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# EASO Executive Director welcomes Spain's commitment to reform reception system




**During the week of 10-14 May 2021, the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Nina Gregori, held a series of high-level meetings in Lisbon and Madrid to discuss the Agency's new operational support for Spain's reception system, as well as work to enhance EASO's mandate and transform it into the EU Agency for Asylum.**

Ms Gregori met with **José Luis Escrivá**, Spain's Minister of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, as well as the Minister of Interior, **Fernando Grande-Marlaska**, in Madrid. She welcomed the clear commitment of the Spanish Government to reform the country's reception system in line with EU standards. The Executive Director highlighted that EASO is mobilising resources and personnel to support this effort, notably by:

- Enhancing the reception capacity in the Canary Islands;
- Supporting the transition towards a new model for reception in Spain;
- Enhancing structural processes in support of the Spanish reception system;
- Providing training, professional development, tools and materials; and
- Supporting the Spanish authorities in the area of resettlement.

During the meetings, Ms. Gregori also highlighted the importance of EU co-legislators finally agreeing on a **mandate for the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA)**, which has been pending since 2016. She underlined that the ability of EASO to meet the increased requests by Member States for operational support under the current outdated mandate is challenging, and expressed hope that an agreement can be reached in Brussels soon.

The Executive Director also discussed the EUAA when meeting with the Portuguese Minister of Internal Administration, **Eduardo Cabrita**, in Lisbon on 10 May, prior to participating in a Ministerial Conference on the Management of Migratory Flows organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU. Ms Gregori thanked the Minister for the Presidency's strong efforts being made to finalise negotiations, stating that it is clear that the Portuguese authorities understand how important the EUAA is for a functional EU asylum system.

During a meeting in Madrid with the Spanish State Secretary for Migration, **Jesús Javier Perea Cortijo**, Ms Gregori outlined the practical plans by which EASO intends to increase its support for Spain, including through the deployment of highly-specialised personnel. These include experts in vulnerability, site management, contingency planning, change management, engineers and architects, amongst other profiles. She also noted that officials of the *Secretaría de Estado de Migraciones* (SEM) are working very well with EASO personnel, highlighting that such good collaboration bodes well for the reform of Spain's reception system.

In Madrid, Ms Gregori also held meetings with various partners, including with **Sophie Muller**, UNHCR's Representative in Spain, and **María Jesús Herrero**, Head of IOM Spain, where all agreed that synergising work was crucial in order to collectively be effective in supporting Spain. She also held a productive meeting with Spain's Ombudsperson, **Francisco Fernández Marugán**.

The Executive Director also visited the *Canaria 50* and *Colegio Leon* reception centers in Gran Canaria, meeting with EASO personnel deployed on the island and reviewing the state-of-play on the ground in the centers. She also used the opportunity to meet with local authorities and national representatives, emphasising the importance of excellent local collaboration, including with **María Teresa Mayans Vázquez,** the sub-Delegate of the Spanish Government to the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands.

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**Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu**

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