

## EUROPEAN PLATFORM OF RECEPTION AGENCIES (EPRA)

### BRIEFING NOTE

December 2015

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#### BACKGROUND

EU reception administrations are confronted with very similar challenges related the day-to-day management of a reception network. Strategic management choices relating to the implementation of a (national or EU) reception policy are sometimes made with a limited consideration for and a limited knowledge of similar developments elsewhere in Europe. A platform of European administrations, through the gathering of management expertise and the dissemination of acquired management knowledge, would have a real added value.

#### OBJECTIVE OF THE PLATFORM

The objective of the platform of EU MS administrations responsible for the implementation of EU and national asylum reception law is to stimulate strategic information sharing on a senior management level, compilation of information, identification and monitoring of best practices with a view to efficient and informed management of asylum reception in the EU.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE PLATFORM

Expected results of the platform include:

- Establishment of a permanent, high-quality information flow on different issues linked to the organisation of reception towards partner organizations.
- Fostering consultation on strategic management level, including the definition and evaluation of management strategies in all their nuances and the exchange of key operational information related to asylum reception.
- Continuous capacity and know-how development of asylum reception administrations in specific aspects of the management of a reception network through the building of a “European community of best practices” based on the sharing and joint monitoring of reception management practices.

#### MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE PLATFORM

Main activities include:

- Organization of 2 full rounds/Expert meetings per year in Brussels and EASO-Malta to foster strategic consultation (top management level) between EU reception administrations.
- Organization of 2 thematic working groups (middle management and expert level) in each of the participating organizations.

EPRA thematic focus includes (non-exhaustive):

- reception budget efficiency and flexibility
- integration of reception in the asylum- reception-return chain
- defining, measuring and managing an appropriate reception capacity
- the measure of reception performance, incl. indicators at operational and policy level
- the work with decentralized actors, either non-profit partners or private contractors.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

EPRA participating organizations include:

- The Austrian Ministry of Interior
- The Belgian Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
- The British Home Office
- The Dutch Central Reception Agency
- The Finnish Immigration Service
- The French Ministry of Interior and the French Office for Immigration and Integration
- The Ministry of Integration of Rhineland-Palatinate (German Land)
- The Irish Reception and Integration Agency
- The Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs
- The Norwegian Immigration Directorate
- The Polish Office for Foreigners
- The Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs
- The Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security
- The Swedish Migration Agency.

The Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees, the Czech Refugee Facilities Administration of the MOI, the Danish Immigration Service, the Italian Ministry of the Interior and the Maltese Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers the Cypriot Asylum service of the Ministry of Interior and the Government of Luxembourg, Office for Reception and Integration were also associated to some activities. The objective is to progressively extend the platform to other interested European (Member) States (reception administrations or alike). (Future) Candidate Member States can be associated to the activities as observers (e.g. the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees).

## OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

EPRA collaborates with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) conform to its mandate. EPRA liaises with other relevant initiatives such as ENARO<sup>1</sup> and international forums such as IGC and GDISC for the reception issue. EPRA outcomes are disseminated to various stakeholders (EC, other relevant initiatives, etc.) based on a plan for dissemination.

## EPRA COORDINATION

EPRA is coordinated by FEDASIL, hosting the EPRA coordination team. EPRA coordination team is supported by national reference points in each partner organizations in order to guarantee a proper level of investment, information sharing and expertise from partner organizations.

## EPRA THREE-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO RECEPTION AND THEMATIC FOCUS 2011-2015



<sup>1</sup> European Network of Asylum Reception Organizations.

## EPRA PROGRAMME IN 2011-2015

Past activities include<sup>2</sup>:

- EPRA Kick-off meeting (31 March & 1 April, 2011) in Belgium - Brussels
- Working Group 1 (15 & 16 June 2011) in Sweden - Gothenburg: "The Asylum, Reception and Return Chain"
- Full Round (22 & 23 September 2011) in Belgium - Brussels
- Working group 2 (25 & 26 January 2012) in Ireland - Dublin: "Defining, measuring and managing an adequate reception capacity"
- Full Round (10 & 11 May 2012) in Belgium - Brussels
- Working Group 3 (10, 11 & 12 October 2012) in Oslo - Norway: "Quality of a Reception policy"
- Full Round (10 & 11 December 2012) in Belgium - Brussels
- EASO-EPRA experts meeting on reception (18 & 19 June 2013) in Malta
- Working Group 4 (5, 6 & 7 November 2013) in Helsinki - Finland: "Persons with Special Needs"
- Full Round (9 & 10 December 2013) in Brussels - Belgium
- Working Group 5 (19, 20 & 21 March 2014) in Paris - France: "Reception networks and the outflow policy"
- EASO-EPRA experts meeting on reception (16-17 June 2014) in Malta
- Working group 6 (5, 6 & 7 November 2014) in Vienna - Austria: "Reception Standards"
- Full Round (8 & 9 December 2014) in Brussels - Belgium
- Working group 7 (31 March, 1 & 2 April 2015) in The Hague - The Netherlands: "Reception Budget"
- EASO-EPRA experts meeting on reception (2 & 3 June 2015) in Malta
- EPRA Flash meeting/Working group 8 (29 October 2015) in Brussels- Belgium: "Managing higher flows in reception and specific measures"
- Full Round (7 & 8 December 2015) in Brussels - Belgium.

## LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE

EPRA is conceived as a long term initiative. The first phase (2011-2012) largely focused on the set-up of the platform with a number of core countries and installed the strategic exchanges mechanisms and the community of practices based on a number of themes. The second phase (2013-2015) will be focused on consolidation of structure and results (also through the support of the Belgium national ERF programme). At the end of this phase, partner organizations will be invited to reflect on and define a longer term perspective for EPRA to guarantee the sustainability of outcomes.

The platform, through the establishment of coordination and exchange mechanisms, will foster sustainable operational connections and confidence between reception administrations.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For any further information on EPRA, please contact EPRA coordination ([vinciane.masurelle@fedasil.be](mailto:vinciane.masurelle@fedasil.be) or [yael.chemin@fedasil.be](mailto:yael.chemin@fedasil.be)).

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<sup>2</sup> Reports of these activities are available on request.