

## Press Release

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## EASO and Greece sign agreement to continue EASO support to Greece until May 2016

*EASO and Greece signed a new Support Plan which provides for EASO tailor-made support to Greece to be implemented over a period of 12 months. The Special Support Plan builds on the progress made within the framework of support which EASO has been providing to Greece since 2011 (under [Operating Plan Phase I and II](#)). In the next 12 months, EASO will support Greece in a number of prioritised areas, such as absorption of EU funds and other financial resources, planning and implementing projects, training Greek personnel in the framework of the EASO Training Curriculum, Dublin III procedures, Country of Origin Information (COI), setting up an effective guardianship system and transcription of interviews. In the field of reception, support will be offered in monitoring the provision of services and enhancing the quality of the reception procedure.*

Following a request by Greece to further improve and enhance the Greek asylum and reception system, the EASO Executive Director decided to render Special Support to Greece by providing expertise from EASO and the EU Member States up to the end of May 2016.

The request for further support by EASO was inspired by the will to ensure sustainability of the good results achieved within the context of previous EASO support to Greece (under the [Operating Plan to Greece Phase I and II](#)), so that the current and future challenges can be adequately addressed. It was concluded that there is a need for supporting the training of staff, setting up an effective guardianship system for unaccompanied minors, in particular within the asylum procedure, enhancing the quality of the asylum and reception procedures, as well as better managing of EU funding which complements the national budget.

EASO is coordinating special support teams on the ground in Greece and works closely with the Greek government, the European Commission's Taskforce on Greece, FRONTEX, UNHCR and other stakeholders. EASO support to Greece under the Special Support Plan will end in May 2016.

### **Background**

EASO support to Greece dates back to April 2011, when the [Operating Plan Phase I](#) was signed. Greece has faced particular asylum pressures in the past years due to a significant influx of irregular migrants at the European external borders. Following a request made by the Greek Government, in February 2011, EASO agreed to support Greece until March 2013 and to deploy various Asylum Support Teams (ASTs). Since the beginning of its operations, Greece was supported in enhancing and building up its capacity in tackling the backlog of asylum cases. In addition, the setup of a sustainable and efficient asylum and reception structure was supported: new First Reception Service, Asylum Service, Appeals Authority and improved reception conditions.

On 7 March 2013, EASO and Greece signed the [Operating Plan Phase II](#). The Plan extended EASO support to Greece up until December 2014 in various areas, e.g. training of the staff of the new services, support to the backlog committees, support to improvement of reception procedures and the management of EU funds related to asylum and reception.



On 13 May 2015, EASO and Greece signed a new Support Plan which provides for EASO tailor-made support to Greece to be implemented over a period of 12 months (until May 2016)

**Quick Links**

EASO Special Support Plan to Greece (2015): [EN](#)

EASO Operating Plan to Greece Phase II (2013-2014): [EN](#) and its amendment [EN](#)

EASO Operating Plan to Greece Phase I (2011-2013): [EN](#), its first [EN](#) and second amendment [EN](#)

*Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: [jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu](mailto:jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu)*