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EASO Executive Director is visiting Cyprus to reaffirm EASO's support to the country's asylum services.



The Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), José Carreira, is visiting Cyprus today in the framework of the agency's ongoing efforts to enhance its support to Cyprus.

Mr Carreira had the opportunity to discuss EASO's operational support with Cyprus' Minister of Interior, Constantinos Petrides and with the Head of the Cyprus' Asylum Service and Acting Head of the Civil Registry and Migration Department, Makis Polydorou.

Following the meeting, the Minister of Interior emphasized the importance of EASO's support to Cyprus in improving and enhancing the Cypriot asylum and reception system. Mr Petrides said:

"In this challenging period of refugee crisis, EASO proved that it can provide practical, efficient and timely support following a request by a Member State. We would like to thank EASO for its flexibility and immediate response to each of our requests for support and also the Member States which, in the framework of solidarity, nominated a number of experts, who contributed significantly in the successful implementation of the activities set out in the EASO Special Support Plan to Cyprus."

EASO's Executive Director also used the occasion to open, together with the Cypriot authorities, EASO's office in Nicosia, which is situated at Cyprus' Asylum Service. The office hosts EASO's experts, which provide operational support to the Cypriot asylum services. During the opening of the office, Mr Carreira said:

"This is a very important day for EASO. It is a milestone for EASO's on-going efforts to support the country's asylum system, which has been facing pressure since 2014. Following the signing of the amended

Special Support Plan of EASO earlier this year, we are taking concrete steps to enhance our support and provide tailor-made support for Cyprus. By continuing to work closely together with our Cypriot counterparts, I am confident that all these measures will help to significantly improve the situation in Cyprus."

Mr Carreira will also visit the Reception and Accommodation Centre for Applicants for International Protection in Kofinou later today.

Background
On 28 February 2017, EASO and Cyprus signed an amendment of the EASO Special Support Plan, which provides for further tailor-made support to Cyprus until 31 January 2018. Besides continuing the implementation of the initial support measures, new activities on backlog management and contingency measures have been added.

Following a request from Cyprus, EASO decided to extend the mandate of the current Support Plan into two new important areas, which would allow EASO to provide operational support.

As part of the agreement, EASO is planning to deploy 8 experts at a time, specialized in backlog management. EASO has also been deploying simultaneously 2-3 experts at the Kofinou reception center, assisting in vulnerability assessment, social assistance, and additional capacity building activities.

As a measure of contingency planning, EASO also stands ready to provide operational assistance to Cyprus in the field of registration, screening and reception of persons requesting international protection in case of high number of arrivals.

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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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