



EASO Newsletter in 2017

Key COI Related Points

December 2017

[January 2017](#)

CALL FOR INPUT TO THE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF ASYLUM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

One of EASO's key tasks is to produce an Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union (EU) with an overview of key aspects of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). This includes comprehensive analysis of relevant statistics, as well as information on important asylum-related developments at EU and national level on the practical functioning of the CEAS.

As a[n] independent centre of expertise, EASO tries to make the report as comprehensive and accurate as possible, taking into account information available from a wide range of sources. The 2015 Annual Report made several references to civil society sources, contributing significantly to the overall quality and value of the report. This year civil-society organisations are invited to contribute once again, as are individuals such as lawyers, academics and any persons who may have invaluable insights to share.

The structure of the input should be as follows: indicate the theme you are commenting on; formulate observations in a concise manner; provide references to any studies or reports and include any background information.

Please email contributions to: ids@easo.europa.eu; consultative-forum@easo.europa.eu by 20 February 2016.

Previous Annual Reports can be found on EASO's website: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/annual-report>

SIXTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM: THE ASSESSMENT

EASO held its 6th plenary Consultative Forum Meeting in Athens on 28-29 November 2016 (see also the November Newsletter). In comparison to previous years, the 6th edition was marked by certain changes. Not only did it attract a record number of over 200 participants from civil society, it was also for the first time held in Athens in order to facilitate access for practitioners working on the ground in the hotspots. In addition, the most important change in the 6th edition was its format; fully participatory, designed and implemented by professionals specialised in participatory leadership. [...]

Some participants further emphasised the necessity to now "translate words into actions". As such, EASO would like to stress its commitment to ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Consultative Forum. [...]

Internal consultations are ongoing and examples of actions under consideration include:

- **Further strengthening consultations with civil society in relation** to e.g. key EASO documents, training modules/material, practical tools, **COI products and methodologies**, ensuring that appropriate feedback is given;
- Possibility of civil society representatives participating in EASO training sessions (if places are available and for those modules relevant to CSOs);
- Exploring innovative methods for communication including via social media;
- Promoting intercultural awareness skills;
- Supporting Member States to better attend to the needs of vulnerable persons;
- Encouraging a more effective two-way dialogue with CSOs on EASO's operational activities;

The final selection of actions is envisaged to be codified in an Action Plan, which EASO aims to implement by the end of 2017.

COI WORKING GROUP FOR MEMBERS OF COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

On 23 January 2017, EASO launched a call for expressions of interest from experts willing to collaborate on the development of practical materials on the subject of country-of-origin information.

The materials to be developed will provide practical support to members of courts and tribunals who are obliged to research and assess COI.

They will focus on research methods and database usage in identifying COI. They will also provide guidance to judicial users on steps that can be taken towards assessing the relevance and reliability of COI.

Further information can be obtained by contacting: judicialtraining@easo.europa.eu

[February 2017](#)

23rd EASO and 1st EASO-FRONTEx Management Board Meeting

[...] The agency in 2017 and beyond

The Board also heard from the Executive Director the key objectives for 2017, notably enhanced operational support, **information analysis** and knowledge development, continuing to achieve improved quality of the asylum processes and reception conditions, providing even more training, and support renewed partnerships with Third Countries and other activities in line with EASO's external action strategy. After 2017, EASO plans to focus on the implementation of its future Regulation as well as continuity and expansion of its core activities for the benefit of the EU+ States and third countries. [...]

March 2017

EASO Exclusion Network

On 27-28 February 2017 EASO has launched the EASO Exclusion Network.

The EASO Exclusion Network is a Network of EU+ States' contact points, engaged in EASO activities on matters related to exclusions from international protection. The Network should further strengthen practical cooperation on such exclusion-related issues, focusing in particular on the implementation of the provisions of Article 12(2) and (3) and Article 17 of the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), including matters of withdrawal of international protection on the basis of these provisions.

The kick-off meeting of the EASO Exclusion Network took place in Malta, on 27-28 February 2017, with representatives of EU+ authorities, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC). The meeting aimed at updating participants of recent developments concerning exclusion, both at EASO and at national level, at exchanging information and expertise in addressing issues of common interest, and at planning the future activities of the Network for 2017.

New Professional Development Series now available online

In cooperation with Courts and Tribunals, EASO is working towards adopting a Professional Development Series aimed at providing a full overview of the Common European Asylum System. New professional development materials are now available on the EASO website on:

- [Ending International Protection: Articles 11, 14, 16 and 19 Qualification Directive \(2011/95/EU\) - A Judicial Analysis](#)
- [Qualification for International Protection Directive \(2011/95/EU\) - A Judicial Analyses](#)

Meanwhile, the Judicial Analysis on Exclusion: Articles 12 and 17 Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) will be available soon in German, Spanish, French and Italian.

All other Judicial Analysis can be found under: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/courts-and-tribunals>.

EASO Publications - [COI Report: Russian Federation – State Actors of Protection](#)

April 2017

EASO training on the Inclusion and COI Modules to the newly recruited interim “assistant-rapporteurs”

In April 2017 EASO recruited 12 interim workers to be seconded as ‘assistant-rapporteurs’ to the Greek Independent Appeals Committees (IAC).

The main duties of the ‘assistant-rapporteurs’ will be to assist the judges by preparing the case for further examination. At the request of the IAC, the interim assistant-rapporteurs followed the Inclusion and COI modules.

The online part of the Inclusion module started on 10th April, followed by the face-to-face session which was held in the EASO Office Athens, Greece on 19th and 20th April. Through this module, the ‘assistant-rapporteurs’ acquired the core knowledge about the eligibility criteria for international protection. This

module was followed by the COI module for which the online part started on 21st April. The face-to-face session will be held 27th and 28th April.

Afterwards, the 'assistant-rapporteurs' will take up their duties with the IACs, independently from EASO.

Working group for the development of a Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin Information

On 6-7 April, the first meeting of a newly constituted Working Group for the development of a Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin Information was held at EASO's premises in Valletta.

Over the coming months the Working Group - consisting of 7 participants of courts and tribunals from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom - will be drafting a Judicial Practical Guide detailing a judicial research approach to issues surrounding Country of Origin Information.

Following completion of the drafting phase, in July a broad consultation phase will be initiated. All interested parties (EASO, the Courts and Tribunals Network and the Civil Society) will be invited to comment on the document.

Once fully completed, the Judicial Practical Guide will complement the Professional Development Series aimed at providing courts and tribunal members with a full overview of the Common European Asylum System.

Fourth EASO COI specialist network meeting

On 28-29 March 2017, the fourth EASO COI specialist network meeting on Somalia took place. 14 COI researchers from EU+ countries participated in the workshop, which was aimed at enhancing the knowledge of participants, sharing information and informing each other of planned activities on Somalia.

Two external experts were invited to provide information on several themes. **Roberta Belli, Security Information Analyst of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) gave the latest state of play on the security situation in South/Central Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, while Dr Markus Virgil Hoehne, University of Leipzig, gave information on the political situation and several human rights issues. In addition, Sweden and Denmark gave presentations on their recent reports on Somalia.** There was ample time for discussions and exchange of experiences and knowledge. The workshop was very positively evaluated by participants.

May 2017

EASO organizes workshop on SOGI

On 16-17 May 2017 the Vulnerable Groups Team organised its first SOGI themed workshop "The examination of applications for international protection raising sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) related considerations". EASO welcomed a total of 16 participants from 12 Member States, UNHCR and civil society.

The focus of the workshop was to discuss best practices and challenges that Member States face with the examination of SOGI-related asylum applications and to share practices in the different Member States. During the first day of the meeting various interesting presentations were provided by Sweden, Belgium, EASO, UNHCR as well as the civil society organisations specialised on SOGI-issues, ORAM, and CMC Netherlands representing ILGA Europe, to look into the specificities of conducting personal interviews, credibility assessment and decision-making when examining SOGI-related cases. These excellent presentations led to fruitful discussions and exchanges of experiences between the participants.

The second day of the workshop was restricted to Member States participants only. During the day, Finland, Italy, France, Luxemburg and Norway presented examples of relevant cases for discussion among the participants to further exchange best practices. The workshop was very positively evaluated by participants.

Study visit for a delegation of the Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM)

On the 15th-17th May 2017, **a delegation composed of 10 representatives at technical level of the Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) and an expert of the UNHCR attended a study visit to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta.** The visit, jointly organised with the UNHCR, had a **specific focus on the Country of Origin Information (COI) and the EASO e-training platform.**

During the meetings, the **EASO experts of the Department of Operations and Department of Asylum Support provided a detailed overview of EASO COI system** and a technical presentation of the E-learning platform. The study visit was completed by a practical and interactive demonstration of the EASO online trainings.

The DGMM delegation expressed high interest in the EASO experience. The visit gave the opportunity to participants to gain a better understanding of EASO tools, while holding interactive discussions and exchanging information.

These interactions provide an important base for future cooperation between EASO and Turkey's DGMM.

The second activity carried out under the IPA II Project was the *Regional Training Module for Managers*. The module is composed of an online phase which started on the 18th April 2017 and a Face to Face session held on 16th-18th May 2017 in Igalo, Montenegro.

This activity targeted managers in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey who work in the asylum sector and covered both theoretical and practical knowledge of the protection-sensitive migration management. It also aimed to initiate the process of developing a network between the competent authorities in the Western Balkans and Turkey which work on international protection.

June 2017

24 Management Board Meeting

On 13 and 14 June 2016, EASO's Management Board convened in Valletta to receive updates on the implementation of EASO's work programme for 2017, to discuss the EASO's General Activity Report and the upcoming Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU, and to explore EASO's readiness for its future mandate.

During the 24th meeting, amongst other topics, members discussed the variation in recognition rates and how more convergence can be achieved across Europe in asylum decision practices. One of the possible reasons behind the variations in recognition rates is the different assessments made in Member States of the situation in a specific country of origin, and the interpretation of certain legal concepts. This also led to an interesting debate on the pilot exercise undertaken by EASO, which aims to develop a common analysis on the situation in Afghanistan with the goal of realizing more convergence in decisions on applications from Afghan nationals.

Further, the Management Board discussed EASO's operational support in the hotspots and relocation from Italy and Greece, EASO's activities in the framework of the EU-Turkey Statement and its support to Bulgaria and Cyprus. One new development to single out is the recently finalised matching tool for relocation, which aims at maximizing the chances of a smooth integration, the cornerstone of the CEAS, in the country of relocation. The tool matches registration data of relocation applicants with Member States pledges and preferences, taking into account principles of non-discrimination, fair distribution and the consideration to provide adequate support to vulnerable applicants.

Addressing the issue of the safety and security of experts deployed by EASO to the hotspots, EASO Executive Director asserted to the delegates that "while the prime responsibility lies with the hosting Member State, EASO has spared no effort to guarantee the utmost safety and security of its experts. We have put a substantial number of necessary measures in place and are counting on the Member States to continue sending their experts to support the work of EASO".

As regards EASO's Training curriculum and asylum support tools, EASO informed that a training module on Trafficking in Human Beings is being finalised. It aims at providing trainees with the knowledge and skills to identify potential victims, to handle the initial encounter and to prepare and conduct an asylum interview. A module for interpreters engaged in asylum interviews is also under development.

The meeting also saw an overview of the key findings and the adoption of the Annual Report on the situation of asylum in the EU 2016, which will be made public on 5 July. It collects information about revisions in countries' policies and procedures, contains new statistics on the number of applications for international protection made in the EU+ in comparison with previous years, and many more fascinating facts and figures.

EASO also informed its Management Board about the possibility of expanding its current Social Media Monitoring project, and to start a cooperation with a number of Member States who have approached EASO with the aim to develop and conduct targeted communication campaigns in countries of origin of asylum applicants while making use of EASO's knowhow and extensive open source intelligence work. EASO's Executive Director emphasized that "warning potential migrants for ruthless smugglers, informing them about legal and safe pathways and providing them with an accurate and realistic picture of life and asylum in the EU before they decide to leave their country, may help save lives and ultimately help stem the flow of irregular migrants to Europe."

Workshop with civil society: exploring the workings of the Consultative Forum

On 1st June, a workshop took place with civil society representatives, in Brussels, to discuss the EASO Study on the Consultative Forum.

EASO is currently conducting a Study on the Consultative Forum to evaluate its workings to date and to identify possible changes with a view of improving its workings under the EUAA. The latter foresees a revised structure and method for the Consultative Forum.

Over the last three months, members of the Consultative Forum (including EASO staff) have extensively been consulted to make sure that their views are appropriately reflected in the results of the Study. Data collection methods included a survey, face-to-face interviews as well as a validation workshop, which took place in Brussels on 1st June. The aim of the workshop was to present and discuss the preliminary findings of the Study and to brainstorm, in a collective effort, on any possible changes. The workshop gathered a total of 15 participants (11 civil society representatives and 4 EASO staff) who discussed:

- The relevance and efficiency of the Consultative Forum;
- The effectiveness of the Consultative Forum in achieving its objectives;
- The overall strengths and weaknesses of the Consultative Forum;
- Any possible changes which could improve the workings of the Consultative Forum under the EUAA

Overall, it was considered that the workings of the Consultative Forum have gradually improved over recent years, though scope for improvement was identified both with regard to its design/structure as well as the implementation of different types of activities including modalities for the exchange of information.

The full results of the Study are expected to be issued over summer and will be used to feed into a plan for a revised Consultative Forum, in line with the new EUAA Regulation once adopted.

Judicial Practical Guide on COI

On 19th – 21st June, the second meeting of the Working Group was held at EASO's premises in Valletta.

The Working Group consists of 7 participants of courts and tribunals from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. **Over the coming months, a Judicial Practical Guide detailing a judicial research approach to issues surrounding Country of Origin Information is to be drafted.**

A broad consultation phase (including EASO Courts and Tribunals Network and EASO Consultative Forum) is envisaged to be initiated in the beginning of August, during which interested parties will be invited to comment on the draft of the Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin Information. Once fully completed, it will complement the Professional Development Series aimed at providing courts and tribunal members with a full overview of the Common European Asylum System.

EASO Practical Cooperation Meeting on Nigeria - Rome

On the 12th and 13th June, EASO organised a two day conference in Rome called "Practical Cooperation Meeting on Nigeria" to offer the Italian authorities and the Country of Origin Information experts and decisions makers from the EU, the possibility of knowing more about one of the main countries of origin of migrants arriving regularly on the Italian coasts.

For many years, Nigerians have been the first nationality of third country nationals arriving in Italy and they represent more than 20% of national asylum requests. The typical Nigerian migrant is normally males between 18 and 34 years old, but there is also a significant number of women, usually victims of prostitution networks, and unaccompanied minors. They escape a country ravaged first by a civil war and more recently by the Boko Haram threat, where the unemployment rate is one of the highest in Africa and the legal system of protection for minorities is inefficient.

To give a comprehensive and full overview of the actual situation, two national experts, one Norwegian and one Dutch, have been expressly deployed by EASO for several weeks to work in cooperation with their Italian colleagues from the COI Unit of the Ministry of Interior. Their aim was searching, collecting and analysing useful information on Nigerian legal system, political development, human rights and security situation, gender and religion related issues etc. All this material has been gathered and elaborated to draft a country factsheet to be used by the Italian and European case officers during the analysis of asylum requests.

The conference has been the perfect occasion to officially present this factsheet. In his opening remarks [sic], the Prefetto Angelo Trovato, explained that the idea of specific work on Nigeria had already emerged during

the Italian presidency of EU in 2014. He thanked EASO for having answered to this need and the greeted Ms Patricia van de Peer, Head of the EASO Department of Asylum Support.

There were several interventions from - the EASO Analysis and Information Unit, UNHCR Regional Representative for Southern Europe, Human Rights Watch, IOM, University of Oxford and Skidmore College spokespersons among others, given by both international and Nigerian specialists. This was followed by three different workshops.

The end result was that this conference gave participants a solid knowledge of Nigeria's specificities and some practical instructions on how to deal with migrants coming from this complex and multifaceted country.

EASO publications

[Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria Country Focus](#)

July 2017

[nothing of interest for us]

August 2017

EASO Training Curriculum: Upcoming train-the-trainers' sessions

EASO Training Plan 2017 has been updated with regards to the sessions scheduled for the second semester of 2017. Six EASO Train-the-Trainers' sessions will be organized for national trainers with the face-to-face part (content, didactics and e-learning) to be held at the EASO premises in Malta. Each time two training modules will be delivered in parallel:

- **September/October:** Modules on 1) Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU and 2) **Country of Origin Information**
- October/November: 1) Module for Managers and 2) Module on Exclusion
- November/December: Modules on 1) Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation and 2) Trafficking in Human Beings

In addition, a train-the-trainers' session in the Didactics module, addressed to didactic trainers only, will take place in November 2017 (content session only). In parallel, EASO is also planning Regional Train-the-Trainers' sessions in different host organisations. The first session will be focusing on the Reception module and the face-to-face will take place in Brussels between 3 and 6 October 2017.

Two additional Regional trainings are scheduled for October/November, the face-to-face sessions will be held in Tallinn between 13 and 17 November 2017 at the EU-LISA premises. EASO will decide on modules to be delivered within the regional sessions based on the needs of Member States.

The updated EASO Training Plan 2017 with dates and registration deadlines can be found here:

<https://www.easo.europa.eu/training>

EASO publications

COI Report - Afghanistan in Focus

On the 23rd August, EASO published the Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled '[Afghanistan Key socio-economic indicators, state protection, and mobility in Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif, and Herat City](#)'.

EASO publishes Country of Origin Information (COI) report on the security situation in Pakistan

On August 4th, EASO published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled '[Pakistan security situation](#)'. The report is the second update of the security chapter of the EASO COI report on Pakistan, Country Overview, published in August 2015, first updated in July 2016, and provides information relevant for the protection status determination of Pakistani asylum seekers.

September 2017

Development of materials: Judicial Practical Guide on Country of Origin

On the 20-21 September, the EASO Courts and Tribunals sector held the last working group meeting on drafting the Judicial Practical Guide (JPG) on Country of Origin Information (COI).

This JPG seeks to assist judges and decision-makers in ensuring that their use of COI in decision-making complies with the common criteria for qualification for international protection in the recast Qualification Directive (QD (recast)) and the requirements for fairness and effectiveness in the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (APD (recast)).

A working group consisting of members of courts and tribunals has drafted the content. The working group met on three occasions in April, June and September in Malta, to review and work on the comments on the draft text received by the EASO Courts and Tribunals network and the Consultative Forum. The Judicial Practical Guide will be finalised by October and published by the end of this year.

October 2017

EASO preparing for transformation into European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)

In its Communication of 6 April 2016 entitled "*Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe*", the Commission set out its priorities for reforming the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), aimed at harmonising asylum standards in the European Union and speeding up procedures.

As part of this reform, which is a key part of the comprehensive migration strategy, the Commission presented seven legislative proposals on 4 May and 13 July 2016. These included the overhaul of the Dublin system, the conversion of the Qualification Directive and Asylum procedures Directive into Regulations, the recast of the Reception Conditions Directive and the Eurodac Regulation, a new Regulation for a Union Resettlement Framework, **and the transformation of EASO into the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), with increased competences.**

Under its new mandate, the Agency will have the necessary tools to 1) provide operational and technical assistance to Member States; 2) facilitate and support the activities of Member States in the implementation of the CEAS, including by enabling convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection across the Union and by coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation and information exchange; and 3) contribute to ensuring the efficient and uniform application of the EU *acquis* in Member States. In particular, the Agency will improve the functioning of the CEAS through a monitoring mechanism and by assisting Member States when their asylum and reception systems are under disproportionate pressure.

As part of this transformation, by 2020, the Agency's budget is expected to grow from €86.97 million in 2017 to over €114.10 million and the staff of the Agency to around 500.

Considering the extent of the proposed changes to its founding Regulation, **the operationalisation of the new agency will be a gradual one spanning a number of months.** Several preparatory measures are already underway, while others will be put in place upon entry into force of the new Regulation. Further measures will be implemented progressively over the months following entry into force. **The actual date of adoption is yet unknown as it depends on the progress made during ongoing negotiations by co-legislators (Council of the EU and European Parliament).**

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Executive Director of EASO established an internal task force (EUAA Implementation Task Force - EITF) during the first half of 2017 on [sic] order to coordinate the preparations for the new mandate, as well as the review of existing activities that will need to be upgraded to meet the proposed new requirements. The EITF is also spearheading an internal information campaign to inform all staff of the upcoming changes to the Agency's role and to engage in an exchange of views on how to operationalise the various new expected tasks in the most effective way possible.

EASO Practical Cooperation Conference on Pakistan

On 16-17 October 2017, EASO organised a **Practical Cooperation Conference on Pakistan** in Rome, following a similar meeting held on Nigeria in June. Pakistan is the fifth largest country of origin of applicants for international protection in Europe.

The expression “Country of Origin Information”, or COI, indicates all the information that can be assembled on countries from which migrants originate. Because this knowledge is very relevant for decision-makers, the quality and accuracy of COI can be decisive while analysing asylum and international protection requests.

This is why EASO always focuses greatly on this element of its activities, constantly working with national COI Specialists to gather detailed and impartial material, drafting reliable reports and factsheets or organising country-specific practical cooperation workshops.

Organised in the framework of measure ITA 5 “Professional development activities and study visits” of the Operating Plan for Italy 2017, the Conference was opened by Sandra Sarti, the President of the Italian National Asylum Commission, who thanked EASO for its support to the Italian authorities and highlighted how this kind of initiative can ease the daily activities of the Italian authorities.

The 120 participants - selected from amongst judges of the National and Territorial Commissions, decision makers, officers of the Ministry of Interior and different European services of Immigration - attended not only the plenary sessions, but also several working groups. These latter sessions aimed at the exchange of practices and challenges and also included question and answer sessions with experts from the UNHCR, IOM, University of London, International Crisis Group and Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies.

The political and socio-economic situation in Pakistan has been analysed and detailed in the EASO country factsheet published in August 2017. It is available on the EASO website at: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/country-origin-information/country-reports>.

November 2017

EASO Consultative Forum in Brussels

On 17 November 2017, EASO held its seventh annual Consultative Forum Plenary Meeting in Brussels. The meeting brought together a record number of approximately 250 participants, including a high diversity of different stakeholders, reflecting the prominence that the event has taken in bringing together the key players involved in the implementation of EU asylum policy, as well as its added-value for all participants.

This year’s edition focused on EASO’s operational activities in frontline Member States and cooperation with civil society, including discussions on a revised format of the Consultative Forum once the Regulation on the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is approved. [...]

Conference on Country of Origin Information (COI) Publications organised in Brussels

On 15 and 16 November 2017, EASO organised a conference in Brussels on COI Publications for EU+ countries’ COI experts, selected civil society organisations with experience in the production of COI, and the UNHCR.

On the first day of the conference, EASO introduced the work on the revision of the EASO COI Report Methodology (2012) and explained the way forward with the production of COI. [...]

In the afternoon of the first day, break-out discussions were held on the different aspects of COI methodology, which were enriched by the variety of participants (EU+ countries; civil society; and UNHCR) sharing different perspectives and points of view.

On the second day, participants were able to engage in workshops on ‘copyrights’ and ‘concise drafting’. In the workshop on copyrights, the copyrights unit of the EU Publication Office gave an introduction on the general principles of copyrights with a focus on relevant aspects for COI publications: how to check whether work is under copyright protection; how to obtain the right to reproduce an image, a graph, table from a third party in your COI report; the use of Creative Commons (CC), etc.

In the workshop on ‘concise drafting’, a consultant used a sample text to provide training to participants. He gave tips on structuring, improving and shortening text, paragraphs and sentences in order to guarantee clear main messages and avoid an overload of less relevant information and words for the reader.

EASO supports the implementation of on-the-job coaching on Country of Origin Information in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia

The coaching took place on 20-24 November 2017 in Belgrade, Serbia, and on 27 November - 1 December in Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Both activities were implemented with the support of one EU Member State expert who presented his/her own national practices and advised national officials from the two countries on Country of Origin Information (COI) best practices and methodology.

The focus of the coaching was to provide guidance on COI research, use of COI portals, as well as to support the selection and assessment of different sources.

Joint meeting of the EASO Exclusion Network and the COI Specialist Network on Afghanistan, 22-24 November 2017

Human rights abuses on the side of anti-government actors and on the side of state actors, relations between different ethnicities and the state of situation with cases of asylum applicants from Afghanistan were the main topics of a joint meeting of the EASO Exclusion Network and the COI (Country of Origin Information) Specialist Network on Afghanistan.

The panel discussions and presentations took place on 22 November in Malta. Participants met with some of the most renowned experts in the field, including from Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, and Afghanistan Analyst Network.

The COI Specialist Network will continue discussions with the experts on the situation in Afghanistan, the security outlook and in particular the situation in the major cities, as well as format of future collaboration among the network members.