



EASO newsletter in 2018

Key COI related points

March 2018

Items of relevance to COI and the work of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Consultative Forum as detailed in 2018 EASO newsletters

- Compiled by ARC – [emphasis added]

March 2018

COI Specialist Network meeting on Somalia

On 6 and 7 March 2018, the IAU unit organised a Country of Origin Information (COI) specialist network meeting on Somalia, attended by COI specialists from several EU+ countries who are members of this network. The meeting was aimed at exchanging information, knowledge and experience regarding COI on Somalia. In addition, three external speakers gave presentations on specific topics that had been identified as the most pressing COI needs and challenges with respect to the country.

Professor Stig Jarle Hansen, from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, gave an presentation on the latest developments regarding Somalia's main insurgent group Al-Shabaab, while a security analyst from the UN gave an update on the security situation in South-Central and Northern Somalia. Dr. Ibrahim Farah delivered a further in-depth presentation on clans and minorities in Somalia.

Kick off meeting for the development of the module on MedCOI

On 21 and 22 March 2018, EASO organised the kick-off meeting for the development of the module on MedCOI.

MedCOI is a project initiated in 2010 with the aim of improving the access to medical Country of Origin Information (COI) for national migration and asylum authorities in Europe. The project is implemented by the Netherlands (Medical Advisors Office – BMA) and Belgium (Desk on Accessibility – BDA), together with the ICMPD. Fourteen Member States take part in the project. MedCOI is currently funded by AMIF, but funding cannot be extended beyond 2020.

During its 12th Management Board meeting in 2013, EASO committed to take over the activities of the MedCOI project in order to guarantee the services and establish stable funding. The transfer of the project to EASO started with a kick-off meeting in October 2017 and is expected to run until 2020 when EASO is envisaged to have the full capacity to deliver the MedCOI services as part of its daily operations.

In its project for the transfer of MedCOI, EASO foresees the development of tailored training module. The content expert group for the development of the module on MedCOI consists of five experts from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland. During the kick-off meeting the content group agreed on the target group, structure and draft content of the module. The module is expected to be finalised by the end of 2018 with the pilot training session to be organised in early 2019.

February 2018

Meeting on Afghans in Iran – Brussels, 13 February 2018

On 13 February 2018, EASO organised a Practical Cooperation meeting on Afghans in Iran. This meeting brought together Country of Origin Information (COI) researchers from the Afghanistan COI Specialists Network, the Iran COI Specialists Network and caseworkers and decision makers experienced on the topic of Afghans in Iran. The Norwegian Landinfo and Swedish Lifos presented the outcomes of their recent fact-finding mission to Iran, and the founder and CEO of the Iranian NGO HAMI, Fatemeh Ashrafi, presented a detailed view of the current situation of Afghan migrants in the country. During a break-out session, case-workers and decision-makers discussed decision practices in the different EU+ countries.

January 2018

Call for input towards the 2017 Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union

EASO has issued an invitation to its civil society stakeholders to provide their input to the Agency's 2017 Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU. Contributions, which are open to civil society organisations, may be sent until 16 February 2018 to ids@easo.europa.eu and consultative-forum@easo.europa.eu, using a [dedicated form](#).

One of EASO's key tasks is to produce an [Annual Report on the situation of asylum in the European Union](#) with an overview of key aspects of the Common European Asylum System. This includes a comprehensive analysis of relevant statistics, as well as information on important asylum-related developments at EU+ and national level, as well as on the practical functioning of the CEAS. The Report provides an opportunity to look into the key challenges and achievements in the previous year, reflects the ongoing debates and puts into context the operational activities and work of EASO. The launch of the Report is accompanied with a public event, providing a forum to openly discuss and debate the main issues at stake as regards international protection in the EU, with a focus on current key themes in each year, such as the relocation programme.

The Report has been published since 2011 and as an independent centre of expertise on asylum, EASO endeavours to make the report as comprehensive and accurate as possible, taking account of information available from a wide range of sources. The [2016 edition of the Report](#) welcomed the highest number of contributions from civil society to-date. To further enhance the transparency and the inclusive nature of the Report, contributions received from civil society were published on [EASO's website](#). There, you can also find the [results of an evaluation survey](#) on the added value and usefulness of the Report, which again brought helpful insights and feedback from a broad group of stakeholders.

EASO believes that the wide scope of sources used contributed significantly to the overall quality and value of the report and we were happy to see that the Report is highly appreciated by its readership. We are looking forward to further enhancing the ongoing dialogue and multifaceted cooperation between EASO and civil society actors, and await your contributions.

[EASO Courts and Tribunals invited to the Scuola Superiore della Magistratura](#)

EASO was invited to speak about its research on Country of Origin Information at an event organised on 21 November 2017 by the Scuola Superiore della Magistratura, which was attended by 40 judges from all over Italy. EASO presented its newest publication for judges, entitled [Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin Information](#). During the presentation, various EASO COI activities were explained such as the COI Networks, Practical Cooperation, [COI products](#), COI Operational Support, [COI Portal](#) and [COI Methodology and Training](#).

[IARLJ Eleventh World Conference \(Athens, 27 November – 1 December, 2017\)](#)

From 27 November to 1 December 2017, the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ) organised its 11th World Conference on Asylum and Migration Law in Athens. EASO was invited to introduce its mission to over 140 judges from five continents and presented the [Professional Development Series](#), which is tailor-made for judges by judges with an aim of providing courts and tribunal members with a full overview of the Common European Asylum System. The main focus of the presentations was last year's newly developed [EASO Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin Information](#), as well as EASO COI Networks, COI reports, COI Methodology COI Training activities and the EASO COI portal.

Judges from all over the world met to discuss contemporary challenges in the context of refugee and migration law, security issues in asylum and migration litigations, statelessness, and human rights, all of which are contemporary issues from a judicial perspective.

[EASO organises a Country of Origin Information \(COI\) Conference on Iran \(Ankara, 6-7 December 2017\)](#)

In the framework of the current pilot Roadmap for cooperation between EASO and the Turkish Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), EASO's External Dimension Sector and the COI Sector organised a Country of Origin Information Conference on Iran, held in Ankara on 6-7 December 2017.

Seventy representatives from Turkish Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMMs) as well as participants from DGMM, international and Turkish speakers, Turkish Academics and members of the EASO COI Specialist Network on Iran attended the event.

The conference covered relevant topics such as religious conversion, the situation of LGBTI persons, the situation of political opponents, and the situation of Afghan refugees in Iran.

It represented an excellent opportunity of exchange and discussion and was welcomed very positively by participants.