

**OPERATIONAL PLAN 01 JULY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2024**  
**AGREED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR ASYLUM**  
**AND**  
**THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**  
**AND**  
**THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND LABOUR OF THE REPUBLIC**  
**OF LITHUANIA**

Valletta Harbour and Vilnius  
June 2023

The Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Asylum (hereinafter 'EUAA' or the 'Agency')  
and

The Minister of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter 'Member State'),

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter referred to as 'EUAA Regulation'), and in particular Article 1, Article 2, Article 3, Articles 16 to 20 and Articles 23 to 28 thereof,

Hereby agree on the Operational Plan (hereinafter 'the Plan') for the provision of technical and operational assistance by EUAA to the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Operational Plan is binding in its entirety, including annexes.

The implementation period of the Plan shall be from 01 July 2023 until 31 December 2024.

The Plan enters into force on the date after it has been signed by both Parties.

EUAA shall share a copy of the Plan with the Members of the EUAA Management Board for information. The Plan will be made publicly available on the EUAA website.

Valletta Harbour and Vilnius  
June 2023

Executive Director of the  
European Union Agency for  
Asylum

Minister of Interior of the  
Republic of Lithuania

Minister of Social Security and  
Labour of the Republic of  
Lithuania

Nina Gregori

Agnė Bilotaitė

Monika Navickienė

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office.

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

An Operational Plan addresses the specific needs of the requesting Member State(s) with regard to:

- operational and technical needs of the Member State(s) whose asylum and/or reception systems are subject to disproportionate pressure;
- operational and technical reinforcement needs of the Member State(s) facing disproportionate migratory challenges;
- the implementation of its(their) obligations under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

The Plan provides the framework for delivery of technical and operational assistance by the European Union Agency for Asylum, including the deployment of asylum support teams.

## **2.0. OPERATIONAL SITUATION, NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

Starting in the second quarter of 2021, the pressure on Lithuania's asylum system significantly heightened as a result of the sharp increase in the inflow of irregular migrants through the Belarus border. By the end of the year 4,287 applications were lodged, representing 50 times increase in the number of asylum applications if compared to the preceding year. The composition of the migration flow also recorded a change. In 2020, most irregular entries concerned the Russian Federation nationals, Belarussian nationals and, to a lesser extent, persons originating from Iraq. In 2021, Iraq represented the main citizenship of applicants with 2,327 applications or 54 % of all national applications. Afghanistan, Belarus, Congo (DR) and Russia followed at a distance. Altogether, these five main countries of origin accounted for 74 % of all applications in the country. The several amendments to the national legal framework, coupled with the prevention of irregular entries, resulted in a consistent decrease of the number of new arrivals through the border with Belarus during the second half of 2021. In 2022, asylum applications in Lithuania remained relatively low and averaged at around 87 applications per month (1,051 in total). In parallel, the beginning of 2022 has witnessed close to 57.000 registrations for temporary protection from Ukrainian nationals. The Ukrainian crisis represented a critical factor towards increasing the pressure on the Lithuanian system, with the highest number of asylum and Temporary Protection (TP) applications reaching a peak in April 2022. Up to 20 March 2023, Lithuania had received and registered around 70,800 applicants of Temporary Protection. Between 11 March 2022, when TPD Registrations begun, and 25 June 2022, some 50,000 people received Temporary Protection in Lithuania. TPD registrations remained at high levels until September 2022, with a weekly average of around 800 registrations. Moreover, according to the latest Blueprint Network report, as of 28 March 2023, the estimated number of active registrations in Lithuania, based on data uploaded on the Temporary Protection Platform (TPP), amounted to 74,802 (1.8 % of the EU+ total).

As a response to the influx of irregular arrivals during 2021, the reception capacity of the country has been expanded with the establishment of 3 additional reception sites. As of end of 2022, the Lithuanian reception system consisted of two Foreigners' Registration Centres (FRC) falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior (in Pabrade, and Kybartai) and three Refugees' Reception Centers (RRC) falling under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (in Naunjininkai, Rukla and Girionys), with a total reception capacity of 1,488 places. In 2022, the occupancy in the reception system of Lithuania decreased rapidly, with an average occupation of close to 1,780 persons. In January 2022, there were 3,256 persons recorded, while in December 2022 only 318 persons had remained at the official reception facilities, a remarkable decrease of 90%. In December 2022, about a third (33%) of all persons under the reception system consisted of asylum applicants awaiting a final decision on their case, while a big proportion (55%) of all persons under the Lithuanian reception system was declared with unknown legal status.

Taking into consideration the unprecedented pressure that emerged to the Lithuanian Asylum and Reception system and the respective authorities in 2021, the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, with a letter addressed to the Executive Director of EASO, requested the support of the Agency to carry out relevant Asylum and Reception related procedures and to prevent the increasing of the backlog of asylum cases. Following a Needs Assessment exercise that was conducted in collaboration with the Lithuanian authorities, an Operational Plan (OP) was signed between EASO and the Republic of Lithuania, on 15 July 2021, the implementation period of which was until 31 December 2021. According to the 2021 Operational Plan, support was provided in the area of Asylum, with the objective of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of access to asylum procedures for applicants of international protection and in processing of asylum applications. More particularly, the Agency supported the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) in registering applications of international protection, and the Migration Department in processing applications at first instance. Following the end of this OP, a Rapid Needs Assessment was conducted by EUAA, in close collaboration with the Lithuanian authorities in order to further assess the needs and the areas of potential support. An Operational Plan was signed on 01 July 2022, with implementation dates from 01 July 2022 until 30 June 2023. The OP envisaged the provision of support in Reception, with the objective of enhancing the capacity of the Lithuanian authorities in managing reception centres. More particularly support was provided to the SBGS and the RRC in the activities of information provision, vulnerability workflows, interpretation and the provision of reception-related training. Furthermore, the OP included support to MoSSL in the area of Strategic and Technical support, in the framework of the conceptualisation and design of the new Reception Agency of Lithuania. It is worth mentioning that the EUAA support on Asylum was concluded in June 2022 as it was not identified as an area of potential intervention according to the Lithuanian authorities and therefore, was not part of the support agreed under the 2022-2023 Operational Plan. In addition, although support continued being provided in the area of Reception and in the conceptualisation of a new Reception Agency, this was also further scaled down in light of high absconding rates and the significant decrease regarding the population residing in reception centres.

Building on previous support provided by the EUAA on Asylum and in the light of the above challenges, the need for continuing increasing the knowledge of national authorities towards the implementation of CEAS and enhancing the quality in Asylum procedures emerged. This may include the provision of continued training for the asylum personnel, as well as the organisation of Study Visits aiming at information sharing on asylum models, good practices, operational mechanisms and strategic planning. Furthermore, in consideration of the rapidly evolving situation regarding asylum flows in the region, the need for enhancing national capacity towards contingency planning, with the objective of being able to respond to potential increased pressure on the Asylum system, was expressed.

Identified as the most cost-efficient alternative, in 2021 Lithuanian authorities decided to centralize all the accommodation sites under one umbrella so that the same standard of living could be ensured and the most sustainable and cost-effective ways to provide services to the accommodated people could be selected. Therefore, the intra-ministerial agreement was reached that a new Reception Agency should be established and tasked with implementing the reception conditions in Lithuania. Moreover, it was concluded that in order to be more flexible vis-a-vis the changing pressure on the border it is necessary to have at least 3.000-4.000 sustainable dignified accommodation places and a capacity to rapidly expand and retract by using modular housing units (container-type). In these circumstances, MoSSL has expressed a need for EUAA support with conceptualizing and designing the new Reception Agency of Lithuania, as well as a need for continued and advanced training for the reception personnel of the Refugees' Reception Centres which will need to undertake the leading role in kick-starting the operationalization of the new Reception Agency of Lithuania. Moreover, a need was identified in relation to contingency planning in Reception, in order for the Lithuanian authorities to be able to respond to potential increased pressure on the national Reception system, as well as the need of enhancing the knowledge of national authorities in vulnerability procedures and quality assurance in Reception was acknowledged.

Taking the above into consideration and following a request for support by the Lithuanian authorities, a Needs Assessment exercise was conducted between February and March 2023. The exercise included

meetings with the respective national authorities, as well as external partners operating within the same framework (meetings with representatives of MoI, SBGS and the Migration Department, MoSSL on 21 February 2023; meetings with representatives of the Supreme Administrative Court, Office of the Ombudsperson, UNHCR and Lithuanian Red Cross on 23 February 2023; meetings with MoI, MD, SBGS, MoSSL, Office of the Ombudsperson, as well as Ms. Lyra Jakulaviciene, from Vilnius University on 23 March 2023; meeting with representatives from the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania on 28 March 2023). As a result, priority areas for the provision of immediate support by the EUAA were identified. The main findings emerging from the Needs Assessment Exercise suggest proceeding with the deployment of EUAA Asylum Support Teams to further enhance the capacities of the national Asylum system through continued support in Reception. This implies the provision of support in the conceptualisation of the new Reception Agency, as well as support towards enhancing the quality of reception procedures through continued support with reception-related training and thematic workshops, information provision, vulnerability procedures, interpretation and contingency planning.

In accordance with the operational situation and needs assessment described herewith, the Parties agree to pursue the achievement of the following operational objectives and results:

- **Expected Outcome 1:** Technical and Operational support to the national reception models, strategies towards the implementation of CEAS.

The agreed outcomes shall be achieved through the implementation of the measures specified in Annex I to the Plan.

The designated Plan Coordinator(s), with the support of the Measure Coordinator(s) where relevant, shall follow up the implementation of the Plan through mechanisms and tools deemed appropriate by the implementing Parties, such as a joint quarterly steering committee or other.

The agreed measures may be subject to annual and/or *ad-hoc* reviews as necessary to ensure their continued relevance and added value.

### 3.0. MAIN NATIONAL PARTNERS

The host Member State's main partners involved in the implementation of this Plan are the following:

Organisation	Responsibilities
<b>Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania</b>	The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (MoI) is the main institution responsible to coordinate the implementation of the Lithuanian policies and regulations on migration. In particular, the following tasks fall under the coordination of MoI: migration, asylum and citizenship procedures; issuance and record-keeping of documents proving personal identity and citizenship; travel documents; residence permits; free movement of persons.
<b>Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania</b>	The Ministry for Social Security and Labour (MoSSL) of the Republic of Lithuania is responsible to coordinate and foster integration of beneficiaries of international protection and third country nationals legally present in Lithuania. Furthermore the MoSSL of Lithuania is responsible for the management of the Refugees' Reception Centers in Rukla and in Vilnius which accommodate unaccompanied minors as well as vulnerable asylum seekers.
<b>State Border Guard Service</b>	The State Border Guard Service (SBGS) is established under the MoI of the Republic of Lithuania. SBGS is responsible for the enforcement of public safety in the fields of State border guarding

Organisation	Responsibilities
	and, within the scope of the assigned competence, to manage irregular migration. Among the main tasks of SBGS is to ensure the inviolability of the State border and implement the policy of State border guarding; to implement international agreements, laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania establishing the legal regulations of the State border; to prevent, detect and investigate criminal activities and other violations of law. SBGS is also managing Foreigners' Registration Center in Pabradė, (FRCs Medininkai and Kybartai that were opened in 2021, were closed in September 2022 and February 2023 respectively), which operate as first line reception facilities and where asylum seekers, irregular arrivals and third country nationals without legal grounds for stay in the country are accommodated. In addition to the above, SBGS manages closed reception facilities at 20 border crossing points where asylum applicants are accommodated on a temporary basis.
<b>Foreigners' Registration Center (FRC) of the State Border Guard Service</b>	The Foreigners' Registration Center (FRC) provides first line reception facilities for asylum seekers, irregular migrants and third country nationals during the processing of their asylum applications or other procedures. FRC is managed by the State Border Guard Service (SBGS) and is located in Pabrade.
<b>Refugees' Reception Centre</b>	The Refugees' Reception Centre is a budgetary institution falling under the competence and management of the MoSSL. The Refugees' Reception Centre acts as a coordinator of the national integration programme for beneficiaries of international protection and as a guardian for unaccompanied minors. The Refugees' Reception Centre is also a designated institution to provide first line reception services to vulnerable asylum seekers and has two reception facilities in Rukla and in Vilnius (Naujininkai).

#### 4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EUAA is implementing a structured Monitoring and Evaluation methodology allowing evidence-based measurement of progress, corrective action-taking and reflective reviews.

In terms of monitoring, EUAA is making use of a number of tools developed in order to collect input from the implementation of the Plan and to guarantee feedback in real time.

Results from the monitoring activities shall be reported through mechanisms deemed appropriate by the implementing Parties, such as steering meetings or other.

Periodic or mid-term and final (ex-post) evaluations<sup>2</sup> can be carried out in order to take stock of lessons learned and good practices. The evaluation(s) will be conducted in line with EUAA's Evaluation Framework, which is based on the European Commission's Better Regulation methodological guidelines for evaluations. They may be performed externally through engagement of evaluation specialist(s), internally by Agency staff, or a hybrid approach.

In order to ensure completeness of evaluations and to take into account the views and feedback from the Parties involved, senior and other key persons from the National Authorities of the host Member

<sup>2</sup> Article 16(4) and Article 18(2)(k) EUAA Regulation.<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

State may be invited to interviews with the evaluators or to provide feedback by alternative means. The National Authorities shall commit to supporting the evaluation process and participating in such engagements with evaluators by mutually agreed appointments.

An evaluation report on the results of the operational and technical measures shall be submitted to the Management Board on conclusion of an evaluation. The report on the final (ex post) evaluation will be due within 60 days from the end of the provision of operational and technical measures. For transparency and accountability purposes, evaluation report(s) may be made publicly available on the Agency's website after internal checks have been made to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions in Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725<sup>3</sup> and Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001<sup>4</sup>.

Other monitoring and evaluation deliverables, as applicable, shall be shared with the host Member State and communicated to the EUAA governance structure (e.g. Management Board members and National Contact Points) where relevant.

## **5.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **5.1 General legal basis for the Plan**

In accordance with Article 1 of the EUAA Regulation, the Agency shall contribute to ensuring the efficient and uniform application of Union law on asylum in the Member States in a manner that fully respects fundamental rights. The Agency shall facilitate and support the activities of the Member States in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (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. The Agency, shall improve the functioning of the CEAS, including through the monitoring mechanism and by providing operational and technical assistance to Member States, in particular where their asylum and reception systems are under disproportionate pressure.

Article 2 of the EUAA Regulation specifies the tasks the Agency is entrusted to perform, while in accordance with Article 3 thereof, each Member State shall appoint at least one national contact point for communication with the Agency on matters relating to the tasks referred to in Article 2.

The Agency shall provide operational and technical assistance to a Member State in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 6 of the EUAA Regulation.

### **5.2. Legal framework applicable to the Plan**

EUAA activities performed in the context of the operational and technical assistance as identified in this Plan are in principle governed by EU law, complemented, where appropriate, by the national law of the host Member State. This includes, inter-alia, the safety and security of persons and assets participating in those EUAA activities.

### **5.3. Lawfulness and Respect for Fundamental Rights**

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, (OJ L 145, 31.05.2001, p. 43).

This Plan shall be implemented by the Parties in full compliance with the applicable law, and with full respects to human dignity. This includes, *inter alia*, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as the Convention Relating to the Status of refugees of 1951.

Any person contributing to EUAA operational support activities and taking part in the implementation of the Plan shall respect the applicable International law, European Union law and the national law of the host Member State. They shall maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, professionalism, respect and promotion of fundamental rights and international protection.

They are to act responsibly and proportionally to the agreed objectives. Whilst carrying out supporting functions, all personnel must not discriminate persons on grounds of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, age or sexual orientation. All persons are expected to treat every person with courtesy, respect and due consideration for the nature of any legitimate activity in which they are engaged. To perform their duties properly, they shall serve the public interest and refrain from any activities which could undermine or compromise their independence and the appropriate performance of their duties.

During the implementation of this Plan, all personnel must apply a zero-tolerance attitude with respect to the infringement of fundamental human rights.

This obligation is particularly important when dealing with persons who are in need of international protection. To that end, participants in EUAA operational support under this Plan shall comply and act in accordance with the 'EUAA Code of Conduct for persons participating in EUAA operational support activities'. Participants in operational support activities will be requested to sign a declaration on compliance with the EUAA Code of Conduct.

Participants in EUAA's operational activities who have reason to believe that a violation of the EUAA Code of Conduct has occurred or is about to occur, are obliged to report the matter to the Executive Director of EUAA and to the host Member State Coordinator for the Plan via the appropriate channel: [operations\\_incident@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:operations_incident@euaa.europa.eu). Such an incident is to be reported using the **Incident Report Form (Annex II)**.

Pursuant to Article 49 of the EUAA Regulation, a Fundamental Rights Officer appointed by the Management Board shall be responsible for ensuring the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights in the context of its activities and promoting the respect of fundamental rights by the Agency. The Fundamental Rights Officer shall, *inter alia*, provide observations to the detailed evaluation reports, and be in charge of implementing the complaints mechanism of the EUAA<sup>5</sup>.

Under the complaints mechanism set up by the Agency<sup>6</sup>, Any person who is directly affected by the actions of experts in the asylum support teams, and who considers that his or her fundamental rights have been breached due to those actions, or any party representing such a person, may submit a complaint in writing to the Agency.

#### **5.4. Confidentiality, Public Access to Documents and Data Protection, Intellectual property rights**

Without prejudice to the right of access to documents, as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001<sup>7</sup> and the EUAA implementing rules on access to documents<sup>8</sup>, all versions of this document shall be made available to the competent authorities in each EU Member State, as well as the associate countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

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<sup>5</sup> As soon as it is established in the EUAA.

<sup>6</sup> As soon as it is established in the EUAA.

<sup>7</sup> Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001, regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

<sup>8</sup> Decision No. 6 of the Management Board of EASO of 20 September 2011 laying down practical arrangements regarding public access to the documents of EASO



EUAA and the host Member State shall consult each other on any requests for public access to documents relating to this Plan and treat such requests in accordance with Regulation (EC) 1049/2001 or the respective national law, whichever is applicable.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. The current Plan also takes into account the General Data Protection Regulation as updated in May 2018<sup>9</sup> with a Corrigendum to the 2016/679 Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (Data Protection Directive), which is applicable to stakeholders at national level.

Whenever personal data is processed by EUAA within the activities agreed in the current Plan, EUAA will act as data processor on behalf of the competent authorities of the host Member State, following the applicable EU and national laws and regulations, as well as the instructions received from the Host Member State as the data controller.

In order to perform their tasks in accordance with this Plan, participants to activities under this Plan are only allowed to access the data bases mentioned below, under section 6.

EUAA will implement the necessary technical and organisational measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of the personal data it processes taking into account possible additional instructions received from the host Member State. This is to prevent any unauthorised disclosure of or access to this information.

The host Member State agrees that any personal data obtained in the course of the implementation of the Plan and by any EUAA personnel working on behalf of the Member State authorities can be processed in the EUAA IT systems, including cloud-based systems, exclusively under the instructions of the Member State and until an alternative system exists that can substitute the processing system used by EUAA.

The host Member State also agrees to indicate a contact point in view of its role as a data controller for any data processed by EUAA on behalf of the national authorities of the host Member State.

All rights in any writings or other work produced by members of asylum support teams shall be the property of EUAA and/or the European Union, where such writings or work relate to activities undertaken in the context of the Plan. EUAA and/or the European Union acquires irrevocably ownership of the results and of all intellectual property rights, such as copyright, and industrial property rights, on the materials produced specifically for EUAA under the Plan and incorporated in such works, without prejudice, however, to the specific rules concerning pre-existing rights on pre-existing materials or other detailed rules contained in the relevant Framework Contracts concluded by EUAA for purposes related to the implementation of this Plan. Selected deliverables developed under this Plan may be published.

### **5.5. Civil and criminal liability of members of the Asylum Support Team**

Articles 26 and 27 of the EUAA Regulation will be applicable to the members of the asylum support teams deployed in the host Member State.

### **5.6. Non-substantial changes during implementation**

The Plan aims to provide effective and flexible support to the identified needs of the host Member State. Therefore, the foreseen activities will be implemented in consideration of the changing

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<sup>9</sup> Corrigendum, OJ L 127, 23.5.2018, p. 2 ((EU) 2016/679)

circumstances which may occur in the international protection and reception systems in the Member States or on the ground, as well as in the context of the availability of financial resources and experts.

The implementation of measures and delivery of technical and operational assistance foreseen in the Plan may be subject to non-substantial changes that may be accommodated within the objectives of a measure, so long as they do not affect the overall EUAA budget, do not require an amendment to or adaptation of the Plan, and that the host Member State is timely informed in writing.

Changes required to the agreed Input(s) and Output(s) in the framework of the Plan shall as a general rule be considered non-substantial, unless such changes require significant additional resources which cannot be accommodated within the overall EUAA budget, as well as when they impact on and/or require an amendment of the agreed Outcome(s).

### **5.7. Amendments to the Plan**

Any changes that prove to require an amendment to or adaptation of the Plan, shall be agreed in writing between the Executive Director of EUAA and the host Member State, after consulting the participating Member States, where necessary, in line with Article 18(5) of the EUAA Regulation.

Changes to outcome(s) specified in Section 2.0. shall as a general rule be considered substantial changes and will be subject to an amendment.

### **5.8. Suspension of measures and/or the Plan implementation**

In accordance with Article 18(6)(c) of the EUAA Regulation, the Executive Director shall, after informing the host Member State, suspend or terminate, in whole or in part, the deployment of the asylum support teams if the conditions to carry out the operational and technical measures are no longer fulfilled or if the Plan is not respected by the host Member State or if, after consulting the Fundamental Rights Officer of the EUAA, it considers that there are breaches of fundamental rights or international protection obligations by the host Member State that are of a serious nature or are likely to persist.

### **5.9. Protocol (No 7) on Privileges and Immunities**

Protocol (No 7) on the privileges and immunities of the European Union ('the Protocol')<sup>10</sup> applies to the Agency staff members (statutory staff), when they are deployed for the purposes of the implementation of the Plan on the territory of the host Member State, including to the Asylum Support Teams.

The host Member State shall ascertain that the relevant provisions of the Protocol are implemented and shall provide the necessary support to the Agency in this regard.

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION STRUCTURE**

This chapter describes the various conditions for and aspects of support to the authorities of the host Member State in the framework of the Plan.

### **6.1. Organisational Pre-Conditions**

**The host Member State will:**

- designate an overall Plan Coordinator, as well as a specific Measure Coordinator for each measure stipulated in the Plan.

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<sup>10</sup> [EUR-Lex - 12012E/PRO/07 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

- grant appropriate access rights for the members of asylum support teams and EUAA representatives to all relevant databases and provide the relevant parties with the required information and data in the context of the implementation of this Plan.
- facilitate the provision of appropriate working space. Every effort shall be made by the Parties to provide suitable working conditions and, where required, working place for the participants in the activities implemented in the framework of the Plan. Minimum working and security conditions are considered as organisational pre-conditions.
- as far as operationally feasible, and where relevant, the working files shall be made available by the host Member State in English (unless otherwise agreed).
- the host Member State shall provide EUAA with information on the implementation of the Plan through timely input to the Early warning and Preparedness System and the delivery of tailored information on the implementation of measures agreed in the Plan.
- facilitate the implementation of the EUAA survey data collection systems (including but not limited to Surveys with Asylum Related Migrants (SAM), Surveys of Arriving Migrants from Ukraine (SAM-UKR)).

**EUAA will:**

- designate an overall Plan Coordinator (also referred to as Coordinating Officer in accordance to Article 25 of EUAA Regulation), as well as a specific Measure Coordinator for each measure stipulated in the Plan.
- provide technical support to experts participating in this Plan with the aim of ensuring that all deliverables make good use of the expertise and information already available to EUAA.
- provide the technical equipment required for the work of the asylum support teams and reimburse costs incurred by persons participating in the support activities deployed by EUAA in the framework of this Plan, according to the applicable EUAA rules.
- support the development and implementation of agreed tools and procedures, taking into account the EUAA tools and guidance.

**6.2. Conditions for Deployment**

General rules and conditions for deployment are published on the following platforms, which the experts/asylum support team members are obliged to consult:

- EUAA Operational Deployment Management System (ODMS)
- EUAA country-specific operations platforms. These platforms are made available to members of asylum support teams upon their deployment, allowing for preparation for deployment and daily implementation of their tasks.
- Other appropriate communication tools may be used as necessary.

The platforms contain relevant information, such as:

- special instructions for the members of asylum support teams, including databases that they are authorised to consult;
- description of specific tasks, workflows and procedures, as relevant;
- location in the host Member State where the asylum support teams will be deployed;
- logistical arrangements including information on working conditions, practical information concerning location of deployment and related workflows, etc.;
- equipment that members of asylum support teams may carry in the host Member State, transport and other logistics;
- other specific instructions and provisions as necessary.

Relevant thematic pages of the EUAA Information and Documentation System concerning the asylum and reception system of the host Member State, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background may be consulted.

The host Member State shall contribute to information concerning its asylum and reception systems, including information on relevant practices, legislation, case law and statistical background.

The host Member State and EUAA will provide experts with information on the general state of play with regard to the procedures for international protection and reception in the host Member State and specific information about the state of play of the deliverables as necessary for the specific measures on a continuous basis. Specific asylum support team deployment details may be provided under each measure, where relevant.

### **6.3. Composition of asylum support teams**

The asylum support teams may be composed of the following resources:

- i. The Agency's staff members, i.e. statutory staff employed by the Agency subject to the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union<sup>11</sup>;
- ii. Member States experts, including Member State experts made available through the Asylum Reserve Pool;
- iii. Associate Countries experts, i.e. experts made available through contributions to the Asylum Intervention Pool by associate countries referred to in Article 34 of the EUAA Regulation, with which the European Union has an arrangement in place on the modalities of its participation in EUAA's work;
- iv. Seconded National Experts (SNEs), i.e. experts employed by a national, regional or local public administration of an EU Member State or an associate country or by a public inter-governmental organisation and seconded to the Agency<sup>12</sup> for the provision of support to its operational activities;
- v. Other experts not employed by the Agency: Experts on contract, i.e. individuals providing services in relation to the Plan upon conclusion of a public contract between the Agency and the legal entity with which these individuals have an employment and/or contractual relationship, including temporary agency workers, or with remunerated external experts in line with Article 93 of EUAA Financial Regulation<sup>13</sup>.

The implementation of the Plan shall be based on the common understanding that the provision of resources, other than EUAA (statutory) staff, to be deployed for the purposes described above can under no circumstances lead *per se* to the establishment of an employment relationship between EUAA and the members of the asylum support teams. Throughout the duration of the deployment of the asylum support teams in the activities undertaken in the context of the present Plan, the employer of the asylum support teams members is and remains their employer.

## **7.0 SECURITY AND SAFETY**

The principles of EUAA's Security Governance Framework<sup>14</sup> are based on the security principles contained in the Commission's security rules. That Commission Decision 443/2013 on the security in the Commission defines that security shall be based on the principles of legality, transparency, proportionality and accountability.

The safety and security of persons participating in EUAA activities under the Plan falls under the overall legal framework of the host Member State and shall be provided by the respective authorities legally

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<sup>11</sup> As laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68, OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Decision No 01 of the Management Board of EASO of 25 November 2010 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts (SNE) to the European Asylum Support Office (ref. number: EASO/MB/2010/03).

<sup>13</sup> Article 93 of Management Board Decision No 54 of 14 August 2019 on the EASO Financial Regulation (as amended by Management Board Decision No 74 of 28 July 2021). The MB Decision nr 54 of 14 August 2019 remains in force despite EASO being replaced by the EUAA. Any references in the EASO Financial Regulation to 'EASO' or the 'EASO Regulation', should therefore be construed as references to the 'EUAA' or equivalent provisions in the 'EUAA Regulation', respectively.

<sup>14</sup> Decision of the Executive Director No 61 of 12 April 2021 on the Security Governance Framework.

responsible and accountable for the public order and security and safety on the territory of that Member State.

EUAA will endeavor to support the identification of required security and safety measures and the implementation of those that are under its remit, both legally and functionally, in close cooperation with the MS security responsible (see relevant definition in Section 7.1 below).

To that end:

- Standard security and safety requirements, identified herewith, shall apply as a general rule.
- Specific security and safety requirements for the Plan, to be identified jointly by EUAA and the host Member State security responsible, shall be established in an annex to this plan.
- The safety and security measures shall be identified jointly on a basis of field assessment visits.

### **7.1. Standard security requirements**

The standard security and safety requirements are rather pertaining to elements to be present in the implementation of the Plan, not to minimum security standards:

- Both the host Member State on one side and EUAA on the other shall appoint a single point of contact responsible for security matters under the Plan both at central and local level (hereafter 'security responsible').
- The host Member State shall ensure that the working conditions for the performance of the activities under the Plan are compliant with the national occupational health and safety norms and regulations.
- A pre-deployment briefing programme, drafted in close cooperation with the respective national authorities, focusing both on general security rules and awareness, as well as on specific security aspects for each deployment will be provided. With regard to the decentralised nature of deployments, the use of e-learning and other distance-based training techniques should be considered.
- Emergency (evacuation) plan. Certain operational activities, such as operations in field locations, require that staff shall have clear guidance and training on how to evacuate quickly in case of emergencies. In a more general context, there could be a need to evacuate from the operational area as well. Emergency plans shall be drafted and maintained up-to-date by the competent authority/person(s), whereas they shall be made available to the concerned parties and exercised regularly. A security responsible shall maintain updated information on the availability of evacuation plans and routes.
- Communication tools. As considered relevant by the EUAA Security sector, EUAA operational staff shall have access to independent radio communication equipment. If possible, the equipment shall be interoperable with the local law enforcement in charge of the security of the operation.
- Security of information. Sensitive non-classified and classified information shall be protected adequately, in accordance with the applicable legal framework<sup>15</sup>. EUAA's security responsible shall be involved in supporting the proper classification of relevant information.
- Security of IT and communication equipment. EUAA's IT equipment is adequately prepared to protect the information level it has been foreseen to process.
- Personal security behavior shall be included in the pre-deployment training, led by operational teams and performed for the experts during the first days of arrival to the operational area. This may refer to the EUAA Code of Conduct as well.

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<sup>15</sup> Including, *inter alia*, the security principles contained in Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444.

- Reporting security incidents from the operational area to the EUAA Headquarters is essential to ensure an overview of the overall security management is maintained.

### **7.2. Specific security and safety requirements**

- Specific security and safety requirements for the implementation of the Plan shall be defined on the basis of a pre-deployment security assessment visit with the aim of identification of specific potential risks, identification of mitigation measures and communication of those measures to the Member State and involved stakeholders, prior to the deployment of asylum support teams.

### **7.3. Suspension of operational activities on security and safety grounds**

EUAA reserves the right to suspend operational activities on the basis of current risk assessment(s), while keeping informed the host Member State on the findings and identified mitigating measures required for resumption.

The host Member State may also suspend temporarily, in whole or in part, the implementation of operational activities in case of serious imminent safety and security incidents, developments, or as mitigating or preventive measures or direct threats to personnel, activities or physical presence. The EUAA Plan Coordinator and the EUAA security responsible shall be informed without delay.

The Parties will agree on conditions for resumption as soon as possible.

### **7.4. Security incident reporting**

Any participant<sup>16</sup> in EUAA's operational activities who becomes aware of a(n) (impending) incident related to the security and safety of persons, assets or premises is obliged to report the matter to the Executive Director of EUAA and to the Host Member State Coordinator for the Plan via the appropriate channel: [security\\_incidents\\_operations@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:security_incidents_operations@euaa.europa.eu). Such an incident is to be reported using the **Security Incident Report Form (Annex III)**.

## **8.0. COMMUNICATION**

The Executive Director will appoint one or more experts from the Agency's staff to act or to be deployed as a Coordinating Officer in accordance with Article 25 of the EUAA Regulation.

The Coordinating Officer will act as an interface between the Agency, the host Member State, and experts participating in asylum support teams, and will foster cooperation and coordination between the host Member State and the participating Member States.

The Coordinating Officer will also monitor the correct implementation of the operational plan, act on behalf of the Agency as regards all aspects of the deployment of asylum support teams and report to the Agency on all those aspects, and report to the Executive Director where the operational plan is not adequately implemented.

The host Member State and the Coordinating Officer will manage the exchange of information concerning the tasks under the Plan.

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<sup>16</sup> The 'participants in EUAA's operational activities' are to be construed as persons deployed to asylum support teams ('AST') referred to in Section 6.3. of the Plan.

During the implementation of this Plan, members of asylum support teams shall be briefed regularly on the current situational and operational developments to address challenges and identify improvements.

Particular attention shall be paid to the need to continuously develop, improve and make available EUAA support tools. Should such need be identified or changed during the Plan implementation, it shall be communicated to EUAA for further consideration.

EUAA will maintain close cooperation and communication with the relevant stakeholders. EUAA will also provide information to its partners (i.e. the European Commission, concerned EU Agencies, and international organisations) about the operational activities, as appropriate and in line with EUAA transparency and communication policies. The timing and content of communication with the media shall be agreed upon between EUAA and the host Member State.

Where relevant, the Parties will facilitate media coverage to ensure a wider dissemination and visibility of results.

As a publicly funded EU body, the Agency is accountable for and committed to transparency for the public resources it makes use of.

In this regard, EUAA may brand its operational activities to ensure appropriate visibility. This includes the application of fixed branding and use of visibility items, such as on, but not limited to, containers and premises, as well as in offices where the Agency provides operational and technical assistance. It also includes the branding of mobile assets which it may deploy, including vehicles.

Such branding may also include visibility clothing and materials worn by personnel deployed by the Agency in order to identify their association to, or funding by, the Agency.

In specific cases, the Agency and the respective national authority/ies may agree on co-branding of visibility clothing and/or materials, in line with the visual identity rules and guidelines of both/all parties.

## **9.0. COOPERATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

### **9.1. Cooperation with the European Commission**

All activities under this Plan will be closely coordinated with the host Member State and in close cooperation with the European Commission.

### **9.2. Cooperation with UNHCR**

In accordance with Article 38 of EUAA Regulation, the Agency aims at a coherent and complementary continuation of the fruitful cooperation with UNHCR. The EUAA Coordinating Officer will liaise with the UNHCR office in the host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the host Member State under the current Plan.

### **9.3. Cooperation with IOM**

In accordance with Article 52 of the EASO Regulation<sup>17</sup>, In July 2019 the Agency signed a working arrangement with IOM to establish a cooperation framework covering the relevant areas of common work and interest setting objectives and principles of such cooperation. Therefore, the EUAA Coordinating Officer will liaise with the IOM office in the host Member State for a continuous cooperation and coordination of practical activities agreed with the host Member State under the current Plan and in accordance with the working arrangement.

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<sup>17</sup> Reference to Article 52 of the EASO Regulation shall be construed as reference to Article 38 of the EUAA Regulation.





## ANNEX I – Operational Measure

<b>Measure LT 1: Reception Support</b> <b>Expected Outcome: Technical and Operational support to the national reception models and strategies towards the implementation of CEAS.</b>	
<b>Responsible Authority(ies)/Main National Partner(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania</li> <li>• Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania</li> <li>• State Border Guard Service (under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania)</li> <li>• Refugees' Reception Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Operational Preconditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular coordination meetings are held among the concerned representatives of the national authorities and with EUAA to ensure effective collaboration and coordination;</li> <li>• The Lithuanian authorities make available the necessary office space for the Agency's deployed personnel and provide the necessary equipment for implementation of the activities, unless otherwise agreed;</li> <li>• A two-way data sharing procedure is in place between EUAA and the Lithuanian authorities to measure the impact of the intervention;</li> <li>• The Lithuanian authorities will be responsible for securing all permits necessary for the provision of the agreed support;</li> <li>• Host Member State authorities grant access to relevant databases/IT systems, where necessary;</li> <li>• The necessary national legislation is adopted providing for the establishment of the new reception agency under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania;</li> <li>• Authorities shall provide existing plans for contingency, if available.</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LT 1.0 Support to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to strategically conceptualize, design and develop the new Reception Agency of Lithuania.</b></li> <li>• <b>LT 1.1 Support to the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior towards enhancing the quality of reception procedures.</b></li> <li>• <b>LT 1.2 Support to the Refugees' Reception Centre under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour towards enhancing the quality of reception procedures.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Actions</b>	<p><b>LT 1.0 Support to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to strategically conceptualize, design and develop the new Reception Agency of Lithuania.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action 1.0.1:</b> Support and facilitate the delivery of training sessions and thematic workshops;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.0.2:</b> Organise study visits to other Member States for information sharing on reception models, best practices, operational mechanisms, and strategic planning;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.0.3:</b> Establishment of a Working Group aiming at the restructuring of the current system and implementation of legal amendments related to the new Agency;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.0.4:</b> Contribute to the design of national coordination structures and integrative methods, including through drafting relevant SOPs and plans, to prepare for, and respond to, increased pressure (contingency planning).</li> </ul>

	<p><b>LT 1.1 Support to the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior towards enhancing the quality of reception procedures.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.1:</b> Support and facilitate the delivery of training sessions and thematic workshops;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.2:</b> Provide information in individual or group sessions with residents, with particular attention to the communication and information needs of vulnerable groups;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.3:</b> Contribute to the design, production, and distribution of information provision tools and materials;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.4:</b> Conduct vulnerability identification, screening, and referral (including rapid identification and pre-identification) with applicants at selected reception facilities;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.5:</b> Design, updating and/or optimization of relevant vulnerability tools, processes and workflows;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.6:</b> Provision of interpretation services in relevant languages, including through remote interpretation services;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.1.7:</b> Contribute to the design of national coordination structures and integrative methods, including through drafting relevant SOPs and plans, to prepare for, and respond to, increased pressure (contingency planning).</li> </ul> <p><b>LT 1.2 Support to the Refugees’ Reception Centre under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour towards enhancing the quality of reception procedures.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.1:</b> Support and facilitate the delivery of training sessions and thematic workshops;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.2:</b> Provide information in individual or group sessions with residents, with particular attention to the communication and information needs of vulnerable groups;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.3:</b> Contribute to the design, production, and distribution of information provision tools and materials;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.4:</b> Design, updating and/or optimization of relevant vulnerability tools, processes and workflows;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.5:</b> Facilitate the sharing of good practices/ lessons learned;</li> <li>• <b>Action 1.2.6:</b> Organise thematic sessions, workshops or other capacity building activities focused on age assessment and guardianship;</li> <li>• <b>Activity 1.2.7:</b> Organise thematic sessions, workshops or other capacity building activities focused on stakeholders involved in the Legal Aid scheme;</li> <li>• <b>Activity 1.2.8:</b> Provision of interpretation services in relevant languages, including through remote interpretation services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inputs</b></p>	<p><b>Indicative Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deployment of asylum support teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Experts: Up to 13</li> <li>➢ Indicative profiles: Organisational Management, Asylum and Reception Financial Management, Organisational Development, Vulnerability, Asylum and/or Reception Operations</li> <li>➢ Interpreters/ Cultural Mediators: Up to 25</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Material support:</b></p> <p>Costs for trainings, meetings, workshops and exchange/study visits.</p>

	<p>Conditional upon EUAA assessment and approval of any request, and subject to budget availability for the present Operational Plan, support could include inter alia equipment, works, services, communication/promotional materials, costs for trainings/meetings/workshops, infrastructure costs, IT equipment, office supplies and other material and operational support where required for the joint EUAA and national authorities' activities.</p> <p><b>All inputs are subject to Agency budget availability.</b></p>
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## ANNEX II - Incident Report Form

[CONFIDENTIAL] Incident Report

<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name of EUAA staff:</b>	
<b>Name of responsible National Authority Authorised Representative:</b>	

Date of incident:

Information on the incident:

## ANNEX III – Security Incident Report Form

### Security Incident Report

<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name of EUAA staff:</b>	
<b>Name of responsible National Authority Authorised Representative:</b>	

1. Time of the incident:
2. Date and time of the report:
3. Type of incident:
4. Persons involved:
5. Incident description:
6. Consequences:
7. Actions taken:
8. Annexes:
9. Recipients of Security Incident Report