News Published: 7 January 2020

EASO operations to double in size this year



In December 2019, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) signed Operating Plans with the national asylum authorities of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta, following needs-based discussions on the support which the Agency will provide throughout 2020.

In 2020, EASO will see its operational **deployments double in size, with up to 550 personnel deployed in Greece, 150 in Italy, 120 in Cyprus and 60 in Malta**. In addition, interpreters and security personnel will be deployed in the four Member States, bringing the total deployment **up to as many as 2,000 personnel**. Cyprus, Greece and Malta will all see a doubling of EASO personnel, while operational deployments in Italy will be decreased in light of changing needs on the part of the Italian authorities.

The **Greek Operating Plan** will see EASO roughly double its personnel in the country, including with almost **three times as many caseworkers** working in close cooperation with the Greek Asylum Service. EASO personnel will also continue to provide support for reception in the Hotspots and now also in Centres on the mainland, as well as targeted structural support to the Greek authorities on both asylum and reception.

Notably, EASO's operational **presence on the Greek mainland will increase by four times the level of 2019**, with personnel being deployed to eight new locations in Thessaloniki and Ioannina to support the country's regular asylum procedure.

In **Cyprus**, the number of deployed caseworkers will **double in size to at least 60 EASO personnel**, while the Agency will be present in **10 locations** in the country supporting both registration and the further processing of asylum applications. EASO will also support the **establishment of the first line reception**

centre in Pournara, while the 2020 Operating Plan also includes collaborating with the concerned authorities to develop and implement the entire workflow for new arrivals. EASO will also establish new support for the second instance authorities and continue its support to the Cypriot authorities in terms of reception.

The **Operating Plan which was signed with Malta** will also see EASO **double its support for the national authorities**. In addition to increased support for the Maltese services within the asylum procedure, EASO will, for the first time, also provide support in terms of **reception**. Specifically, EASO personnel will support work on vulnerability through the deployment of Vulnerability Officers and technical support on reception, including age assessment procedures. EASO will not, however, be involved in direct support for the management of reception centres.

In addition, EASO will continue to be ready to support the Maltese authorities with *ad hoc* disembarkations and voluntary relocations.

With regard to the **Italian Operating Plan**, EASO's deployments will be reduced as the country faces less workload within its first instance procedures and reception infrastructure. As such, EASO will shift its focus to second instance (appeals to first instance decisions) support. Notably, EASO will **deploy Research Officers to the 26 Tribunals which handle appeal cases**. The Agency will also continue to provide structural (although not operational) support for reception and asylum.

As with Malta, EASO will continue to be heavily involved in Italian *ad hoc* disembarkations and voluntary relocations based on the Standard Operating Procedures which were agreed to in Malta in the autumn of 2019.

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

---

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu