

EASO Management Board selects new Executive Director and elects new Chairperson

The 31st meeting of the European Asylum Support Office's (EASO) Management Board has selected Ms. Nina Gregori to be the new Executive Director of the Agency. At the same meeting, the Board elected as its new Chairperson, Dr. David Costello, Member of the Board from Ireland, following the end of Mag. Wolfgang Taucher's term in January 2019. The Management Board also elected Mr. Mikael Ribbenvik as the new Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Nina Gregori, a Slovenian national, was selected by the Management Board to serve as the new Executive Director of EASO by the Management Board on 18 February 2019. Ms. Gregory currently serves as Director-General responsible for the area of asylum, migration, integration, internal administrative affairs and naturalization, within the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior.

The European Parliament will issue an opinion on Ms. Gregori's selection following a hearing which will take place on 11 March in Strasbourg. The Management Board will then take the opinion into account before making a formal appointment. Until the procedure is formally completed and the new Executive Director takes up her duties, Mr. Jamil Addou will continue to serve as Executive Director *ad interim*.

The Management Board also elected as its new Chairperson, **Dr. David Costello**, Member of the Board from Ireland. Dr. Costello, an Irish national, is the Chief International Protection Officer and Head of Ireland's International Protection Office (IPO). He was formerly the country's Refugee Applications Commissioner and has served as Deputy Chairperson of the EASO Management Board since 8 June 2015.

Prior to taking up the positions of Refugee Applications Commissioner and Chief International Protection Officer, Dr. Costello was Director of Asylum Policy in the Department of Justice and Equality. Among his responsibilities were the development of domestic and EU/international asylum policy, including legislative aspects.

Dr. Costello was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, University College Cork and University College Dublin from which he holds graduate and postgraduate qualifications in public administration, law and governance.

Following his election, **Dr. Costello**, who took up his responsibilities with immediate effect, stated: *"It is a privilege to be selected to Chair the EASO Management Board. This is an exciting time for the Agency, which is growing both in terms of staffing as well as its responsibilities and deliverables. I look forward to working closely with all my colleagues on the Management Board and with the great staff of EASO to further strengthen the Agency's governance framework and implement work priorities. These include support for*

Member States' asylum processes in areas such as training, operational support, country guidance and the quality of decision making in the context of the operation of the Common European Asylum System. I also want to personally thank my predecessor, Mag. Wolfgang Taucher, member of the Management Board from Austria, for the extraordinary work he did during his two terms as Chairperson and previously also as Deputy Chairperson of the EASO Management Board. His work and dedication cannot be understated and I am committed to carry this forward in the best interest of the Agency.

The EASO Management Board also elected **Mr. Mikael Ribbenvik**, a Swedish national, as its new Deputy Chairperson. Mr. Ribbenvik is Director General of the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA). He served as Director for Legal Affairs of the SMA between 2008 and 2013, responsible for internal jurisprudence. From 2013 to 2016 he was Director of Operations and Deputy Director General responsible for managing and improving standards of performance within the operation of the SMA.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

[EESC goes to Belfast to listen to concerns over #Brexit](#)



The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the EU house of organised civil society, represented by its Diversity Europe Group, met at Queen's University in Belfast on 15 February 2019 to take stock of the Brexit process and focus on its consequences for the Northern Ireland peace process.

"We are here to listen to your concerns, your fears and your hopes. We are here to reach out a hand to civil society on both sides of the border. We will stand by you, whatever happens in the next ten weeks. Civil society knows no borders and we should already be thinking about how to continue to work together in the months and years to come," declared the president of the Diversity Europe Group, **Arno Metzler**, pointing to the fears brought about by the Brexit process.

"Although not everyone here agrees on what the impact of Brexit will be on the island of Ireland, there is no doubt that all of us, the other 27 EU Member States, European civil society and the European institutions, will do everything within our means to ensure that the spirit of cooperation enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement continues in your minds and in your daily lives," he added.

European representatives from business, trades unions, farmers, consumer groups and others heard local politicians, academics and local voluntary organisations describe how the UK's withdrawal from the EU would affect their lives from a professional, political and personal point of view, with less than two months to go before the Article 50 deadline for the UK/EU divorce

and a settlement not yet agreed.

With the current stalemate created by the 'backstop' proposal, the fact-finding mission of EESC members aimed to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing the UK/Ireland border and find out more about the social, economic and political impact of the UK's withdrawal on Northern Ireland.

EESC members **Jane Morrice** and **Michael Smyth**, from Northern Ireland, maintained that a no-deal Brexit would be madness and stressed how important it was to act now to avoid chaos. Diversity Europe Group vice-president **Séamus Boland**, from the Republic of Ireland, declared that peace in Northern Ireland was fragile and urged the EU and the British and Irish governments to prevent the emergence of a hard border in Ireland at all costs.

Guest speakers included **Brian Cowen**, former Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland, **Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP**, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and MLAs **Caoimhe Archibald**, Sinn Féin, and **Mike Nesbitt**, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).

"We will report back to Brussels," concluded **Mr Metzler**. "Many in the EU were reluctant to accept the reality of Brexit. With less than 42 days to go, the EU must face up to the fact that the UK is leaving and it is urgent that we work out any possible new arrangement that can be put in place to ensure the close contact between UK and EU civil society is maintained."

Background

For further information on the activities of the EESC Diversity Europe Group, please consult our [website](#).

MIFID II: ESMA ISSUES LATEST DOUBLE VOLUME CAP DATA

Today's updates include DVC data and calculations for the period of 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018 as well as updates to already published DVC periods.

The number of new breaches is 109: 80 equities for the 8% cap, applicable to all trading venues, and 29 equities for the 4% cap, that applies to individual trading venues. Trading under the waivers for all new instruments in breach of the DVC thresholds should be suspended from 20 February 2019 to 19 August 2019. The instruments for which caps already existed from previous periods will continue to be suspended.

In addition, ESMA highlights that some trading venues in the meantime have submitted corrected data that affects past DVC publications. For 1 instrument, this means that the previously identified breach of the cap proved to be incorrect and the suspension of trading under the waivers should

be lifted.

As of 15 February, there is a total of 378 instruments suspended.

Please be aware that ESMA does not update DVC files older than 6 months.

Completeness indicators

ESMA has also updated the DVC completeness indicators file. From now on, the [completeness indicators](#) are calculated on the basis of the calendar year relevant for the DVC publication of the month. In addition, instruments are not present in the DVC system if the relevant trading venue for that instrument has not provided reference data for that instrument. This is due to recent changes to the system.

Brexit

As communicated on [5 February 2019](#), in case of a no-deal Brexit ESMA will not perform the DVC calculations in April and May 2019 due to concerns about disruptions of the ESMA IT-systems after Brexit. The DVC calculations will resume in June 2019. The DVC publications will include UK-related data submitted to the ESMA IT systems up to 29 March 2019.

Background

MiFID II introduced the DVC to limit the amount of dark trading in equities allowed under the reference price waiver and the negotiated transaction waiver. The DVC is calculated per instrument (ISIN) based on the rolling average of trading in that instrument over the last 12 months.

[Main topics and media events 18 February – 3 March 2019](#)

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Foreign Affairs Council, Monday 18 February 2019

The Council will discuss Ukraine, Venezuela, Syria and the Horn of Africa. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Yemen.

Competitiveness Council (Internal market, industry and research), Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 February

2019

On 18 February, the Council will exchange views on the future of the Single Market in preparation of future discussions at European Council level. It will also discuss (and adopt conclusions on) the impact of artificial intelligence on EU industry. Furthermore, the Council will debate the industry-related aspects of the Commission communication “A clean planet for all”, as well as the impact of the European Semester process on the real economy.

On 19 February, the Council will take stock of the progress achieved so far regarding the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe.

General Affairs Council, Tuesday 19 February 2019

The Council will start the preparation of the March European Council and will discuss the Article 7(1) procedures concerning Hungary and Poland, the multiannual financial framework and a reflection paper on sustainability.

EU-League of Arab States Summit, Sunday 24 and Monday 25 February 2019

Leaders from both sides will seek to strengthen Arab-European ties. They will also address a wide range of issues and common challenges, such as: multilateralism, trade and investment, migration, security and the situation in the region.

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[Weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk](#)

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