

EASO Management Board meets to prepare activities for 2018

On 27 and 28 November 2017, the 26th meeting of the Management Board of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) took place in Valletta, Malta and approved the Agency's Work Programme for the upcoming year.

The Management Board meeting, which was Chaired by Mr. Wolfgang Taucher, devoted significant attention to preparations for the Agency's activities and operations in 2018.

✘ Within this context, the Management Board approved EASO's Single Programming Document for the 2018-2020 period, as well as the Work Programme and Budget for 2018. The Work Programme foresees a scaling-up in the levels of support that the Agency could provide to Member States, also bearing in mind that negotiations on the Regulation which will transform EASO into the European Union Agency for Asylum are at an advanced stage amongst co-legislators. The meeting also approved the 2018 External Communications and Stakeholder Plan, which has also been prepared to take into account the possibility of the transition in the coming year.

The Management Board also ratified a Hosting Arrangement with Italy following the signing of the arrangement on 22 November 2017 by the Director General for the EU at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Giuseppe Buccino Grimaldi, and the Executive Director of EASO, José Carreira. The Arrangement, which now needs to be ratified by the Italian Parliament, sets out the legal status of EASO's premises, staff and assets in Italy, therefore specifying the modalities under which the Agency can carry out its operations and facilitating its effectiveness. Talks are also ongoing on a similar arrangement with the Greek Government on EASO's operations in that country.

✘ Additionally, EASO provided the Management Board with the latest updates on asylum trends in the European Union, as well as the latest developments in its operations in Cyprus, Greece and Italy. Finally, delegates also discussed plans for cooperation with the European Union Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) with regard to returns of migrants whose applications for international protection in EU Member States are rejected. Having a more effective return system is an important element of the EU's comprehensive approach to managing migration, and EASO stands ready to provide FRONTEX with any assistance it can.

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