Screening/benchmarking exercise

The results of EASO's benchmarking exercise for the years 2016 and 2017 are presented in Annex IV. The distribution of staff resources across the standard job type categories is determined based on staff numbers and the individual job profiles.

In summary, there was a slight increase in the Operational job types' category from 63.3% in 2016 to 64.3% in 2017.

¹¹ Number of staff (206) includes also offered positions as of 31.12.2017 (198 in actual service).

The Administrative support and coordination job types' category decreased marginally from 24.3% to 23.8%. The Neutral job types' category relating to Finance and Control also experienced a slight reduction from 12.4% to 11.9%.

II.5 Assessment by EASO Management

II.5.1 Results of controls performed by staff of the agency on the legality and regularity and the four internal control principles objectives (ex-ante, ex-post, internal control self-assessment, evaluations)

The Executive Director shall having due regard to the risks associated with the management environment and the nature of the actions financed, put in place the organizational structure of EASO.

As of late 2016, EASO started to implement a partial decentralisation of financial circuits for expenditure operations (commitments, payments, etc.) whilst maintaining central financial verification by staff in the Finance and Procurement Unit. Specifically this means decentralisation of operational and financial initiation, operational verification and authorisation, which are accordingly performed within the Departments and Units.

In the course of 2017, the Agency continued to operate a partially decentralised system of financial management where the mandatory ex ante financial verification of each financial transaction was performed by Administration staff. This step in the financial circuits, which is based on the four-eyes principle, is intended to provide reasonable assurance to the Responsible Authorising Officers on legality, regularity and sound financial management of expenditure operations.

As a result of an ex-post internal control self-assessment in 2018, EASO concluded that the partial decentralisation implemented in 2016 was not defined and supported by a comprehensive risk analysis taking into account their cost-effectiveness.

On 21st February 2017, the then Executive Director updated the procedure in place for 'EASO management of exceptions and non-compliance events'. The procedure foresees an ex ante request to be made for an exception that must be supported by identified measures to be taken to prevent recurrences prior to approval. In the case of a non-compliance event detected after an action was taken, an ex post note has to be filed. Exception requests and non-compliance notes have to be approved by the Authorising Officer by Delegation.

However, the Finance and Procurement Unit, found following ex-post checks several significant inefficiencies regarding the exceptions processes and procedures in EASO:

- The process for registration of exceptions reports was not regular as the then Executive Director was not formally approving the reports and therefore not taking final responsibility for exceptions.
- The majority of the exceptions and non-compliance in 2017 covered deviations of contractual procedures.
- The process for registration of exceptions did not guarantee that all ex-ante instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established processes and procedures were documented and justified, duly approved before action is taken and logged centrally. However, the following exceptions and non-compliance events were registered:
 - During 2017, 19 exceptions with a total value of €10,253,929.38 were documented mostly relating to the urgent provision of human resources, goods or services for the hotspots and regional offices in response to the asylum crisis. The total value represents 12.2% of the total 2017 subsidy.
 - During 2017 a total of 76 non-compliance events were recorded with a total value of €1,204,874.57.

As an outcome of the internal control self-assessment conducted in the third quarter of 2018, EASO management concluded on the lack of effective and efficient governance and internal control structures in 2017, which did not receive the attention necessary to provide adequate assurance on the legality and regularity of expenditure operations and of the other internal control objectives in Article 32.2 of the Financial Regulation (sound financial management, prevention, detection, correction of irregularities and fraud and reliable reporting).

Indeed, the results of the internal control self-assessment led to the conclusion that the majority of Internal Control Standards were either not implemented fully or were in progress of being implemented at the end of 2017.

The results of the internal control self-assessment also shows that:

- In 2012 EASO Management Board adopted the Internal Control Standards for effective management. However the compulsory requirement adopted by the Commission for the implementation of the Internal Control Standards were never duly implemented, documented and explained to EASO staff and management.
- Contrary to its Financial Regulation, EASO did not implement an annual internal control self-assessment of the Internal Control Standard for effective management in line with the Management Board Decision N° 17 of 23 November 2012 adopting the Internal Control Standards for effective management and in particular ICS 15 “Assessment of Internal Control Systems”.
- Reporting on the state of implementation of the Internal Controls, particularly on the Consolidated Annual Activity Report, to the Management Board, the Commission, the Budget Authority and the control bodies was not accurate and reliable.
- EASO lacked an internal control framework fully in line with the equivalent minimum standards laid down by the Commission for its own departments which results in a lack of compliance with Article 34 of EASO Financial Regulation.
- On 14 December 2017 the EASO Management Board adopted its Decision 34 on a New Internal Control Framework of EASO. However, the Internal Control Framework was not based on the equivalent minimum standards laid down by the Commission for its own departments:
 - the characteristics were not defined;
 - and the principles were not always aligned with those in Chapter II of Commission Communication on the new version of the Internal Control Framework.

II.5.2 Information on the controls carried out, any weaknesses identified and the actions taken to remedy these

The Executive Director a.i. appointed on 7 June 2018, took immediate corrective actions in the second half of 2018 for all the inefficiencies and weaknesses described in point II.5.1:

- EASO requested a consultancy engagement to the IAS on EASO financial circuits that it is ongoing at the date of this report.
- A Governance action plan including 56 actions has been adopted and communicated to the EASO Management Board.
- In July 2018, the Executive Director a.i. signed a decision concerning the methodology of carrying out a self-assessment of the Agency against COSO 2013 Internal Control-Integrated Framework. This assessment, whilst compulsory according to EASO Financial Regulation, had not been implemented in previous years.
- As an outcome of the above mentioned internal control self-assessment, the new EASO Management has identified 47 corrective actions to immediately address weaknesses in the internal control systems of EASO.

- In accordance with Article 44 of the EASO Financial Regulation, the Management Board will be invited by the Executive Director to adopt a new MB Decision on the new Internal Control Framework of EASO that will repeal EASO Management Board Decision N° 34 adopted on 14 December 2017. The new internal control framework will clearly:
 - allow full compliance with the EASO regulatory framework;
 - foresee the appointment of an internal control coordinator;
 - explain the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved in Internal Control, including the Management Board, the Executive Director, the Internal Control Coordinator and EASO Management;
 - foresee an overall assessment of the functioning of all internal control components at least once a year and report the outcome to the MB;
 - allow to take appropriate action to define the monitoring criteria and baselines for the minimum standards (both principles and characteristics), taking into account their specificities and risks.
- The Agency has also taken immediate action to increase awareness of EASO staff on internal control through tailored training and guidance.

II.6 Budget implementation tasks entrusted to other services and entities

Not applicable to EASO.

II.7 Assessment of audit results during the reporting year

II.7.1 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In 2016 the IAS carried out their last regular audit in EASO (audits in 2017 concerned one fact finding mission and the three year strategic risk assessment exercise) which focused on budget implementation and procurement planning. EASO followed up on the audit recommendations by agreeing on an action plan with the IAS and then implementing this action plan during 2017.

Whereas during the first half of 2017 it seemed that EASO was successfully implementing the agreed actions (an accountant and assistant accountant joined the agency, a procurement planning tool was implemented and key staff was recruited - Head of Sector Finance, Head of Sector Procurement, Head of Unit HR -, many actions concerning late payments were implemented) towards the end of 2017 it became clear that the situation was again deteriorating due to some staff resignations, continued late payment rates as well as the ECA qualified opinion linked to procurement procedures. Hence the IAS decided to carry out a follow up audit to analyse the degree of closure of these recommendations.

The follow up audit by IAS took place during the first week of July 2018 and at the time of writing, EASO was still waiting for the draft report.

In October 2017 the IAS carried out their 3-year annual strategic risk assessment exercise. As an outcome the topics for future audits from 2019 – 2021 were identified as follows:

- IT Governance and IT Project Management
- HR Management and Ethics
- Procurement and Contract Management
- Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of Operational Support Plans

These audits are being planned together with the IAS, the date for the first audit to be carried out in 2019 is still to be decided.

II.7.2 European Court of Auditors (ECA)

In view of the negative 2016 report, the IAS fact finding mission and the OLAF investigation, the Court carried out a higher number and more intensive audits during 2017.

- 04.12. – 08.12.2017 Headquarters in Malta
- 20.02. – 23.02.2018 Athens and Lesvos
- 11.06. – 22.06.2018 Headquarters in Malta

End of July the Court's preliminary observations were received in which the Court recognises the exceptional circumstances under which the agency was still operating in 2017:

- High number of vacancies
- Unprecedented expansion of tasks and activities since 2016
- Significant budget increase (from 19 million in 2016 to 79 million in 2017)
- Increase in number of procurement procedures (87 in 2015 to 140 in 2017)
- Number of payments that increased by 225% between 2015 and 2017

The Court in their 2017 final report provided a clear opinion on the reliability of the accounts as well as the legality and regularity of the revenue underlying the accounts. The report however confirmed the adverse audit opinion concerning the regularity of EASO's payments underlying the accounts.

The report highlights a series of areas that need to be improved amongst which internal controls and procurement. The full report is annexed to this note.

In addition to the formal report, in August 2018 EASO received - at working level - also the detailed summary of findings. These are being used internally to thoroughly analyse the situation especially in procurement and recruitment and to derive improvement actions that will be carefully monitored. In order to ensure that all issues raised by the Court will be considered, a table was produced highlighting all the detailed findings, whether they are being considered by ECA as irregular, if EASO can accept the finding, related actions, status and responsibilities.

In annex to this note, this table, which includes EASO actions related to the ECA reports from 2016 and 2017, is provided to the Management Board for information. Whereas for the 2016 report all actions have been carried out, for the 2017 report discussions are ongoing with management to identify the appropriate actions. The Management Board will be informed about progress on the actions at each meeting. The table does not include follow up from IAS reports since EASO has not yet received the relevant reports from IAS.

II.8 Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits

In 2017, EASO focused on implementing all actions deriving from the 2016 IAS audit on Budget Execution and Procurement Planning. However due to a deterioration in several areas, IAS decided to carry out a follow up audit in July 2018 to evaluate the degree of implementation. At the time of drafting of this report, the findings of the follow up audit were not available.

Following the report of the Court of Auditors on the audit for 2016, a remedial action plan was drafted and implemented systematically during 2017.

Following the publication of the ECA report on the year 2017, EASO elaborated an action plan and presented it to the Management Board in November 2018. The agency will report periodically to the Management Board on the implementation of the plan.

II.9 Follow-up of observations from the Discharge Authority

In the context of the budget discharge for 2016, EASO received the draft report from the European Parliament that recalls the material findings made by ECA in relation to two out of five significant

procurement procedures from 2016 for which payments were incurred during the year. In reference to the investigation by OLAF, the Budgetary Control Committee issued an opinion to postpone granting EASO discharge in respect of the implementation of the Office's budget for the financial year 2016 until all the relevant information regarding EASO's operations are fully known. In this vein, the Committee asked EASO to report to the discharge authority on the measures taken to remedy the issues identified by the Court before 15 June 2018 and called on OLAF to inform the discharge authority of the outcome of the investigation as soon as it is closed in order to include any relevant findings in the 2016 discharge report of the Office.

On 18 April 2018, the European Parliament decided to postpone the discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agency for the financial year 2016.

EASO takes note of the 24 October 2018 decision of the European Parliament not to grant EASO the discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2016 despite the positive vote on the draft Report by the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT) on 27 September 2018, which recognises that the "corrective measures taken to date have sufficiently responded to the reservations presented by Parliament in its decision of 18 April 2018 postponing the discharge".

EASO notes, in particular, the concerns raised with regard to past administrative and financial procedures within the Agency, as the primary reason for the refusal. EASO takes these concerns extremely seriously and has been working hard for several months to address these, in particular through the reforms contained in its Governance Action Plan, which was endorsed by the Management Board in September 2018.

II.10 Investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) visited the EASO headquarters twice, in October 2017 and again in January 2018, in the context of an investigation into several areas of the Agency's functions, including recruitment and procurement. In addition, in 2018, OLAF visited the EASO operational office in Athens, as well as the field operations in Lesbos and Chios.

The EASO Management Board, including the Commission, was informed of the ongoing investigations. The Board immediately requested information and follow-up, and instituted a number of interim measures in exercising its role as the planning and monitoring body of EASO and its responsibilities as laid down in the EASO founding Regulation. Regular biweekly comprehensive reports are being provided to Management Board as of March 2018, focusing on recruitment and procurement.

Through their investigation, OLAF has discovered a number of irregularities, which include the breach of procurement procedures resulting in unjustified expenditure for EASO, mismanagement, the abuse of position regarding human resources issues, harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards staff members, as well as breaches of data protection rules.

OLAF has also addressed recommendations for disciplinary action to the EASO Management Board concerning the Agency's former EASO Executive Director and other members of EASO staff.

The report and possible follow up measures were discussed at the Management Board meeting, during a restricted session, which took place on 26-27 November 2018 in Vienna.

PART II (b): EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Article 46 of the EASO Regulation states that EASO shall commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements. Following the adoption of the terms of reference by the Management Board and the conclusion of a procurement procedure, EY (formerly Ernst & Young) was mandated by EASO to conduct the independent external evaluation of EASO's activities covering the period from February 2011 to June 2014. All activities implemented by EASO, across all the Member States of the European Union, were included in the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation was conducted between October 2014 and July 2015.

In particular, the thematic scope of the evaluation covered EU added value, effectiveness and impact of EASO in contributing to the implementation of the CEAS, including the asylum legislative package. The efficiency and quality of working practices during its first years of operations were also examined. The ultimate objective of the external evaluation was to provide concrete recommendations to address possible changes to EASO's legal framework, structural changes to EASO (without amending its legal framework) and a further increase in practical cooperation amongst Member States, in particular in the field of training, data collection, country of origin information and operational support.

The external evaluators presented their findings and recommendations to the EASO Management Board in January 2016. At that meeting, EASO agreed to develop an action plan to address the recommendations and to report on the state of play of implementation to the Management Board.

Since then the Management Board has been kept informed of progress made on this action plan and the final version was presented at the Management Board meeting held in September 2017.

The next external evaluation of the Agency will be determined by the Management Board. The evaluation report is available on the EASO website.

PART III: ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

III.1 Risk Management

The Agency's Internal Control Standards were adopted by the EASO Management Board in 2012 but have not been systematically implemented since then. On the contrary, the compulsory requirement for each Internal Control Standard were never fully implemented, properly documented and shared with EASO staff and management.

The risk management procedure, established by the Executive Director in 2016, was followed throughout 2017. Risk registers were established by the end of 2016 in order to identify risks related to the achievement of objectives in the EASO Work Programme 2017 and the required mitigating actions. EASO departments regularly monitored and reported on the implementation of the actions. The EASO Management Team discussed related reports regularly throughout the year.

The main risks identified for 2017 were linked to the need for human resources and the expected high workload, as well as the potential inability or constraints of Member States to support EASO activities.



Figure 3: EASO risk management cycle.

In November 2017 EASO carried out its annual risk assessment exercise. In separate workshops, each unit identified its objectives for 2018 and the potential associated risks. These risks were assessed as far as likelihood and impact are concerned and were introduced into a new risk management tool for regular follow-up.

However as a result of an ex-post internal control self-assessment implemented on the second half of 2018 and the ECA report that was received in July 2018 and provided an adverse audit opinion, EASO management identified significant inefficiencies on the internal controls that may involve critical risks that may adversely impact the achievement of the EASO political, strategic and operational objectives, including lost opportunities. These inefficiencies and the linked risks were not always documented in the central EASO risk register and therefore actions for mitigation may have not been implemented and monitored properly.

A description of all these inefficiencies is detailed in point III.2 of the present CAAR.

III.2 Compliance and effectiveness of Internal Control Standards

III.2.1 Methodology applied for assessment of the compliance and effectiveness of the ICS

The assessment focused on the state of implementation in 2017 of EASO Internal Control Standards (as approved by the MB in 2012¹²) and their compulsory minimum requirements as approved by the Commission.

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the methodology approved by the ED in July 2018¹³ against COSO 2013 Internal Control-Integrated Framework and comprised:

- A **preliminary survey** was carried by the Head of Finance to acquire knowledge and understanding of the internal control regulatory framework in EASO. Based on this preliminary review a methodology was proposed to EASO ED by Finance in July 2018.
- A **Desk review** was conducted of supporting documents and internal control inefficiencies already documented by the Finance Sector as an output of the financial verification function.
- **Analysis of EASO** implementation of the **Internal Control Standards assessment criteria** defined in Article three of EASO/ED/2018/207, including an analysis of the materiality of "exceptions reporting" and an assessment of key controls of the Office's control systems.
- **Feedback** from EASO staff during **Finance Info Sessions**.
- **Meetings** lead by the Head of Finance with key staff supporting the set-up and functioning of internal control processes and procedures. The following functions and/or Units were involved in the assessment meetings:
 - Executive Director a.i. and the Management Team
 - Quality Management Officer
 - Communications & Stakeholders Unit staff
 - Head of Executive Office a.i.
 - Accounting Officer
 - Career Development Sector staff
 - Payroll & Entitlement Sector staff
 - ICT Unit staff and Document Management Officer
 - Head of Procurement Sector
 - Head of Operations Unit
 - Head of Security Sector
 - Finance Sector staff
- **Preparation of the report and identification of corrective actions.** Based on the draft proposal from the Head of Finance Sector, the Management Team has produced, discussed and agreed on the final report including corrective actions (see Annexe 1). The inefficiencies and corrective actions have been agreed and approved unanimously by the EASO Management Team Members. The final decision rest on the AO who is ultimately responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of internal control in EASO. By producing the final action plan, the Executive Director a.i. ensures that the reasons for his/her decisions are recorded for audit trial purposes and on-going monitoring.

¹² Management Board Decision N° 17 of 23 November 2012 adopting the Internal Control Standards (ICSs) for effective management. This Decision included 15 ICSs compared to the 16 ICSs adopted at that moment by the Commission for its own departments.

¹³ EASO/ED/2018/207

III.2.2 Information on the standards with which the agency does not comply yet (fully or partially)

EASO management identified the existence of a critical internal control deficiencies or combination of several major deficiencies in 8 out of the 15 Internal Control Standards and concluded that these 8 ICS were not effective and its implementation had not started. As for the remaining 7 out of the 15 Internal Control Standards a combination of moderate deficiencies were identified and therefore EASO concluded that these 7 internal control standards are partially effective and in progress.

Overall, as reflected in the table below, the results of the internal control self-assessment led to the conclusion that the majority of Internal Control Standards were either not implemented fully or were in progress of being implemented at the end of 2017.

Internal Control Standard	Status 2017
ICS 1 Mission	In progress
ICS 2 Ethics and Integrity	Not started
ICS 3 Staff Allocation and Mobility	Not started
ICS 4 Staff Appraisal and Development	In progress
ICS 5 Objective and performance indicators	In progress
ICS 6 Risk Management	In progress
ICS 7 Operational Structure	Not started
ICS 8 Processes and Procedures	Not started
ICS 9 Management Supervision	Not started
ICS 10 Business Continuity	Not started
ICS 11 Document Management	In progress
ICS 12 Information and Communication	In progress
ICS 13 Accounting and Financial Reporting	Not started
ICS 14 Evaluation of Activities	In progress
ICS 15 Assessment of Internal Control Systems	Not started

III.2.3 The reasons for noncompliance with Internal Control Standards

The following is a summary of the reasons for noncompliance for significant and major internal control deficiencies found during 2017 period per internal control standard for which EASO management team has already put in place a corrective action plan (Annex IX).

ICS 1 Mission

- EASO Units and sectors did not always have up-to-date mission statements which are linked across all hierarchical levels and made known to staff.

ICS 2 Ethics and Integrity

- EASO Staff was not sufficiently made aware of the rules to report fraud and irregularities.
- Adequate protection was not always provided to whistle-blowers
- Adequate measures were not taken to address inefficiencies and irregularities reported by staff

ICS 3 Staff Allocation and Mobility

- Adequate processes and internal consultations were not in place to ensure that recruitment and allocation of staff was always based on EASO's objectives and priorities.
- Staff job descriptions were not always consistent with relevant mission statements.
- Management and the Management Board did not always have sufficient and relevant information about priorities and staff workloads as well as required and available skills.

- The root causes of high staff turnover in some Units/sectors was not sufficiently analysed and addressed

ICS 4 Staff Appraisal and Development

- The former Executive Director did not define strategic training frameworks so that learning and development needs are defined on the basis of the policy goals of the Agency and the staff profiles needed to reach those goals.

ICS 5 Objective and performance indicators

- EASO does not monitor the attainment of some horizontal units objectives throughout the year using performance indicators and adequate reporting tools.
- EASO does not duly report on some horizontal units objectives achievements, expected results and impact in the Annual Activity Report. Some horizontal objectives are not known to staff.

ICS 6 Risk Management

- Some significant risks identified during this internal control assessment process, that may adversely impact the achievement of the EASO political, strategic and operational objectives, including lost opportunities, are not always documented in the central EASO risk register and therefore actions for mitigation may have not been implemented and monitored.

ICS 7 Operational Structure

- In 2017 EASO fully lacked of an effective and efficient control structure;
- Lack of documented and comprehensive cost effective risk analysis to define financial circuits and the controls structure;
- Delegation of authority was not always clearly defined, assigned and communicated in writing, conforming to legislative requirements;
- ABAC access rights were not always updated and in line with delegation and nominations;
- Non statutory staff was nominated with budget implementation tasks;
- Former ED (AO) did not signed a charter of tasks and responsibilities;
- FVAs had not receive and acknowledged a professional code of conduct; Delegation for "certified correct" was not defined, assigned, agreed and communicated in writing to Operational Initiating Agents;
- Financial nominations and delegations were not duly documented and up-dated.
- Roles and responsibilities of the actors involved on the implementation of financial transactions were not always clear and documented:
- Where additional mitigating controls were need, the former ED did not put them on time and therefore the risks involved were not reduced to an acceptable level;
- FVAs often have a grade lower than FIAs;
- EASO defined the appropriate organisation for management of the information systems it owns. However:
 - Steering committee at EASO management level is yet to be formally implemented;
 - EASO IT Policy was approved by ED Decision (EASO/POL/02) "Policy for information and communication technology" on 25 09 2017. Not all the aspects of this policy have been implemented yet;
 - The EASO Project Management (PM) methodology is generic and very high-level. Therefore, there is room for more detailed PM guidelines and instructions to support PM and to better streamline the project management process;
- Security aspects are not formalised in governance documents such as Working Instructions (WINS).

ICS 8 Processes and Procedures

- The process for registration of exceptions reports was not regular and did not ensure that all instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established processes and procedures were documented and justified, duly approved before action is taken and logged centrally.
- The majority of the exceptions and non-compliance in EASO cover deviation of contractual procedures.
- The Agency's processes and procedures did not always comply with applicable provisions.

ICS 9 Management Supervision

- During 2017 and previous years, management supervision did not cover Internal Control implementation. Significant and material inefficiencies of the internal controls standards were properly communicated by the former ED to the MB.
- There is no ex-post control capacity in house to identify and keep track of main deficiencies, legality and regularity issues and ensure the follow-up of corrective actions linked to ex-post controls checks.
- EASO lacks an internal legal capability function.
- There is no system in place to report internal control weaknesses / inefficiencies other than the exception report.
- EASO lacks of an internal control framework based on the equivalent minimum standards laid down by the Commission for its own departments which results in a lack of compliance with article 34 of EASO Financial Regulation.

ICS 10 Business Continuity

- In the quick growth environment of 2017 and 2018, the limited availability of Human Resources has exposed the agency to an increased risk of business dis-continuity.
- EASO has not yet developed, following in-depth Business Impact Analysis (BIA) a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that is well maintained, exercised and revised regularly, at least once a year.

ICS 11 Document Management

- EASO Record Retention and Disposal Policy was not yet formally approved in 2017.
- Since EASO does not have a central and common physical paper archive, there are no conditions for adequately protecting EASO paper documents. Moreover, some archive rooms do not include protection against fire destruction.
- No formal rules have been yet developed regarding how to handle non-classified sensitive information.

ICS 12 Information and Communication

- In 2017 there was no internal communication plan to guarantee and ensure that staff is duly informed of decisions, activities projects and operations.
- The Department/Unit meetings were not always duly documented in formal minutes
- Reports of the Management Team meetings were not made available to all the staff
- Information from key external meetings and documentation therefrom is not often shared with the relevant Sectors/Units.
- During 2016, 2017 and the first part of 2018 the MB was not informed of the lack of EASO control structure and the significant inefficiencies of the internal control. On the contrary, the information reported did not always reflect the reality.
- EASO Staff was not appropriately informed and made aware of internal control standards and its requirements in order to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and efficiently

ICS 13 Accounting and Financial Reporting

- The assessment found that Authorising Officers did not always ensure reliable and complete internal control, financial and accounting information for the production of financial management reports. Particularly, financial and internal controls information provided in the

Annual Activity Report 2016 was not always accurate and in line with applicable rules and provisions.

- Financial actors did not have always the necessary skills and experience in the accounting and financial fields.

ICS 14 Evaluation of Activities

- N/A

ICS 15 Assessment of Internal Control Systems

- The former Executive Director did not assess and document the effectiveness and efficiency of EASO's internal control systems.
- As a result the state of implementation of the Internal Control was never duly presented in the agency's Consolidated Annual Activity Report.
- Internal Control Standards and its compulsory requirements were not documented, made available and explained to all the staff.

III.2.4 Planned corrective actions to address the situation, including target dates

The EASO Management has identified 47 corrective actions to immediately address the weaknesses of internal control systems of EASO. The status of implementation of the corrective action at the date of this report is as following:

Corrective Actions	Not Started	In progress	Implemented
Status of implementation	5	36	6
	10.6%	76.6%	12.8%

The Agency believes that the first and more urgent corrective action is to set out a new internal control framework that will:

- allow full compliance with the EASO regulatory framework;
- foresee the appointment of an internal control coordinator;
- explain the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved in Internal Control, including the Management Board, the Executive Director, the Internal Control Coordinator and EASO Management;
- foresee an overall assessment of the functioning of all internal control components at least once a year and report the outcome to the MB;
- allow to take appropriate action to define the monitoring criteria and baselines for the minimum standards (both principles and characteristics), taking into account their specificities and risks.

In accordance with Article 44 of the EASO Financial Regulation, the Management Board will be invited to adopt a new MB Decision on the new Internal Control Framework of EASO that will repeal EASO Management Board Decision N° 34 adopted on 14 December 2017. This is necessary to ensure full alignment of EASO internal control framework with the standards as laid down by the Commission.

In addition, EASO will monitor and report to MB on the state of implementation of the corrective action plan.

The planned corrective action to address the situation, including target dates are detailed in Annex IX (Internal Control Self-Assessment Corrective Action Plan).

III.2.5 Information on the standards with which the agency is considered fully compliant (i.e. compliant with all their requirements)

At the end of 2017, EASO was not fully compliant with any Internal Control Standard.

III.2.6 Information on how effectively the standards prioritised in the Work Programme for the reporting year are implemented. This reporting should include the results of the action taken during the year for each "priority standard".

EASO did not prioritise in the Work programme 2017 any internal control standard.

III.2.7 Conclusions as to the overall appreciation of the effectiveness of the internal control system.

The EASO Management Team is of the opinion that the budget 2017 was not implemented in accordance with effective and efficient Internal Control.

The Management Team concluded that during the 2017 period, EASO internal control structures, which fell within the responsibility of the then Executive Director, have not received the attention necessary to provide adequate assurance of legality and regularity.

EASO management has initiated the necessary steps to ensure that compliance is at the forefront and integrated in the culture and conduct of all EASO's activities. This includes an objective, honest and frank follow up of the proposed corrective actions contained in the internal control 'self- assessment' report. This is of paramount importance taking into account that during the reference period, and still today, EASO operates in a very dynamic environment where its operational tasks in support of Member States are expanding, its budget is increasing continually, the volume of payments is growing, and the number and complexity of procurement procedures on the rise. This is further compounded by the Agency needs to manage multiple locations without sufficient staff (management and non-management) in place either in headquarters or in the geographically dispersed offices.

PART IV: MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

IV.1 Review of the elements supporting assurance

The following are the main building blocks of assurance identified by EASO in order to provide reasonable assurance on the legality, regularity and sound financial management of EASO budget implementation:



The analysis and assessment by the ED on the efficiency and effectiveness of the above mentioned building blocks of assurance and of any significant weaknesses reported in Part II and Part III of this report will be the basis for the Authorising Officer final declaration of assurance.

IV.2 Reservations

The Executive Director a.i. was appointed on 7 June 2018 which was subsequent to the events described in this Consolidated Annual Activity Report. The Executive Director a.i. did not receive a "testament" (internal, for use of the successor) by the former Executive Director, in which the latter reports on the management of the service for the part of the year when he was in charge.

The former Executive Director sent a draft Consolidated Annual Activity Report to the Management Board in June 2018. The declaration by the former Executive Director provided reasonable assurance except for one reservation related to the materiality of exceptions. However, the Executive Director a.i. found that information provided by the former Executive Director in the draft Consolidated Annual Activity Report was not always accurate and reliable.

An internal control self-assessment was not implemented by the former Executive Director, an OLAF investigation on the former Executive Director was on-going and the decision by the Budget Authority on the Discharge for 2016 had not been taken.

At the time of drafting of this report, the 2017 Internal Control Self-Assessment had been concluded by the Executive Director a.i, the conclusions of OLAF investigation addressed to the Management Board and European Parliament did not grant the budget discharge to EASO for 2016 Budget implementation. In addition, the European Court of Auditors has issued an adverse opinion on the regularity and legality of budget implementation 2017 due to systematic irregularities on procurement procedures and selection processes.

Therefore, the liability of the Executive Director a.i. is limited to what is accepted unreservedly ("bénéfice d'inventaire").

Thus the Executive Director a.i cannot provide reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable internal controls were in place and working as intended in 2017.

As a result, the Executive Director a.i. has decided to introduce an overall reservation for the year 2017 regarding its lack of an effective and efficient internal control framework. At the same time, the necessary improvements and reinforcement measures are being implemented to correct the immediately all the significant weaknesses reported in Part II and Part III of this report.

IV.2.1 Reservation “Lack of effective and efficient Internal Control and Governance structures”

Based on the results of this internal control self-assessment, performed as described in points III of this report, it is considered that the internal control system in place in 2017 did not provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of EASO business objectives with respect of:

- Compliance with rules and procedures;
- Reliable financial and management information;
- Safeguarding of assets and information;
- Prevention and detection of fraud.

From a materiality qualitative point of view, the lack of effective and efficient internal controls is judged significant based on the following criteria:

- significant occurrence of errors in the underlying transactions (legality and regularity) detected during the ex-ante and ex-post controls or the internal control self-assessment;
- significant control system weaknesses and inefficiencies as describe in point 3 of this report for long period (since 2012);
- adverse opinion on the legality and regularity of EASO expenditure operations as outlined by the European Court of Auditors for 2017 period. The systematic nature of non-compliances demonstrates an inadequate internal control system. The combined error from non-compliant payments amounts at least to 7,7 million euros or 10,3 % of the Office’s total payments made in 2017. In addition, based on ECA’s adverse opinion for the previous year, the Budget Authority did not grant the discharge to EASO budget implementation on 2016;
- The outcome of the OLAF investigation that has confirmed a number of irregularities which include the breach of procurement procedures, resulting in unjustified expenditure for EASO, mismanagement, the abuse of position regarding human resources issues, harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards staff members, as well as breaches of data protection rules. This outcome also include recommendation for disciplinary action: to the EASO MB concerning the Agency’s former EASO Executive Director and other members of EASO staff;
- significant reputational risk for EASO staff and MB.

From a quantitative point of view, this reservation is considered also material because the financial impact (monetary value of the identified problem, amount considered erroneous, amount considered at risk) is greater than 2 % of the authorised commitments for the financial year. As a matter of fact:

- During 2017, 19 exceptions with a total value of €10,253,929.38 were documented but not always approved by the AO. The majority of the exceptions and non-compliance in EASO cover deviation of contractual procedures. The total value represents 12.2% of the total 2017 subsidy.
- During 2017 a total of 76 non-compliance events were recorded with a total value of €1,204,874.57.

However, as the process for registration of exceptions reports did not fully ensure that all instances of ex-ante overriding of controls or deviations from established processes and procedures were documented and justified, duly approved before action is taken and logged centrally, the exact quantitative materiality of the reservation may not be calculated.

IV.3 Overall conclusion on assurance

The Executive Director a.i. has decided to introduce an overall reservation for the year 2017 regarding its lack of an effective and efficient internal control framework. Therefore, the liability of the Executive Director a.i. is limited to what is accepted unreservedly ("bénéfice d'inventaire").

This statement is based on EASO Executive Director a.i. own judgment and on the information to his disposal, such as the results of the internal control self-assessment, ex ante controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learned from the reports of the European Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

The mitigating corrective action are described in part III of this report and Annex IX (Internal Control Self-Assessment Corrective Actions).

IV.3.1 Summary analysis of the conclusions of significant weaknesses reported in Part II and Part III with an impact on the declaration of assurance.

Based on the reports in Part II and Part III, it is concluded that for 2017 the Executive Director a.i. cannot rely on the efficiency and effectiveness of the building blocks of assurance described in point IV.1. The following is a summary of the conclusions on the significant weaknesses reported in Part II and Part III with an impact on the declaration of assurance:

- i) Under the former Executive Director internal controls standards were not duly implemented and therefore did not provide reasonable assurance to prevent potential wrongdoings and other unethical practices and irregularities.
- ii) The work programme and the budget 2017 was not implemented in accordance with an effective and efficient internal control. EASO identified critical internal control deficiencies or combinations of several major deficiencies in 8 out of the 15 Internal Control Standards and concluded that these 8 ICS were not effective and their implementation had not started. As for the remaining 7 out of the 15 Internal Control Standards a combination of moderate deficiencies were identified and therefore concluded that these 7 internal control standards are partially effective and their implementation is in progress.
- iii) Even though the standards were approved in 2012 by the Management Board, their compulsory requirements and elements have never been documented, approved and explained to the staff and management. As a result, the majority of EASO staff and management were not aware of the Internal Control concepts and requirements. Without pre-defined and approved compulsory requirements it was almost impossible to implement the internal control standards;
- iv) Roles and responsibilities regarding Internal Control were not agreed and explained to EASO managers and Responsible Authorising Officers. Particularly an EASO Internal Control Coordinator was not formally appointed.
- v) During 2017 EASO lacked of a sound financial process to ensure that all instance of overriding of controls or deviations from established processes and procedures were documented and justified, duly approved before action is taken and logged centrally.
- vi) The assessment of the quantitative and qualitative materiality of the non-conformities and exception included in the register for 2016 was not duly implemented and reported to Management Board on the CAAR.
- vii) The existing control structure on 2017 to ensure legality and regularity of the Agency's underlying transactions, and to prevent and detect fraud and conflict of interest was not fully implemented in accordance with the EASO Financial Regulation. For example:

- a. EASO did not have due regard to the risks associated with the management environment and the nature of the action financed, when putting in place the organisational structure. The establishment of such structure and systems was not supported by a documented and comprehensive risk analysis, which took into account their cost-effectiveness.
 - b. EASO Staff was not sufficiently made aware of the rules on how to report fraud and irregularities. Adequate protection was not always provided to whistle-blowers.
 - c. ABAC access rights were not always up-dated and in line with delegation and nominations.
 - d. Non statutory staff were nominated to perform budget implementation tasks.
 - e. The former Executive Director did not sign a charter of tasks and responsibilities on his capacity as Authorising Officer.
 - f. The majority of Financial Verifying Agents had not received and acknowledged a professional code of conduct.
 - g. As regards financial transactions, delegation for "certified correct" was not defined, assigned, agreed and communicated in writing to Operational Initiating Agents.
 - h. Financial nominations and delegations were not always duly up-dated.
 - i. Roles and responsibilities of the actors involved on the implementation of financial transactions were not always clear and documented.
 - j. Where additional mitigating controls were need, the former Executive Director did not put them on time and therefore the risks involved were not reduced to an acceptable level.
 - k. There is no ex-post control capacity in house to identify and keep track of main deficiencies, legality and regularity issues and ensure the follow-up of corrective actions linked to ex-post controls checks.
 - l. EASO lacked an internal legal capability function.
 - m. There was no system in place to report internal control weaknesses/inefficiencies other than the exception report.
- viii) During 2017 and previous years, management supervision did not cover Internal Control implementation. Indeed, during 2017 and previous years, EASO did not undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of internal control systems at the Agency, including the compulsory annual self-assessment and follow up to internal control standards. As a result the Management Board was not informed about Internal Control critical Inefficiencies which is key for EASO Management to be able to implement its role of monitoring the implementation of EASO internal control systems. As a result the Management Board was not able to provide an opinion with accurate observations and recommendations regarding previous years ED duties regarding the internal control.
- ix) The European Parliament has not granted the discharge for EASO budget implementation 2016. Nevertheless, the declaration of assurance of the Authorising Officer in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016 did not contain any reservations.
- x) As for the control bodies reports, the Court issued an adverse opinion concerning legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts 2017.
- xi) The outcome of the OLAF investigation that has confirmed a number of irregularities which include the breach of procurement procedures, resulting in unjustified expenditure for EASO, miss-management, the abuse of position regarding human resources issues, harassment and inappropriate behavior towards staff members, as well as breaches of data protection rules. This outcome also include recommendation for disciplinary action: to the EASO MB concerning the Agency's former EASO ED and other members of EASO staff.

Declaration of Assurance and Reservations by the Executive Director a.i.

I, the undersigned,

Executive Director a.i. of the European Asylum Support Office,

In my capacity as Authorising Officer for the operating and administrative budget of EASO, I declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.¹⁴

I am not in a position to express an opinion on the assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions because of the significance of the matters described in the Reservation section of this report.

I was appointed Executive Director a.i. on 7 June 2018, which was subsequent to the events described in the Reservation section of this report.

The information in the Reservation section is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the internal control self-assessment, ex-post controls, the OLAF Report, and the lessons learned from the reports of the European Court of Auditors for this year and years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the European Institutions or those of EASO.

Valletta Harbour, 12 December 2018

(signature)

Jamil Addou
Executive Director a.i.¹⁵

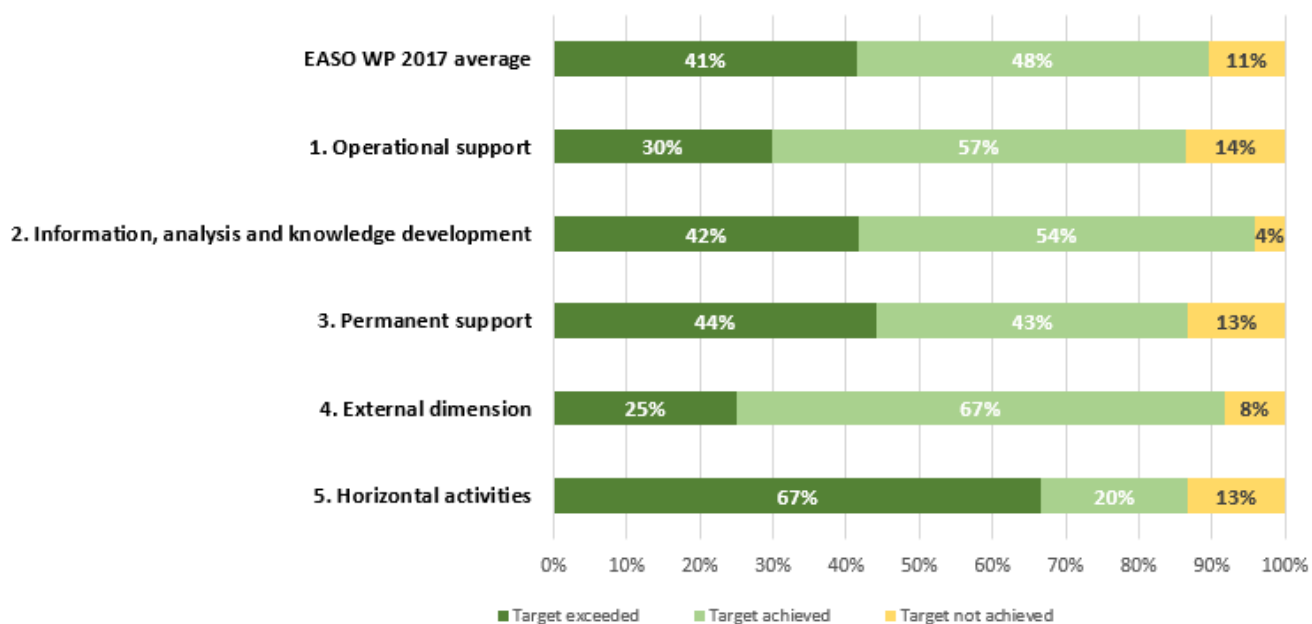
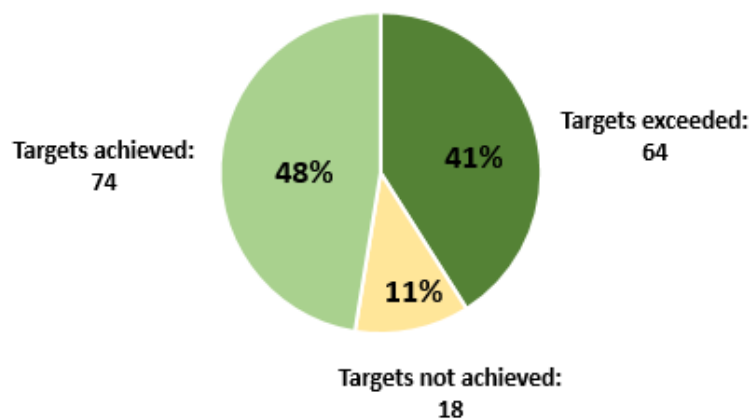
¹⁴ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the Agency.

¹⁵ Mr. Jamil Addou was appointed Executive Director *ad interim* on 7 June 2018.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Core Business Statistics

A detailed overview of the results is provided in Part I of this report.



Annex II: Statistics on financial management

Detailed budget execution per fund source and budget item

1. Funds from the EU general budget (C1)

Title 1

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-1101	9,420,000.00	9,201,471.00	97.68	218,529.00	9,420,000.00	9,201,471.00	97.68	
A-1102	3,229,100.00	3,179,722.20	98.47	49,377.80	3,229,100.00	3,179,722.20	98.47	
A-1103	247,631.44	246,532.50	99.56	1,098.94	247,631.44	246,532.50	99.56	
A-1104	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00		
	12,896,731.44	12,627,725.70		269,005.74	12,896,731.44	12,627,725.70		0.00
A-1201	474,900.00	466,900.00	98.32	8,000.00	474,900.00	410,357.18	86.41	56,542.82
	474,900.00	466,900.00		8,000.00	474,900.00	410,357.18		56,542.82
A-1301	340,000.00	312,170.00	91.81	27,830.00	340,000.00	230,471.50	67.79	81,698.50
	340,000.00	312,170.00		27,830.00	340,000.00	230,471.50		81,698.50
A-1401	111,000.00	81,221.37	73.17	29,778.63	111,000.00	57,821.37	52.09	23,400.00
A-1402	20,760.96	10,929.20	52.64	9,831.76	20,760.96	4,929.20	23.74	6,000.00
A-1403	658,000.00	654,212.91	99.42	3,787.09	658,000.00	415,635.07	63.17	238,577.84
	789,760.96	746,363.48		43,397.48	789,760.96	478,385.64		267,977.84

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-1501	155,000.00	131,904.57	85.10	23,095.43	155,000.00	102,681.42	66.25	29,223.15
	155,000.00	131,904.57		23,095.43	155,000.00	102,681.42		29,223.15
A-1601	1,380,239.04	1,380,239.04	100.00	0.00	1,380,239.04	944,776.17	68.45	435,462.87
A-1602	165,882.69	164,629.43	99.24	1,253.26	165,882.69	100,329.43	60.48	64,300.00
A-1603	140,000.00	139,500.00	99.64	500.00	140,000.00	102,672.00	73.34	36,828.00
	1,686,121.73	1,684,368.47		1,753.26	1,686,121.73	1,147,777.60		536,590.87
A-1701	3,000.00	1,705.85	56.86	1,294.15	3,000.00	1,705.85	56.86	0.00
	3,000.00	1,705.85		1,294.15	3,000.00	1,705.85		0.00

Title 2

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-2101	1,860,000.00	1,508,286.23	81.09	351,713.77	1,860,000.00	1,128,888.08	60.69	379,398.15
A-2102	281,946.04	270,180.73	95.83	11,765.31	281,946.04	159,530.82	56.58	110,649.91
A-2103	818,589.52	818,509.99	99.99	79.53	818,589.52	106,652.40	13.03	711,857.59
A-2104	637,000.00	631,249.06	99.10	5,750.94	637,000.00	224,426.08	35.23	406,822.98
	3,597,535.56	3,228,226.01		369,309.55	3,597,535.56	1,619,497.38		1,608,728.63
A-2201	866,389.81	866,389.81	100.00	0.00	866,389.81	664,503.49	76.70	201,886.32
A-2202	414,453.96	414,158.72	99.93	295.24	414,453.96	324,595.10	78.32	89,563.62
A-2203	791,868.00	791,868.00	100.00	0.00	791,868.00	489,356.08	61.80	302,511.92
A-2204	199,811.92	199,811.92	100.00	0.00	199,811.92	121,747.86	60.93	78,064.06
A-2205	45,000.00	44,998.65	100.00	1.35	45,000.00	23,211.37	51.58	21,787.28
	2,317,523.69	2,317,227.10		296.59	2,317,523.69	1,623,413.90		693,813.20
A-2301	65,000.00	55,719.13	85.72	9,280.87	65,000.00	34,311.31	52.79	21,407.82
A-2302	4,999.87	3,802.00	76.04	1,197.87	4,999.87	3,072.38	61.45	729.62
A-2303	15,000.00	11,575.00	77.17	3,425.00	15,000.00			11,575.00
A-2304	274,000.00	265,524.85	96.91	8,475.15	274,000.00	236,296.01	86.24	29,228.84
A-2305	102,000.00	92,784.97	90.97	9,215.03	102,000.00	56,076.16	54.98	36,708.81
A-2306	310,900.00	310,817.00	99.97	83.00	310,900.00	179,386.00	57.70	131,431.00

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-2307	650,000.00	650,000.00	100.00	0.00	650,000.00	588,550.04	90.55	61,449.96
A-2308	150,000.00	61,178.59	40.79	88,821.41	150,000.00	32,210.32	21.47	28,968.27
A-2309	288,100.00	271,551.34	94.26	16,548.66	288,100.00	162,155.75	56.28	109,395.59
	1,859,999.87	1,722,952.88		137,046.99	1,859,999.87	1,292,057.97		430,894.91
A-2310	8,170.00	8,170.00	100.00	0.00	8,170.00	7,297.20	89.32	872.80
A-2311	105,000.00	103,494.66	98.57	1,505.34	105,000.00	98,882.81	94.17	4,611.85
	113,170.00	111,664.66		1,505.34	113,170.00	106,180.01		5,484.65

Title 3 and 4

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
B3-101	95,320.74	95,320.74	100.00	0.00	117,000.00	90,667.39	77.49	21,072.74
B3-102	631,969.66	631,383.85	99.91	585.81	626,000.00	548,869.34	87.68	276,977.50
B3-103	1,000,709.60	1,000,459.60	99.98	250.00	830,000.00	806,166.11	97.13	307,262.05
	1,728,000.00	1,727,164.19		835.81	1,573,000.00	1,445,702.84		605,312.29
B3-201	2,867,958.00	2,867,958.00	100.00	0.00	2,816,400.00	2,663,483.16	94.57	1,146,634.71
B3-202	1,946,279.00	1,945,436.68	99.96	842.32	1,857,508.00	1,760,869.84	94.80	540,744.69
B3-203	1,124,362.00	965,799.73	85.90	158,562.27	732,362.00	539,356.78	73.65	461,236.74

Budget line	CA budgeted (€) (1)	Executed commitment (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA budgeted (€) (3)	Executed payment (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
	5,938,599.00	5,779,194.41		159,404.59	5,406,270.00	4,963,709.78		2,148,616.14
B3-301	50,672,559.27	49,197,463.67	97.09	1,475,095.60	43,807,976.27	43,027,927.31	98.22	19,645,683.48
	50,672,559.27	49,197,463.67		1,475,095.60	43,807,976.27	43,027,927.31		19,645,683.48
B3-401	152,250.00	132,764.77	87.20	19,485.23	159,000.00	112,025.27	70.46	31,796.00
B3-402	264,838.00	216,343.66	81.69	48,494.34	200,000.00	186,131.33	93.07	30,212.33
	417,088.00	349,108.43		67,979.57	359,000.00	298,156.60		62,008.33
	82,989,989.52	80,404,139.42	96.88	2,585,850.10	75,379,989.52	69,375,750.68	92.03	26,172,574.81

2. Amounts recovered in 2017 (C4)

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-2104	1,555.07	1,476.91	94.97	78.16	1,555.07			1,476.91
	1,555.07	1,476.91		78.16	1,555.07			1,476.91
B-3301	7,938.30			7,938.30	7,938.30	1,879.05	23.67	
	7,938.30			7,938.30	7,938.30	1,879.05		
	9,493.37	1,476.91	15.56	8,016.46	9,493.37	1,879.05	19.79	1,476.91

3. Amounts recovered in previous years (C5)

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
B3-301	2,820.00	2,820.00	100.00	0.00	0.00			940.95
	2,820.00	2,820.00		0.00	0.00			940.95
	2,820.00	2,820.00	100.00	0.00	0.00			940.95

4. Automatic carry-overs from previous year(s) C8

Title 1

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-1201	66,043.09	37,819.49	57.26	28,223.60	66,043.09	37,819.49	57.26	0.00
	66,043.09	37,819.49		28,223.60	66,043.09	37,819.49		0.00
A-1301	22,227.43	9,595.87	43.17	12,631.56	22,227.43	9,595.87	43.17	0.00
	22,227.43	9,595.87		12,631.56	22,227.43	9,595.87		0.00
A-1402	4,800.50	2,828.20	58.91	1,972.30	4,800.50	2,828.20	58.91	0.00
A-1403	196,123.83	177,269.80	90.39	18,854.03	196,123.83	177,269.80	90.39	0.00
	200,924.33	180,098.00		20,826.33	200,924.33	180,098.00		0.00
A-1501	4,150.37	1,155.00	27.83	2,995.37	4,150.37	1,155.00	27.83	0.00
	4,150.37	1,155.00		2,995.37	4,150.37	1,155.00		0.00
A-1601	143,863.18	108,774.63	75.61	35,088.55	143,863.18	108,774.63	75.61	0.00
	143,863.18	108,774.63		35,088.55	143,863.18	108,774.63		0.00

Title 2

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-2101	179,394.88	124,900.43	69.62	54,494.45	179,394.88	124,900.43	69.62	0.00
A-2102	30,267.99	14,432.33	47.68	15,835.66	30,267.99	14,432.33	47.68	0.00
A-2103	190,224.04	149,414.13	78.55	40,809.91	190,224.04	149,414.13	78.55	0.00
A-2105	85,941.94	81,383.52	94.70	4,558.42	85,941.94	81,383.52	94.70	0.00
	485,828.85	370,130.41		115,698.44	485,828.85	370,130.41		0.00
A-2201	547,782.74	527,463.54	96.29	20,319.20	547,782.74	527,463.54	96.29	0.00
A-2202	164,503.04	163,643.44	99.48	859.60	164,503.04	163,643.44	99.48	0.00
A-2203	348,267.62	289,382.62	83.09	58,885.00	348,267.62	289,382.62	83.09	0.00
A-2204	84,743.30	68,699.47	81.07	16,043.83	84,743.30	68,699.47	81.07	0.00
	1,145,296.70	1,049,189.07		96,107.63	1,145,296.70	1,049,189.07		0.00
A-2301	24,661.82	24,661.81	100.00	0.01	24,661.82	24,661.81	100.00	0.00
A-2302	2,300.00	564.73	24.55	1,735.27	2,300.00	564.73	24.55	0.00
A-2303	48,390.00	36,940.00	76.34	11,450.00	48,390.00	36,940.00	76.34	0.00
A-2305	15,510.03	13,153.74	84.81	2,356.29	15,510.03	13,153.74	84.81	0.00
A-2306	202,806.00	202,806.00	100.00	0.00	202,806.00	202,806.00	100.00	0.00
A-2307	402,897.20	392,358.70	97.38	10,538.50	402,897.20	392,358.70	97.38	0.00
A-2308	32,861.85	32,777.02	99.74	84.83	32,861.85	32,777.02	99.74	0.00
A-2309	82,308.33	81,576.75	99.11	731.58	82,308.33	81,576.75	99.11	0.00
	811,735.23	784,838.75		26,896.48	811,735.23	784,838.75		0.00
A-2310	12,560.39	11,394.80	90.72	1,165.59	12,560.39	11,394.80	90.72	0.00

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-2311	29,399.23	27,843.75	94.71	1,555.48	29,399.23	27,843.75	94.71	0.00
	41,959.62	39,238.55		2,721.07	41,959.62	39,238.55		0.00

Title 3

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
B3-101	21,437.83	16,419.39	76.59	5,018.44				0.00
B3-102	225,201.86	217,190.62	96.44	8,011.24				22,727.63
B3-103	144,996.15	115,568.56	79.70	29,427.59				2,600.00
	391,635.84	349,178.57		42,457.27				25,327.63
B3-201	1,037,677.44	963,563.87	92.86	74,113.57				21,404.00
B3-202	395,241.10	377,137.85	95.42	18,103.25				20,960.00
B3-203	54,451.49	34,793.79	63.90	19,657.70				0.00
	1,487,370.03	1,375,495.51		111,874.52				42,364.00
B3-301	14,796,151.42	13,609,720.85	91.98	1,186,430.57				133,573.73
	14,796,151.42	13,609,720.85		1,186,430.57				133,573.73
B3-401	19,350.50	11,056.50	57.14	8,294.00				0.00

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount (€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
	19,350.50	11,056.50		8,294.00				0.00

5. Associate countries contributions and grants (R0)

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount(€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
A-1601	216,220.94	146,481.34	67.75	69,739.60	216,220.94	79,982.24	36.99	66,499.10
A-2101	56,209.61			56,209.61				
A-2102	12,664.60	12,664.60	100.00	98,782.52	12,664.60	12,664.60	100.00	
A-2103	100,000.00	1,217.48	1.22	3,024.75	100,000.00			1,217.48
A-2104	3,024.75				3,024.75			
	171,898.96	13,882.08		158,016.88	171,898.96	12,664.60		1,217.48
A-2201	905,568.15	852,192.58	94.11	53,375.57	905,568.15	468,455.97	51.73	383,736.61
A-2203	345,000.00	342,864.77	99.38	2,135.23	345,000.00	140,838.52	40.82	202,026.25
A-2204	125,000.00	125,000.00	100.00	0.00	125,000.00	24,814.63	19.85	100,185.37
	1,375,568.15	1,320,057.35		55,510.80	1,375,568.15	634,109.12		685,948.23
A-2303	5,000.00	300.00	6.00	4,700.00	5,000.00	300.00	6.00	0.00
A-2305	60,000.00	60,000.00	100.00	0.00	60,000.00			60,000.00
A-2306	165,371.25	23,722.00	14.34	141,649.25	165,371.25	23,722.00	14.34	0.00

Budget line	CA transaction amount (€) (1)	Executed commitment amount(€) (2)	% Committed (2/1)	Credit not used (€) (1-2)	PA transaction amount (€) (3)	Executed payment amount (€) (4)	% Paid (4/3)	R A L (€) (2-4)
	230,371.25	84,022.00		146,349.25	230,371.25	24,022.00		60,000.00
A-2311	20,000.00	20,000.00	100.00	0.00	20,000.00	14,705.35	73.53	5,294.65
	20,000.00	20,000.00		0.00	20,000.00	14,705.35		5,294.65
B3-201	719,924.02	628,779.50	87.34	91,144.52	789,924.02	450,120.10	56.98	178,659.40
B3-202	70,000.00	70,000.00	100.00	0.00	0.00			70,000.00
B3-203	0.00			0.00	50,000.00			
	789,924.02	698,779.50		91,144.52	839,924.02	450,120.10		248,659.40
B3-301	2,793,145.56	332,670.97	11.91	2,460,474.59	2,743,145.56	2,670.97	0.10	330,000.00
	2,793,145.56	332,670.97		2,460,474.59	2,743,145.56	2,670.97		330,000.00
B3-401	40,000.00	32,763.80	81.91	7,236.20	40,000.00	32,763.80	81.91	0.00
	40,000.00	32,763.80		7,236.20	40,000.00	32,763.80		0.00
B4-102	882,670.60	772,883.85	87.56	109,786.75	882,670.60	502,579.32	56.94	270,304.53
B4-103	1,678,568.13	1,678,568.13	100.00	0.00	1,678,568.13	1,678,568.13	100.00	0.00
	2,561,238.73	2,451,451.98		109,786.75	2,561,238.73	2,181,147.45		270,304.53
	8,198,367.61	5,100,109.02	62.21	3098258.59	8,198,367.61	3,432,185.63	41.86	1,667,923.39

Budget transfers list per quarter

Quarter 1

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
21/02/2017	A01601	458,239.04	458,239.04
	A01603	-280,000.00	-280,000.00
	A01402	-49,239.04	-49,239.04
	A01104	-15,000.00	-15,000.00
	A01501	-114,000.00	-114,000.00
21/02/2017	A01601	115,254.00	115,254.00
	A01101	-115,000.00	-115,000.00
	A01501	-254.00	-254.00

Quarter 2

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
05/05/2017	A02201	150,000.00	150,000.00
	A02203	-150,000.00	-150,000.00
06/06/2017	A01603	30,000.00	30,000.00
	A01602	49,882.69	49,882.69
	A01103	-49,882.69	-49,882.69
	A01101	-30,000.00	-30,000.00
30/06/2017	A01601	87,000.00	87,000.00
	A01602	2,000.00	2,000.00
	A01201	195,000.00	195,000.00
	A01101	-284,000.00	-284,000.00

Quarter 3

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
17/07/2017	A01603	70,000.00	70,000.00
	A01101	-70,000.00	-70,000.00
31/07/2017	A02306	-100,000.00	-100,000.00
	B03402	100,000.00	100,000.00
11/08/2017	A02304	52,000.00	52,000.00
	A02101	-478,000.00	-478,000.00
	A02306	-173,100.00	-173,100.00
	A02309	-36,900.00	-36,900.00
	A02103	715,000.00	715,000.00
	A02201	206,000.00	206,000.00
	A02202	17,000.00	17,000.00
	A02203	105,000.00	105,000.00
	A02303	-80,000.00	-80,000.00
	A02104	-156,000.00	-156,000.00
	A02311	-25,000.00	-25,000.00
	A02205	5,000.00	5,000.00
	A02102	-10,000.00	-10,000.00

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
24/08/2017	A02301	-145,000.00	-145,000.00
	A02305	4,000.00	4,000.00
	A01602	21,000.00	21,000.00
	A01501	-21,000.00	-21,000.00
01/09/2017	A02306	-130,000.00	-130,000.00
	A02309	80,000.00	80,000.00
	A02301	10,000.00	10,000.00
	A02305	40,000.00	40,000.00

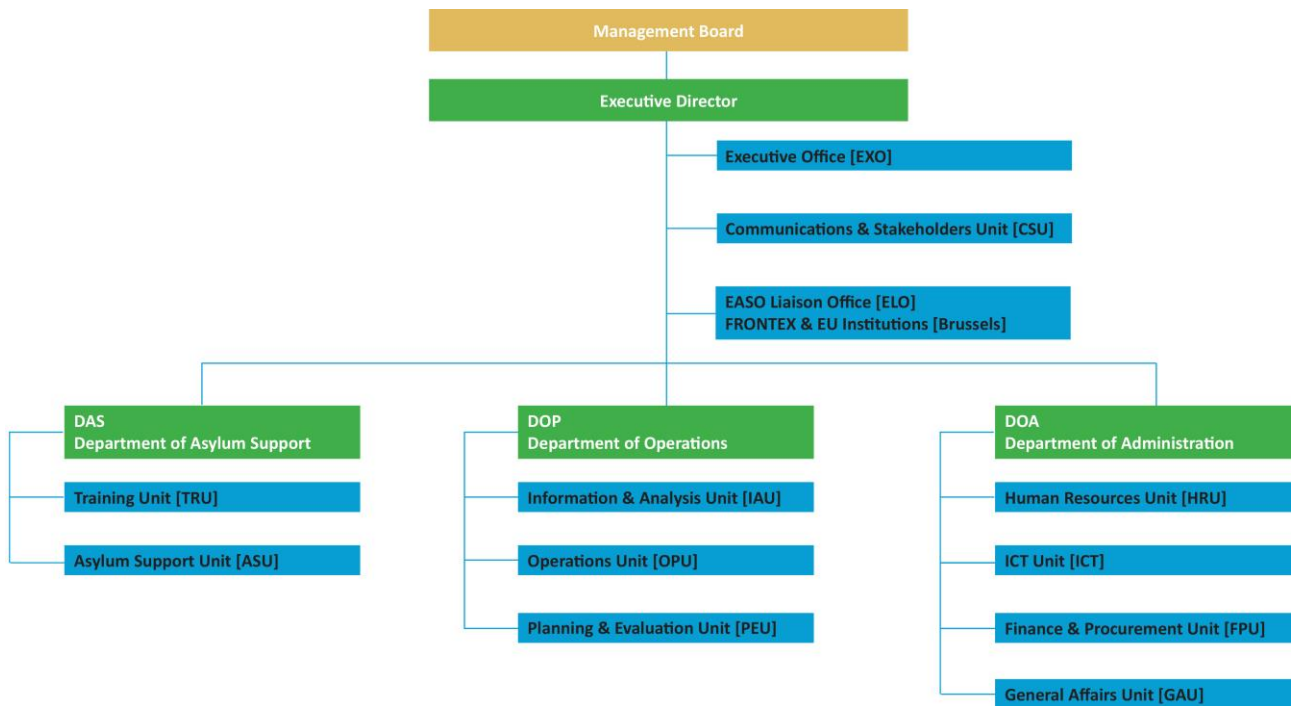
Quarter 4

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
23/10/2017	A02304	-45,000.00	-45,000.00
	A01301	80,000.00	80,000.00
	A02310	-1,830.00	-1,830.00
	B03202	-40,000.00	-40,000.00
	A02101	-448,000.00	-448,000.00
	A02306	-30,000.00	-30,000.00
	A02309	45,000.00	45,000.00
	A01102	257,000.00	257,000.00
	B03103	-100,000.00	-100,000.00
	B03102	-274,000.00	-274,000.00
	B03201	1,135,400.00	1,135,400.00
	B03203	-533,380.00	-533,380.00
	A02103	49,000.00	49,000.00
	A02201	-12,930.27	-12,930.27
	A02203	70,000.00	70,000.00
	B03101	37,000.00	37,000.00
	A01601	-75,000.00	-75,000.00
	A01402	-20,000.00	-20,000.00
	A02104	133,000.00	133,000.00
	B03301	296,240.27	296,240.27
	A02311	10,000.00	10,000.00
	A02205	5,000.00	5,000.00
	A01201	12,000.00	12,000.00
	A01701	-2,000.00	-2,000.00
	A01401	-89,000.00	-89,000.00
	A01103	-71,000.00	-71,000.00
	A02102	-120,000.00	-120,000.00
	A01101	-300,000.00	-300,000.00
	A01104	-7,500.00	-7,500.00
	A01501	40,000.00	40,000.00
24/11/2017	B03202	270,000.00	0.00
	B03301	-270,000.00	0.00
08/12/2017	A02304	-13,000.00	-13,000.00
	B03202	0.00	185,000.00
	A02306	15,000.00	15,000.00

Date	Budget Line	CA (€)	PA (€)
	A01102	-27,900.00	-27,900.00
	B03401	0.00	69,000.00
	B03103	0.00	-120,000.00
	B03102	-45,000.00	-80,000.00
	B03201	45,000.00	338,000.00
	B03203	0.00	-392,000.00
	A02103	-49,400.00	-49,400.00
	A02201	33,320.08	33,320.08
	A02202	47,453.96	47,453.96
	A02203	-33,132.00	-33,132.00
	A02303	15,000.00	15,000.00
	A01602	20,000.00	20,000.00
	A01403	118,000.00	118,000.00
	A02311	20,000.00	20,000.00
	A01201	7,900.00	7,900.00
	A02102	-38,053.96	-38,053.96
	A02301	5,000.00	5,000.00
	A02204	-188.08	-188.08
	A01101	-118,000.00	-118,000.00
	A02305	-2,000.00	-2,000.00
13/12/2017	B03202	-6,500.00	0.00
	A02101	-204,000.00	-204,000.00
	A02306	29,000.00	29,000.00
	B03103	50,709.60	0.00
	B03102	-29,030.34	0.00
	B03201	6,500.00	0.00
	B03101	-21,679.26	0.00
	A01601	10,000.00	10,000.00
	A02104	160,000.00	160,000.00
	A01602	23,000.00	23,000.00
	A01201	-10,000.00	-10,000.00
	A02301	15,000.00	15,000.00
	A01101	-23,000.00	-23,000.00
14/12/2017	B03202	70,000.00	0.00
	B03201	-70,000.00	0.00

Annex III: Organisational Chart

EASO's organisation chart applicable at the end of 2017.



Annex IV: Establishment Plan and Additional Information on Human Resources Management

Establishment plan

Category and grade	Authorised under the Union Budget 2017		Amending Budget 1/2017		Amending Budget 2/2017		Plan at end of 2017 ¹⁶	
	Official	TA	Official	TA	Official	TA	Official	TA
AD 16	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AD 15	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
AD 14	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AD 13	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AD 12	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
AD 11	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
AD 10	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	9
AD 9	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
AD 8	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	11
AD 7	-	41	-	-	-	-	-	41
AD 6	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	11
AD 5	-	24	-	-	-	-	-	24
Total AD	-	107	-	-	-	-	-	107
AST 11	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 10	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 9	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 8	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 7	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 6	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 5	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
AST 4	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	10
AST 3	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	26
AST 2	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
AST 1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Total AST	-	48	-	-	-	-	-	48
Total	0	155	0	0	0	0	0	155

¹⁶ The establishment plan was not modified by budget amendments; no modifications were made during 2017 by application of the flexibility rule.

Entry level for each type of post

Key functions	Type of contract (TA or CA)	Function group, grade of recruitment (entry level)	Administrative support or operations
Head of Department (level 2) ¹⁷	TA	AD 12	- Operations - Administrative
Head of Unit (level 3)	TA	AD 10	- Operations - Administrative
Head of Sector (level 4)	TA	AD 8	- Operations - Administrative
Senior Officer / Coordinator	TA	AD 7 – AD 8	- Operations - Administrative
Officer	TA	AD 5 – AD 6	- Operations - Administrative
Assistant	TA	AST 1 – AST 5	- Operations - Administrative
Officer	CA	FG IV	- Operations - Administrative
Assistant / Coordinator	CA	FG III	- Operations - Administrative
Assistant	CA	FG II	- Operations - Administrative
Assistant / Driver	CA	FG I	- Administrative

Benchmarking exercises

Job type (sub) category	2016 (%)	2017 (%)
Administrative support and coordination	24.26	23.79
Administrative support	22.49	21.36
Coordination	1.78	2.43
Operational	63.31	64.32
General operational	49.70	52.18
Programme management	5.33	4.37
Top-level operational coordination	5.92	4.85
Evaluation and impact assessment	2.37	1.92
Neutral	12.43	11.89
Finance	9.47	9.47
Control	2.96	2.42

¹⁷ Level in Agency structure, where level 1 is the post of Executive Director

Annex V: Human and financial resources by activity

Human resources are expressed as full-time equivalents (FTE).

Financial resources represent the commitment appropriations (C1) by activity area.

Activity	Human resources (FTEs)					Financial resources (€)
	AD	AST	CA	SNE	Total ¹⁸	
II.1 Operational Support						
II.1.1. Italy	4		3		7	15,097,662.91
II.1.2. Greece	9	2	5		16	34,711,027.52
II.1.3. Other EU Member States	1				1	1,665,443.52
II.1.4. Development of support tools for operations	3	2			5	2,231,801.31
II.1.5. Development of support tools for the hotspots and relocation	3	2		1	6	
II.2. Information and analysis						
II.2.1. Country of Origin Information	7	2	1.25		10.25	1,629,199.66
II.2.2. Early warning and Preparedness (EPS)	5	1	3	1	10	1,488,573.42
II.2.3. Information and Documentation System (IDS)	1	3	0.25		4.25	578,790.07
II.2.4. Annual report on the situation of asylum in the EU		2	0.25		2.25	11,052.50
II.2.5. Integration and further development of AIS			1.25		1.25	219,603.75
II.2.6. Research programme on pull and push factors	3				3	50,780.25
II.3. Permanent support						
II.3.1. Training	9.5		0.5	1	11	3,654,134.19
II.3.2. Asylum processes	4		0.5		4.5	1,307,800.05
II.3.3. Activities on vulnerable applicants	3		1		4	
II.3.4. Cooperation with members of courts and tribunals	1		1		2	937,824.21
II.3.5. Dublin Network	0.5		1		1.5	697,749.09
II.3.6. Reception	2				2	
II.3.7. Integration and Return					-	-
II.3.8. Country guidance for convergence	2	1	1		4	278,650.28
II.3.9.a. EASO queries					0	0.00
II.3.9.b. List of available languages					0	0.00
II.4. External dimension						
II.4.1. Third Country support	2			1	3	1,284,592.09
II.4.2. Resettlement	2		4		6	399,349.22

¹⁸ Number of staff (206) includes also offered positions as of 31.12.2017 (198 in actual service).

Activity	Human resources (FTEs)					Financial resources (€)
	AD	AST	CA	SNE	Total ¹⁸	
II.5. Horizontal activities						
II.5.1. Civil society and Consultative Forum	1				1	181,071.26
II.5.2 EASO's communication and stakeholders relations	6	4	9		19	1,132,092.65
TOTAL Operational	69	19	32	4	124	
Other staff allocated to other horizontal/administrative activities	30	13	39		82	12,846,941.47
TOTAL	99	32	71	4	206	80,404,139.42

Annex VI: Specific Annexes Relating to Part II

Revenue in 2017

Details relating to the initial budget as voted and each of the two amending budgets in 2017.

Budget line	Description	Voted Budget (€)	Budget amendment 1 (€)	Budget amendment 2 (€)	Final budget (€)
2000	EU Contribution (Commission subsidy - Titles 1, 2 and 3)	69,206,000.00		6,170,000.00	75,376,000.00
3000	Associate countries contributions	-	3,805,492.17		3,805,492.17
4000	Other contributions	-	0.00		0.00
5000	Administrative operations and miscellaneous income	-	3,989.52		3,989.52
	Total revenue	69,206,000.00	3,809,481.69	6,170,000.00	79,185,481.69

Expenditure in 2017

Details relating to the initial budget as voted and each of the two amending budgets in 2017.

Commitment appropriations (CA)

Budget title	Description	CA			
		Voted Budget (€)	Budget amendment 1 (€)	Budget amendment 2 (€)	Final budget (€)
1	Staff expenditure	16,521,014.13	-	-	16,521,014.13
2	Infrastructure and operating expenditures	8,879,999.87	1,559,557.67	-550,000.00	9,789,557.54
3	Operational expenditures	43,804,986.00	2,249,924.02	14,330.000.00	60,484,910.02
4	Other external projects	-	-	-	-
	Total expenditure	69,206,000.00	3,809,481.69	13,780,000.00	86,795,481.69

Payment appropriations (PA)

Budget title	Description	PA			
		Voted Budget (€)	Budget amendment 1 (€)	Budget amendment 2 (€)	Final budget (€)
1	Staff expenditure	16,521,014.13	-	-	16,521,014.13
2	Infrastructure and operating expenditures	8,879,999.87	1,559,557.67	-550,000.00	9,789,557.54
3	Operational expenditures	43,804,986.00	2,249,924.02	6,720,000.00	52,874,910.02
4	Other external projects	-	-	-	-
	Total expenditure	69,206,000.00	3,809,481.69	6,170,000.00	79,185,481.69

Data protection activities

1. Introduction

In accordance with the obligation laid down by Article 24 of Regulation (EC) 45/2001 on all community institutions and bodies to appoint a person as Data Protection Officer (DPO), EASO recruited a temporary agent as Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO's functions and duties refer exclusively to ensuring in an independent manner that EASO fully complies with its data protection obligations pursuant to Regulation (EC) 45/2001 and all other relevant rules.

The Decision on the appointment of EASO's DPO sets the data protection principles and rules applicable to EASO as well as clarifies role and tasks of the DPO concerning the monitoring and supervision of those rules and principles. It is also required that the DPO shall monitor and ensure that the provisions laid down in the Regulation are applied by EASO. The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) shall in cooperation with the DPO, supervise the Agency's compliance with the Regulation.

The activities and the actions carried out by the DPO during 2017 (since the date of first appointment) in relation to monitoring and ensuring compliance with Regulation 45/2001 and an assessment of the status of compliance of the Agency follow.

2. Data protection awareness

One of the key missions of the DPO is to raise data protection awareness among EASO staff. During 2017, the DPO held awareness sessions for EASO staff in all of EASO's departments.

The training sessions focused on providing staff with general information on the key concepts used in the data protection Regulation, the stakeholders involved, data subjects' rights, areas covered by the EDPS Guidance, as well as how the principles provided by the legal framework can be translated into staff member's daily activities and how to ensure compliance in this field.

3. Other procedures and policies

The DPO provided advice and comments during the drafting of EASO policies on Data and information management and on ICT services. Input was also provided to the drafting of rules on the use of anonymization techniques in order to use data for statistical or training purposes, as well as on shared calendars within the work e-mail system.

4. Opinion and guidance

There are projects involving processing operations that include personal data where the DPO is requested to provide requirements or an assessment. Such cases refer, amongst others, to the use of personal data in electronic human resources systems, various ICT services, CCTV systems and security access control on EASO premises.

Generally, staff members requested the DPO's advice or assessment on these issues at an early stage in process development, sufficiently so that the DPO's input can be taken into account.

5. DPOs Network meetings

The DPO attended the three DPOs Network meetings, including the meeting for DPOs from all EU agencies and bodies and the more restricted group of DPOs from JHA agencies. The themes addressed referred to the changes to be brought by the new regulation applicable to EU agencies and bodies, which will align these provisions with those of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Cases concerning EASO by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in 2017

1. [Case T-129/17 RENV – DI v EASO](#)

Subject matter: Staff Regulations of officials and Conditions of Employment of other servants.

2. [Case T-730/15 P - DI v EASO](#)

Subject matter: Staff Regulations of officials and Conditions of Employment of other servants. Judgment of the General Court (Appeal Chamber) of 2 March 2017.

3. [Case T-610/16 PC v EASO](#)

Subject matter: Staff Regulations of officials and Conditions of Employment of other servants. Action brought on 16 May 2017 (Official Journal of the European Union 2017/C 269/37).

4. [Case T-181/17 AJ - PC v EASO](#)

Subject matter: Staff Regulations of officials and Conditions of Employment of other servants. Action brought on 18 August 2017 (Official Journal of the European Union 2017/C 357/18).

Cases concerning EASO or requests made by the European Ombudsman in 2017

1. Case 2000/2017/MDC

The European Asylum Support Office's (EASO) failure to reply to correspondence seeking information about the cancellation of selection procedure EASO/2017/TA/015

The Ombudsman's inquiry team contacted EASO on 6 December 2017 and EASO replied to the complainant on 18 December 2017.

2. Case 515/2016/JAP

The European Asylum Support Office's probationary assessment of a temporary agent

On 19 May 2016, the Ombudsman opened an inquiry into EASO's failure to reply to the complainant's Article 90(2) complaints and also into its alleged shortcomings in dealing with their assessment. In the course of the inquiry, the Ombudsman asked the complainant for additional documents, sought some clarifications from the EASO and also inspected the EASO file.

On the basis of the inquiry, the Ombudsman concluded on 28 April 2017 that EASO had settled the procedural aspect of the complaint concerning the failure to reply and further inquiries into the remaining aspects of the complaint were not justified. As a suggestion for improvement, the Ombudsman recommended that EASO should act in accordance with the requirement, provided for in its Guide on the assessment of probationary staff, to set the job objectives of new staff members without undue delay.

End of 2017 EASO informed the EU Ombudsman that the guide on assessment of probationary staff is implemented since end of 2015 and that since April 2017 in order to further improve the systematic implementation of the rules described in the guide, a new template for objective setting had been introduced which needs to be signed by the newcomer and reporting officer within one month of the newcomer taking up his/her duties.

3. Case 735/2017/MHZ

EASO's involvement in applications for international protection submitted in the 'hotspots' in Greece

The case was opened by the Ombudsman on 13 July 2017. EASO provided the requested information to the Ombudsman and was informed on 05/07/2018 that the EU Ombudsman based on the information received decided to close the case.

4. Case 1230/2017/EIS

The case was opened by the EU Ombudsman based on a complaint from one person to whom EASO did not grant full access to documents relating to the agency's operational plans, the deployment of asylum support teams and the operational plans at hotspots. EASO acknowledged that this as a weakness in its internal systems and wrote to the complainant to apologise and to inform that corrective measures and procedures had been put in place. A meeting with the complainant was organised and the access to documents granted.

The EU Ombudsman based on the above decided to close the case on 06.08.2018.

5. Case 1646/2017/MDC

Case 1646/2017/MDC was opened by the EU Ombudsman based on a complaint received from a Greek who was not recruited as an interim worker following a selection procedure and EASO's alleged failure to explain the rejection of his application.

EASO has provided the requested information but the EU Ombudsman requested further documentation and answers. EASO is in the process of responding to this request.

Public access to EASO documents

1. Introduction

Article 17(1) of Regulation (EC) no 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001, regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, provides that "Each institution shall publish annually a report for the preceding year including the number of cases in which the institution refused to grant access to documents, the reasons for such refusals and the number of sensitive documents not recorded in the register."

The right of citizens to request and obtain public access to documents held by the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies is an essential part of EU citizenship.

EASO remains committed to the principal of transparency: accordingly, documents that could possibly be relevant to the public interest are already published and accessible on the EASO website. Moreover, access to the vast majority of the documents requested by the applicants are being granted. Applications are being processed favourably and a substantial number of documents have already been disclosed.

In 2017, EASO improved its practice in line with the EC Regulation 1049/2001, i.e. in the event of an application relating to a very long document or to a very large number of documents, or in the event that a clarification related to an unclear request is needed, the Agency proactively confers with the applicant informally, with a view to finding a fair solution, and with intention to meet the needs of the applicant. By maintaining this practice, EASO demonstrates its openness, transparency and willingness to suit the requests in the best possible way.

2. Incoming requests

All the incoming requests for access to documents are treated as a request falling under the provisions of Regulation No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, which also applies to EASO documents, and in accordance with Management Board Decision No 6 of 20 September 2011 laying down practical arrangements regarding public access to EASO documents.

During 2017, EASO received 23 requests for access to documents. There has been an increase in the number of incoming application compared to the previous years, reflecting an increased awareness of the Agency's activities. Most applications for access to documents are processed favourably.

The most frequently requested documents were EASO Operating Plans and requests related to staff selection procedures.

Type of request for access to documents	Number in 2017
Initial requests for access to documents	23
<i>Full access granted</i>	9
<i>Partial access granted</i>	8
<i>Refusal</i>	1
<i>Not applicable</i>	5
Confirmatory requests	3
Complaints to the EU Ombudsman	1
Cases before the EU Courts	0
Exceptions laid down in Article 4 of EC Regulation No 1049/2001	7
Deadline extensions	3

The grounds for partial or total refusal most frequently evoked were exceptions foreseen in EC Regulation No 1049/2001, mainly:

- Article 4(1): public security and international relations;
- Article 4(2): Commercial interests of legal person, including intellectual property;
- Article 4(3): where the disclosure could seriously undermine the institution's decision-making process.

In five cases, the request was not applicable as the requested information was not available to EASO. Referrals to the appropriate authorities were provided.

EASO examined three confirmatory requests. The Agency held informal contacts with the requestor and a fair solution was found.

A complaint to the EU Ombudsman was made concerning request for access to documents (2000/2017/MDC) in relation to a selection procedure. A reply has been sent and the complaint was resolved.

Consultation of a Member State or third parties took place in several cases related mainly to requests concerning Operating Plans.

A deadline extension was applied in three cases due to the requests being related to a large number of documents. The applicants were informed on the extensions in line with the Regulation.

Annex VII: Specific annexes relating to Part III

Not applicable.

Annex VIII: Final Annual Accounts

EASO's Final Annual Accounts 2017 are available on the Agency's website at <https://www.easo.europa.eu/governance-documents>

Annex IX: Internal Control Self-Assessment Corrective Actions

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 1 Mission		
1. EASO raison d'être is clearly defined. Long-term strategic objectives are defined, translated into operational ones, documented and explained to the staff.	Actions Implemented Progress Implemented	Dec-19
2. EASO Units and sectors have up-to-date mission statements which are linked across all hierarchical levels and made known to staff	Actions Every unit should document a clear mission statement, objectives, expected results, performance indicators and updated organizational charts. A process to keep these updated needs to be put in place. Progress A process was started in summer 2018 to support those units that still had not produced their mission statements. This process is ongoing.	Dec-19
ICS 2 Ethics and integrity		
3.a. The Staff is sufficiently made aware of the rules to report fraud and irregularities. The ED, in particular, ensures that his/her staff are aware of relevant ethical and organisational values and the associated rules and procedures.	Actions An administrative Circular "EASO_DOA_2018_199" was addressed to all staff in June 2018, with clear instructions on the obligation and how to report wrongdoing, irregularities and red flags of fraud. The Finance Sector has implemented an info-session to explain the content of the Administrative Circular on July 2018 Progress Completed	Jun-18
3.b. A solid and targeted antifraud strategy is organised at EASO level and known by the Staff.	Actions EASO to amend and adopt (by ED Decision) a revised anti-fraud strategy, to better prevent and detect fraud Once amended and adopted, an assessment should be carried out as to whether EASO is currently in compliance with the strategy, and an action plan should be conducted to ensure full and effective implementation - which will include full dissemination and training on fraud, and EASO's anti-fraud strategy, to staff. During the annual risk identification and assessment exercises, a specific focus on risks linked to fraud will be given.	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
3.c. EASO has procedures in place - including updates and annual reminders - to ensure that all staff are aware of relevant ethical and organisational values, in particular ethical conduct, and avoidance of conflicts of interest, fraud prevention and reporting of irregularities.	Actions Mandatory training to all staff on Fraud prevention and ethics and integrity to be delivered annually in EASO. A section on ethics and integrity to be created in the EASO website. Progress In October 2018, training has been provided for all staff and management on “respect and dignity”.	Dec-18
4. Adequate protection is provided to whistle-blowers	Actions HR shall clearly explain to all the staff through info sessions the rights and obligations of whistle-blowers EASO MT should duly inform staff of the new procedure and assess the need for periodicity of the training. Progress The procedure on protection of whistle-blowers is being updated in order to reflect the new Commission guidance and the proper application of Staff Regulation article 22.	Dec-18
5. Enough is done by management to facilitate the practical application of ethical guidance.	Actions An EASO Code of Conduct is currently under preparation for Quarter 4 2019 Ethics guidance must be made more effective in this domain with increased training. Particularly, EASO should offer confidential and impartial guidance and support for (potential) whistle-blowers. An Ethics correspondent / Compliance function should be created in EASO. Progress MT is considering actions to create easily accessible and secure channels for staff to report in a confidential way alleged wrongdoings.	Dec-19
6. Adequate measures have been taken to address inefficiencies and irregularities reported by staff	Actions EASO should transpose the guidance from Communications of the Commission on the roles and responsibilities so that all RAOs regarding measures that have to be taken to address inefficiencies and irregularities reported by staff. Adequate supervision arrangements needs to be defined to guarantee that corrective action are duly implemented. Indication of measures to prevent recurrence of cases of conflict of interest, irregularities and fraud needs to be documented in the SPD.	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 3 Staff Allocation and Mobility		
7. Recruitment and allocation of staff is always to be based on EASO's objectives and priorities. Particularly: d. Management aligns the organisational structures and staff allocations with priorities and workload e. Adequate arrangements in place to ensure effective staff planning and allocation	Actions In the context of the preparation of the draft SPD 2019-2021, an internal consultation on human resource planning has been initiated to align the information from the work programme 2019 with the reality of the staffing foreseen for the different activities. Progress 53 offer letters have been sent to candidates on existing reserve lists have been sent between June and August 2018. A recruitment plan has been designed and launched in August 2018 including 29 vacancies to be published by January 2019. It is expected that with the conclusion of this recruitment drive the staffing situation in EASO would be approximately of 270 staff members, i.e. 90% implementation of the establishment plan 2018.	Dec-18
8. Staff job descriptions are consistent with relevant mission statements	Actions HR to review the quality of all EASO job descriptions and particularly old ones and up-date those with accurate and reliable tasks and roles assigned to the jobholder. At the same time a staff policy plan should be implemented where the posts and functions in EASO should be described and aligned with the needed competences and skills. Particularly, all the inconsistencies among grades should be assessed and an action plan for correction to medium term should be provided by HR to the Executive Director a.i.	Dec-19
9. Management and the MB have sufficient and relevant information about priorities and staff workloads as well as required and available skills. The possible loss of knowledge adequately managed	Actions EASO is providing bi monthly reports with comprehensive information in line with MB Decision 35. The Executive Director a.i. reports on progress made on the implementation of MB Decision 35 at every Preparatory Group and Management Board meetings. Moreover, on a weekly basis, the Executive Director a.i. requests the endorsement of the Chair of the Management Board on staff to be recruited, vacancy notices to be published and confirmation of probation periods of staff. The Governance Action Plan includes measures to reinforce the finance sector in line with action 147.	Sep-18
10. Staff turnover is sufficiently monitored and analysed. Particularly the root causes of any abnormal staff turnover is sufficiently analysed and addressed	Actions HR to assess and monitor the rationale behind the high staff turnover in certain sectors Progress The staff satisfaction survey has been used to assess the overall turnover reasons in EASO. A staff engagement plan has been presented on 2 July 2018. The plan includes several measures and actions aimed at making EASO staff feel more part of the organisation and to have a higher level of satisfaction from their work.	Jun-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 4 Staff Appraisal and Development		
11. Staff performance is appraised according to clear rules and instructions set by HR department. Particularly: f. As part of the appraisal dialogue and report, the learning and development needs of staff are discussed and recorded g. Discussions are held on time and managers provide on time to HR quality and complete reports h. Discussions are held individually with staff to establish their annual objectives, which fit with the Unit's objectives; i. Also staff performance for staff in probation is appraised according to clear rules and instructions set	Actions HR SOPs will be developed in 2018 in order to improve the process for reclassification and appraisal exercises and implemented during 2019. HR will organise at the end 2018 additional workshops in order to improve the general culture for appraisal addressed to both staff and reporting officers. Progress An electronic on-line system for the appraisal exercise is to be developed in 2018 in order to help with the deadlines for the appraisal process (HR has already started and contacted one contractor and the project should be ready to start the new appraisal exercise in 2019).	Dec-19
12. Management has defined strategic training frameworks so that Learning and development needs are defined on the basis of the policy goals of the Agency and the staff profiles needed to reach those goals. Every staff member attends at least the training courses of a compulsory nature as defined in the strategic frameworks	Actions A training framework (the training learning path) to be developed at the level of all functions in EASO as part of the competences matrix effort. Staff involved on budget implementation should attend at least the key training courses for their strategic frameworks (ABAC, ELC, Procurement, Internal Control, Fraud Prevention, etc.). In addition, a strategic learning path incorporating targets from staff perspective but also from business perspective should be produced and approved every year. HR should propose a SOP beginning 2019.	Jun-19
ICS 5 Objectives and Performance Indicators		
13. EASO SPD and WP clearly sets out how planned actions and deliverables will contribute to the achievement of	Actions The SPD will seek to describe what the agency aims to deliver in the respective outlook period towards achieving SMART objectives for the remaining horizontal administrative activities (HR, Procurement, Logistics,	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
objectives set, taking into account the allocated resources and the risk identified.	Finance, Budget) and include the expected results and targets.	
14. EASO monitors the attainment of its objectives throughout the year using performance indicators and adequate reporting tools. EASO reports on its achievements, expected results and impact, and if relevant, on its contribution to Commission-wide priorities, in the Annual Activity Report. Particularly: a. The concept of "management by objectives" (i.e. building the EASO's activities around SPD objectives at different management levels) is sufficiently understood, discussed and accepted by management and staff and this concept work in practice b. The EASO SPD objectives are known to staff and meaningful c. EASO/Unit's performance indicators are meaningful, i.e. do they actually support and facilitate the management and monitoring of the EASO/Unit's activities d. In case performance cannot be quantified, meaningful qualitative performance indicators are established	Actions The SPD will seek to document objectives for all units activities including horizontal units/Sectors (Procurement, Logistics, Finance, Budget) and include the expected result, key performance indicators and targets that will be monitored during the year and reported on the AAR. Horizontal objectives should be sufficiently understood, discussed and accepted by management and staff to work in practice by agreeing on the targets, expected results and performance indicators. To increase effectiveness, the annual objectives should be translated into targets monitored and reported on every quarter (as it is today) to facilitate strategic decisions.	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 6 Risk Management Process		
15. A risk assessment exercise is conducted at least once a year as part of the SPD process and whenever management considers it necessary (typically in the event of major modifications to the activities of the Agency occurring during the year). Particularly, risk management concept sufficiently understood by management and staff and is performed in line with applicable provisions and guidelines.	Actions N/A Progress As a result of this assessment, the Finance Sector and the quality manager made available to EASO staff a list of FAQ on risk management through EASO intranet as from September 2018.	N/A
16. Risk management action plans are realistic and take into account cost/benefit aspects in order to avoid disproportionate control measures. Processes are in place to ensure that actions are implemented according to plan and continue to be relevant.	Actions As an outcome of this Internal Control Self-assessment it is clear that significant risks that could affect the achievement of EASO objectives, including the lack of controls structure, need to be registered and assessed. A risk that is considered "critical" should be reported as part of the AAR. Methodologies for risk identification should be revised, including in addition to the workshops, questionnaires and interviews. A description of all the significant and critical risks identified in this action plan together with the corrective actions to be taken, the owners of these actions (who will be responsible for implementing the defined measure(s)) and target dates/milestones should be immediately documented in the central EASO risk register. Regular monitoring (e.g. quarterly) is needed on the part of management. EASO should report on the status of the implementation of central risk register action plan in the Annual Activity Report.. The "reservations" in the AAR should be envisaged by ED to describe the specific causes of the weaknesses, inefficiencies or significant risks with an impact on the CAAR declaration.	Dec-18
ICS 7 Operational Structure		
17. Delegation of authority is clearly defined, assigned and communicated in writing, conforms to legislative requirements and is	Actions Sub delegations have to be done in writing and clearly describe their content. All the delegations for RAO (AOSD & AOD) have been updated accordingly in 2018.	Dec-18
	Actions	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
appropriate to the importance of decisions to be taken and risks involved.	EASO to immediately plan to replace all interim FIAs by statutory staff, as soon as possible. This will be reflected in the Financial Manual and ABAC rights for FIA interims will be revoked accordingly. Progress Recruitment of administrative and finance assistants (AST3) is ongoing with a view to replace the interim FIAs.	
18. All RAOs have received and acknowledged the Charters and specific delegation instruments;	Actions Finance to register a non-compliance concerning the lack of acceptance of the charter by the former Executive Director a.i. Info session and training should be provided once a year to all RAOs on their roles and responsibilities. Progress A charter template for AO was prepared by the Head of Finance and signed by the new Executive Director a.i..	Dec-18
19. FVAs have received and acknowledged the professional code of conduct Article 46 (4) of EASO FR: Code of professional standards for staff responsible for ex-ante and ex-post financial verification	Actions Staff responsible for controlling the management of financial operations shall have the necessary professional skills. Non-compliance event to be registered by Finance Sector. Progress The Head of Finance Sector produced a code of professional standards that was approved by Executive Director at the end of 2017. The Code was endorsed by all FVAs in January 2018.	Oct-18
20. As regards financial transactions, delegation for "certified correct" is defined, assigned, agreed and communicated in writing;	Actions A new procedure was signed at the end of last year on, among other things, the process for the nominations of staff implementing ex-ante controls (including OIAs). OIAs were nominated in written for the first time in January 2018.	Oct-18
21. Financial nominations and delegations are duly documented and up-dated.	Actions N/A Progress The ED signed a new procedure end of last year on among other things the process for the nominations of staff implementing ex-ante controls (including OIAs). The table was up-dated on the last quarter 2017. OIAs where up-dated in January 2018	Jan-18
22. Roles and responsibilities of the actor involved on the implementation of financial transactions are clear and documented. Particularly, the nature and scope of delegated functions and powers are	Actions Finance should create a finance manual with clear roles and responsibilities of the financial actors that will be made available in the intranet. While this is not an obligation, a charter of tasks and responsibilities of the FIAs and OIAs is to be prepared and addressed to all the FIAs and OIAs for endorsement and signature.	March-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
clear to all persons concerned.	Once the new FFR is approved by DG BUDG, EASO Finance will prepare a MB decision for endorsement of both. Progress The revised finance manual is almost already completed. It concerns the roles and responsibilities regarding budget planning, implementation and reporting, contract management, procurement, internal control, etc. By the end of the year this work will lead to the production of new Financial Manual where all the financial processes described in the Financial Regulation will be documented and merged in a single document.	
23. Where additional mitigating controls are needed, management put them on time and therefore the risks involved are reduced to an acceptable level	Actions For all those cases of potential wrongdoing/internal control inefficiencies it is strongly advisable to implement a process for reporting by staff to the ICC, who following proper analysis assess whether corrective action is needed and /or additional inquiries needs to be implemented. Progress N/A	June-19
24. ABAC access rights are up-dated and in line with delegation and nominations	Actions Verification of ABAC access rights with a neutral verifier to be implemented (neutral verifier to be appointed).	Dec-18
25. FVAs have a grade equal or higher than FIAs. Financial actors should have the necessary skills and experience in the accounting and financial fields.	Actions A selection process for FVA that will cover future needs is being implemented. EASO to adopt a plan to fill the gap asap and progressively realign the grading of financial agents by 2020. Relevant Training should be provided to upskill those Staff involved to ensure adequate technical capacity and expertise including in sub offices.	Dec-20
26. Financial circuits are defined and based on a risk assessment exercise assessing advantages and disadvantages. To this end a risk assessment is carried out and relevant mitigating controls are established;	Actions Based on the analysis of the current decentralisation model as well as on a risk analysis taking account of the cost-effectiveness of controls, the Management team is to re-assess whether the existing financial circuits are the most suitable. Progress • In 2018 the finance sector implemented a risk analysis of the financial circuits. • In the meantime, EASO has requested a consultancy engagement on the decentralisation of EASO's financial and administrative services to be implemented by IAS. • The output of the risk analysis implemented by the Finance Sector was provided to the IAS for further assessment. • The consultancy engagement also includes consultations with all EASO Units to assess the merit of the decentralisation.	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
27. The standard IT governance policy of the Commission is always applied.	Actions Full implementation of all aspects of the policy will be supported by more detailed instructions as ED Decisions, SOPs (Q3-Q4 2018): ED Decision on acceptable use; ED Decision on information systems security. Progress Most of the WINS's are currently in circulation for approval.	Feb-19
27 a. EASO has defined the appropriate organisation for management of the information systems it owns, Generally in the form of an IT Steering Committee (management level)	Actions Terms of reference for the EASO IT Governance board will be drafted in Q4 2018 and the Board will be officially set up. The first EASO IT governance board should meet on Q4 2018. Progress It was decided on 5 November 2018 that the EASO IT Governance board will be composed by the EASO Management Team. The Board will meet at least twice a year for strategic meetings while progress will be monitored in the MTM format.	Dec-18
27 b. Each information system is overseen by a steering committee (IT system level).	Actions Identify criteria to set up steering committees for critical applications and set up Steering committees where required. The role for the IT steering committee should be clearly explained to the Staff and EASO management. IT Steering committees should in general include the technical owner (ICT), system owner, key stakeholders and users. Progress N/A	Dec-18
27 c. All new information systems projects are approved on the basis of a vision document	Actions EASO could further consider adding systematic feasibility assessments on all new projects. Progress N/A	N/A
27 d. All new information systems are developed using the standard Commission project management and development methods	Actions Additional PM guidelines with management products and instructions will be drafted to support PM to better streamline the project management process in Q3-Q4 2018. Progress The first PM review was made on the 12 th of October and produced recommendations to be addressed.	Dec-18
27 e. All new information systems are developed taking security into account from the very first stage.	Actions An information system security policy will be developed on the fourth quarter 2018 and implemented during 2019. Further guidelines, templates and checklists will be developed 2018-2019 to support a common approach to security requirements definition and validation for each information system. Progress First draft of the policy is available in Oct 2018	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 8 Processes and Procedures		
28. EASO main processes and procedures for the implementation and control of the Agency/Unit's activities are adequately documented in a user-friendly fashion, are readily accessible and kept up to date. They ensure segregation of duties and comply with applicable provisions.	Actions IT should provide a process mapping tool accessible to all staff. If a member of staff wants to know if there is any document he/she must drill down from the high-level process to the procedure where they can link to relevant information on the intranet. Based on all processes and procedure already documented in EASO, this assessment recommends to coordinate and develop an action plan to identify missing documented processes and procedures and prepare a general inventory mapping all relevant processes and procedures per Unit. Its implementation will be coordinated with the management team that will prioritise the processes to be documented based on the available resources.	Dec-19
29. A process for registration of exception reports ensure that all instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established processes and procedures are documented and justified, duly approved before action is taken and logged centrally.	Actions Decision on exception procedures has been amended in June 2018 in order to clearly identify such cases (e.g. by adding the exception(s) to the non-compliance event and marking them as 'linked cases'). Finance to explain it to all staff during the info sessions and trainings on internal control. Table of exceptions to be aligned with the new procedure. Progress ED Decision on exceptions was amended in the second half of 2018. Training already provided by the Finance Sector to RAOs.	Dec-18
30. The Agency's processes and procedures comply with applicable provisions, in particular the Financial Regulation and by analogy with the Commission's Rules of Procedure; Article 77 of EASO FR: The payment of expenditure shall be carried out within the time limits specified in, and in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.	Actions Finance Sector to coordinate corrective actions to update processes and procedures in order to ensure compliance.	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
31. Exceptions and non-compliance events cover deviations, which are not initially foreseen by the procedures and therefore require individual follow-up. Particularly exceptions procedure is not a process to transfer responsibility or to authorise or condone breaches.	Action Exception procedure to be amended Progress Completed in the June 2018	Jun-18
ICS 9 Management Supervision		
32. Management supervision covers both legality and regularity aspects and operational performance and includes supervision of external bodies entrusted with the budget implementation tasks. If Management supervises the activities they are responsible for, they keep track of main issues and ensure the follow-up of accepted audit and other recommendations e.g. linked to interval evaluations and reviews. Management supervision covers Internal Control.	Action The position of Senior Legal Officer has been restored and is to be filled as soon as possible. An ex-post controls capacity to be implemented. Progress The post of Senior Legal Officer has been published in August 2018 and the selection is currently on going.	Dec-18
32. At least twice a year and at any time deemed appropriate, the ED informs the MB of any potentially significant <u>issues related to internal control</u> and audit and OLAF investigations as well as material budgetary and financial issues that might have an impact on the sound management of appropriations or which could hamper the	Actions As immediate corrective action an amended Internal Control Framework should be documented and adopted by the MB including the minimum standards referred to in EASO Financial Regulation and the instruction provided to the ED in the Communication of the Commission C(2017) 2373 of 19 April 2017 on the Revision of the Internal Control Framework from Commissioner Oettinger. Guidance on Internal Control for all EASO staff should be implemented and included in the Finance Manual Tailored training should be provided to all the staff. <u>In order to comply with their role it is paramount that EASO MB is:</u> - Made aware of their role and responsibilities concerning internal control	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
attainment of the objectives set. Particularly: - There is a systematic follow-up of significant issues identified through the supervisory activities. - Management shows full cooperation and provide accurate and reliable information to auditors.	- Made aware of the minimum standards of internal control referred in EASO financial regulation (principles and characteristics) - Informed by ED in timely manner on internal control deficiencies and significant risks. - At least twice a year and at any time deemed appropriate, the ED informs the MB of any potentially significant issues related to internal control and audit and OLAF investigations as well as material budgetary and financial issues that might have an impact on the sound management of appropriations or which could hamper the attainment of the objectives set. Progress • Training for all EASO staff will be provided before the end of the year • In this training EASO staff will be provided with documented guidance on Internal Controls transposed from DG BUDG available guidance and adapted to EASO governance. The guidance on internal control will be also transposed and documented in the EASO Finance Manual. • EASO will present a revised decision for MB adoption on the new internal control framework in line with the Commission requirements by the end of 2018. • EASO has added internal control as a relevant points for the agenda of the MB meetings, both at prep group level and at MB level. • EASO reports every fortnight to the MB on the state of play of the internal control self-assessment and the new internal control framework.	
33. There is a system in place to report internal control weaknesses / inefficiencies other than the exception reports. Reported internal control weaknesses are properly analysed and duly addressed in time where necessary.	Actions The Internal Control Coordinator (ICC) to be appointed. The Internal control self-assessment should be an ongoing process where staff is provided with the mechanisms to report internal control weaknesses. Those are to be assessed by the ICC who will assess whether a corrective action is needed to be documented in the action plan. At least twice per year the Internal Control self-assessment action plan is evaluated by EASO management team.	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
ICS 10 Business Continuity		
34. Adequate measures - including handover files and deputising arrangements for relevant operational activities and financial transactions -are in place to ensure the continuity of all service during “business-as-usual” interruptions (such as leave, staff mobility, migration to new IT systems, incidents, etc.). EASO procedures to ensure continuity of service (handover arrangements, backup	Actions Adequate measures, including handover files and deputising arrangements for relevant critical activities and financial transactions to be established to ensure the continuity of all services during “business-as-usual” interruptions (holidays, sick leave, staff mobility, migration to new IT systems, incidents, etc.) and particularly during the end of year exercise. EASO’s procedures to ensure continuity of service (handover arrangements, backup procedures, etc.) should be made sufficiently known through training be, readily accessible (in particular to new staff) and applied in practice. This needs to be similarly reflected in regional and sub offices as business continuity applies directly to their operations Progress A WIN (working instruction) was produced to guarantee continuity based on the above needs.	Oct-19
35. EASO has developed, following in-depth Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and using SG template and guidance, a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that is well maintained, exercised and revised regularly, at least once a year: l. Contingency and backup plans for information systems are established, maintained, documented and tested in the context of Disaster Recovery Planning (DRP) and security needs. m. Management and relevant staff are sufficiently aware and appropriately trained regarding the BCP. They know what to do in the immediate response to major disruption in order to minimise the risks to staff and assets. The BCP is easily understandable and readily accessible to	Actions EASO has to develop, following an in-depth Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and using the standard templates and guidance, a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that needs to be well maintained, exercised and revised regularly, at least once a year. Currently and as a response to the recommendation from the IAS, it is indicated that DOA is responsible to set up a proper Business Continuity in EASO and the development will start in Q4 2018. A Business Continuity manager needs to be appointed, responsible for the development of the BCP and once approved by the ED, for maintenance, testing and regular revision of an EASO Business Continuity Plan. He/ She will be responsible for training and making staff aware by making the BCP easily understandable and readily accessible to those who need it when they need it. Further EASO IT systems will be tested in the context of Disaster Recovery Planning. The results of testing activities will be sufficiently analysed and documented, the necessary improvements identified and BCP updated accordingly. In the meantime a reservation applies on the AAR regarding the lack of BCP and risk register should be up-dated accordingly.	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
those who need it when they need it n. The BCP - including relevant IT elements – is sufficiently tested by conducting periodic testing and practice drills determining whether the continuity plan works effectively in practice. o. The results of testing activities are sufficiently analysed and documented, the necessary improvements identified and BCP updated accordingly		
ICS 11 Document Management		
36. Document management procedures and related systems comply with relevant compulsory security measures, provisions on document management and rules on protection of personal data: a. Every document that fulfils the conditions laid down in pre-defined implementing rules needs to be registered, filed in at least one official file and preserved during the period established by the document management rules. To do so, the Agency uses systems which respect the above rules b. Documents are adequately protected against destruction, theft, fire. c. Procedures for registration and filing of documents are sufficiently known and they are applied in	Actions • EASO Business classification scheme and Record retention and disposal policy have to be finalised and approved, with the help of Heads of Unit and Departments. • Guidelines regarding Email management and Standard naming conventions for electronic records should be converted in appropriate administrative circulars. • It is recommended using one single application in order to register all EASO documents. The use of different repositories/applications such as shared drives, AeroFS, Intranet, and Paperless should be clearly defined. • There is a need for EASO to establish a single formalised physical archive for all departments and merging all current de-centralized archives into one archive governed under appropriate procedures. There is a clear need for EASO to establish the necessary procedures, attribute roles and recommended handling guidelines regarding EU classified and non-classified sensitive information. • The Management Team should be fully aware of the key sponsorship role it plays for the implementation of the Document Management System (DMS) across EASO and for the alignment of the DMS with the handling guidelines for non-classified sensitive information. In addition, the Document Management Contact network should be formally recognised within the agency via an ED decision, and only EASO statutory staff should be designated as contact points. Progress	Dec 2019

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
practice d. Applicable rules regarding handling of sensitive documents are documented and sufficiently known and applied in practice e. Management and staff sufficiently aware of applicable retention periods for documents. The retention periods are respected in practice	The ERDMS implementation is in the final stages of implementation. A thematic meeting on ERDMS is scheduled to help overcome the last hurdles of the project	
ICS 12 Information and Communication		
37. a, b and c: Arrangements are in place to ensure that management and staff are appropriately informed of decisions, projects or initiatives – including those in other Units/ department – that concern their work assignments and environment. There are processes in place for the voice of staff to be heard	Actions - EASO is implementing during 2018 for the first time its internal communication plan approved by the MB in 2017 and including decisions/projects/initiatives that are communicated to staff through various channels. - Minutes of Units and Management Team, Department and Units meetings to be regularly uploaded and accessible by all staff members on EASO Intranet Portal. - Department and Unit meetings implemented at least once per month. - Participation to key external meetings, should be decided on a case by case basis depending on the subject matter being discussed. Missions reports and key documents shared at external meetings should be shared internally for awareness raising and in particular to management for follow up when necessary. - Adopt flash reports practice among managers. Progress The WOB has been revamped to a CBB (Core Business Briefing) to allow a wide exchange of information on business activities between staff. It was held for the first time in October 2018 and it will continue to be held once a month. Intensification of the use of Brown Bag lunches is undergoing.	Dec-19
37. d. EASO management communicates and reports to the MB relevant and accurate information, timely and in a transparent way	Actions EASO to include a reservation in AAR 2017 clearly stating that relevant and accurate information related to the internal control and the irregularities were not provided in a transparent way to the MB.	Dec-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
38. EASO Staff is appropriately informed and made aware of internal control standards and its requirements in order to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and efficiently	Actions EASO management to define and document the characteristics for each new internal control principles. Once the characteristics of each internal control principle are documented and approved, EASO Management will analyse the more relevant internal controls monitoring criteria that are pertinent to the risk environment including baselines, expected results and performance indicators. EASO staff needs to be made aware of Internal Control principles characteristics and monitoring criteria through guidance and training. The Agency needs to take ownership of the new framework. Based on this self-assessment an evaluation of compliance of the new framework needs to be documented and actions to ensure full compliance by year-end need to be developed. At year-end an assessment needs to be carried out with units, departments and management to discuss how to further tailor the framework to EASO needs and develop it further. Progress As of Oct 2018, tailored training by the Finance Sector on internal control has been delivered for senior staff and further training scheduled for all relevant EASO personnel in November. In October 2018, draft guidance on the new internal control framework implementation and assessment including proposed document per principles and performance indicators was drafted. This guidance will be included in the Finance Manual.	Dec-18
39. EASO has a communication strategy which shall contribute to corporate communication. Staff, management and the MB are consulted in devising the strategy, which must use the corporate communication themes as reference points. There are process in place to seek and analyse feedback from target audiences regarding communication impact. Relevant feedback is escalated to the appropriate level and	N/A	N/A

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
used to adapt ongoing communication strategies		
40. Communication actions respect legal and regulatory requirements (including copyright laws) and are in line with the instructions and	N/A	N/A
41. The standard Information Systems Security Policy of the Commission is applied. In particular, EASO has adopted and implements an IT Security Plan based on an inventory of the security requirements and a risk analysis of the IT systems under their responsibility, and applies at least the relevant control measures of the corporate IS Security Policy. The IT systems support adequate data management, including database administration and data quality assurance. Data management systems and related procedures comply with relevant Information Systems Policy, compulsory security measures and rules on protection of personal data.	Actions Information Systems Security Standards (policy) is in draft and will be finalized in Q4 2018. All BIAs need to be formally signed by the System owners. Security and Business continuity plans (including recovery) will be drafted for the most critical systems in Q4 2018, and others in 2019 Further WINS will be drafted in 2019 to address standardisation and formalization of sub-processes with regard to security (e.g. monitoring and logging, user rights review, cryptography etc.). Progress Policy is drafted and is being circulated for comments in Oct 2018	Dec-19
ICS 13 Accounting and Financial Reporting		
42. Each Authorising Officer ensures that the internal control, financial and accounting information and related information submitted to the ED and Accountant for the production of accounts and management reports (including the AAR) is	Actions N/A Progress As of the 1st January 2018 in ABAC, the option "cost claim" should be used to encode all the costs that have to be reimbursed by EASO within the framework of MB Decision 16 and ED Decision 306.	Jan-18

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
reliable and complete. Particularly, financial and management information produced by the Agency, including financial information provided in the Annual Activity Report, is in conformity with applicable rules and provisions.		
43. Financial actors have the necessary skills and experience in the accounting and financial fields	Actions The ED should decide on the appropriate level of control which includes the allocation of financial actors to the financial circuits. Progress The training plan has been developed to fully support staff in	Dec-19
ICS 14 Evaluation of Activities		
44. Evaluations are performed by analogy with the guiding principles of the Commission's evaluation standards. Corresponding evaluation baseline requirements are applied for retrospective evaluations (interim, final and ex-post) while prospective evaluations (ex-ante and impact assessments) follow the relevant specific guidelines.	Actions Internal evaluations should be completed for all core business activities reflected in the WP. Progress All operating plans and 50% of the road maps and working instructions for the external dimension should be completed by end of 2018. All activities under operations will be evaluated and output delivered by end 2019. From 2018 EASO Operations is developing and using a very detailed and validated Project, Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology for all activities within operations – to be completed across all operations including Ext Dim by end 2019.	Dec-19
ICS 15 Assessment of Internal Control Systems		
45. Management assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of EASO's internal control system at least annually. The results of the review should be presented in the Annual Activity Report. Both the review and relative reporting must be carried out in accordance with applicable guidance. Managers and staff who participate in self-	Actions Building on the methodology for the 2018 assessment exercise, the new methodology for the 2019 assessment will be developed and approved by the Management Team and will include characteristics, baselines, indicators and targets for 2019 and beyond and recognise the geographical spread of EASO organisation. Progress A new internal control framework will be adopted by EASO MB before the end of 2018.	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
assessments of the EASO internal control systems have a sufficient understanding of Internal Control.		
46. The results of the assessment should feed into the preparation of the AAR, section on the assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems, and the declaration of assurance of the Executive Director.	Actions A reservation to be included in CAAR 2017, clearly stating that contrary to Article 47 of EASO Financial Regulation the 2016 CAAR information about internal control was not accurate and reliable and based on an assessment of the internal control. Progress As of July 2018 EASO ED signed decision 207 defining the methodology for EASO first internal control self-assessment and gave the mandate to the Head of Finance Sector to organise and implement it. As an outcome of such exercise, a draft report with observations and an action plan with corrective actions was sent to the MT in August 2018 by the Head of Finance Sector. Extensive consultations took place in the Management Team between September and October 2018 to finalise the self-assessment exercise.	Dec-18
47. Internal Control Standards and its compulsory requirements are documented, made available and explained to all the staff	See assessment criteria 38	See assessment criteria 38
48. The self-assessment is sufficiently sponsored by senior management and results sufficiently supported. Management facilitates communication and reporting of internal control weaknesses. Internal Control Coordinator coordinates such reporting and ensures the use of information to reinforce the effectiveness of controls as needed. To this end an action plan with is built to correct internal control inefficiencies and explained to senior management and staff	Actions The results of the self-assessment should be sufficiently sponsored by senior management and results sufficiently supported by sharing the report and the action plan with the EASO staff to increase awareness. The action plan should be monitored by the MT or duly delegated. Progress As of July 2018 EASO ED signed Decision 207 defining the methodology for EASO first internal control self-assessment and gave the mandate to the Head of Finance Sector to organise and implement it. As an outcome of such exercise, a draft report with observations and an action plan with corrective actions was sent to the MT in August 2018 by the Head of Finance Sector. Extensive consultations took place in the Management Team between September and October 2018 to finalise the self-assessment exercise.	Dec-19

Assessment Criteria	Corrective action	Target date
49. Exception report is one of the management tools used to conclude on effectiveness of internal control and/or changes needed to internal control system, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Article 30 of EASO FR: procedures for monitoring of performance and for follow-up of identified internal control weaknesses and exceptions; Article 47 of EASO FR: The consolidated annual activity report shall indicate the results of the operations by reference to the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control systems	Actions Based on the number of exceptions and non-compliances registered, the CAAR to mention that the 2017 Internal Control was not effective and efficient. The missing non-compliances should be registered. If the materiality of the noncompliance reaches or exceeds 2% of the PA approved for the financial year, the spending area should be classified as affected by material error and a reservation should be included in the AAR. Progress All exceptions approved by EASO ED are accompanied by a corrective action. The status of the implementation of the corrective action is monitored by the Quality Manager. For example, as of 2018 DOP has systematically addressed/regularised all existing outstanding exceptions (ref. Cyprus lease, Lesvos lease, Chios lease, Greek national experts payments). One longstanding exception remains (Rome lease).	Sep-19