

# EU-FRANK

Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee  
Admission through New Knowledge



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## Final recommendations to EASO from the EU-FRANK project



EUROPEAN UNION  
Asylum, Migration  
and Integration Fund

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## Background

The European Union action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project aimed to increase European Union (EU) Member States' (MS) operational capacity and knowledge on how to deliver effective, high-quality resettlement programmes. The project explored ways to increase competence and improve coordination, cooperation and experience exchange about resettlement on an EU level. Over the course of 2017–2020, EU-FRANK acted as a vehicle and platform for experience exchange between states. The project set up working groups of experts who co-created tools and training materials, and arranged multiple practical learning opportunities and workshops around topics related to different parts of the resettlement process. The project also explored the potential for joint actions, coordination and information sharing between states, in order to provide guidance on how future resettlement activities can be carried out in a more effective way.

EU-FRANK was led by the Swedish Migration Agency in partnership with migration authorities in Belgium<sup>1</sup>, Italy<sup>2</sup>, Netherlands<sup>3</sup> and Switzerland<sup>4</sup>, and several non-State actors<sup>5</sup> with extensive experience in resettlement. To ensure sustainability and long-term implementation, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) is envisaged to manage and incorporate the project results. These include practical tools (e.g. guides and checklists), a training module on resettlement incorporated into the EASO Training Curriculum (ETC), as well as experiences and recommendations mainly concerning the prospects and possible methods for increased cooperation and coordination between EU MS around resettlement on an operational level.

In the *Roadmap for the handover of the EU-FRANK project results between the Swedish Migration Agency and the European Asylum Support Office*, it is stated that EU-FRANK should share any recommendations or outputs, which may be relevant to support MS and increase cooperation among them that may be of interest to EASO. Recognising that the project built an informal network of resettlement experts, it is also stated that “EU-FRANK and EASO will work closely on matters relating to networking and communication, including supportive materials etc. that may become available on the EASO platform.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Interior.

<sup>3</sup> The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service Ministry of Justice and Security.

<sup>4</sup> The State Secretariat for Migration

<sup>5</sup> The European Asylum Support Office, International Catholic Migration Commission, International Organization for Migration, Migration Policy Institute (MPI Europe), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees act as reference partners within the framework of EU-FRANK.

Against this backdrop, EASO asked EU-FRANK to provide recommendations that could be of use in the establishment of the EASO Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Network<sup>6</sup> in late 2019. This document in its first format contained initial recommendations based on the experiences of the project over the period 2017–2019. EU-FRANK also shared observations and suggestions concerning the establishment of a network for resettlement practitioners with EASO during recurrent meetings, as well as discussions in the project’s Strategising Committee, as set out in the handover plan. The final version of this document contains the consolidated version of the project’s recommendations to EASO.

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<sup>6</sup> Later EASO Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network.

## General experiences from EU-FRANK

Throughout the project period, EU-FRANK explored the prospects of bringing resettlement practitioners together in different types of constellations in order to learn from each other. To facilitate as much exchange of knowledge and inspiration as possible, the project set out to establish a structure for experience exchange between a number of actors rather than bilateral twinning arrangements. Throughout its duration, the project brought together close to 300 practitioners from over 30 countries and organisations across Europe in over 30 different events. Activities focused on different phases/aspects of the resettlement process, and displayed different models adopted by different actors.

Experiences show that resettlement practitioners welcome opportunities to come together with colleagues across national borders, to gain insight into the practices, good experiences and challenges that other states face. There is also interest in getting access to useful tools, such as fact sheets, overviews of where other states are going on missions and practical information concerning, for instance, specific host country contexts. The project noted a specific interest in practical learning opportunities and experience exchange with a hands-on focus aimed at practitioners. However, apart from project events, such opportunities seem only to exist in limited numbers, and depend on goodwill and relationships between states. By creating a forum for international exchange on resettlement on an operational level, the project aimed to complement other international meetings of a more strategic character, such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) and the Core Groups.

EU-FRANK also noted a specific interest among resettlement practitioners to attend events that are tailored to fit specific professional categories or following a specific topic. This was the case for example of the Pre-departure Orientation (PDO) Network, active during 2019–2020; the Experience Exchange Programme for Heads of Selection Mission, active in 2020; and the Monitoring & Evaluation workshop series, with four workshops in 2019–2020. In all three cases, it became evident that the more the participants get to know each other and each other's programmes, the easier it became to set up experience exchange opportunities between them.

Aside from the meeting structures above, the project invested in testing different set-ups with a focus on a specific operational aspect, as was the case of the Operational Meeting on Resettlement for states resettling from Jordan, or focusing on practical learning opportunities, for example through study visits. Alongside the analysis of how to establish a structure for experience exchange and support between EU MS, EU-FRANK analysed what could serve to support such a network. A key prerequisite in order to facilitate cooperation is access to information about states' programmes and areas of expertise. For states to be able to build on each other's competence to increase their resettlement capacity, they need to know

whom to contact around different topics. This may include aspects such as in which host-countries states operate and which methods they use to perform resettlement activities. While some states can easily obtain this information, it may not be as accessible to newcomers in the field. EU-FRANK therefore explored the possibilities of making supportive tools and information available online.

The project believed that a digital platform or online forum could be an alternative to provide information relating both to specific meetings and of more general nature, about states' resettlement programmes or areas of expertise. This could be of use for states that are looking to partner up around specific matters, or who want to develop their programmes by comparison with others. It could also be of use for projects such as EU-FRANK or for EASO in matching states or directing support. EU-FRANK tools, such as Practical Guides or templates, could also be made available on such a platform.

This short background outlines some of the main experiences of the project that are reflected in the recommendations below. For more specific details on the different areas and operations, it is possible to refer to the final operational reports produced by the project.

# Recommendations

Based on the experiences described above, EU-FRANK would like to present the following recommendations for EASO, which include and complement the initial recommendations shared in November 2019.

## 1. Connecting states on an operational level

EU-FRANK succeeded in bringing together states with varying experience in resettlement, as well as with different models, for practical discussions and exchange around operational work in different phases of the resettlement process. By providing opportunities for practitioners to observe and discuss hands-on resettlement delivery, the project complemented other international meeting fora such as the ATCR, WGR and Core Groups, where discussions tend to stay on a general or strategic level. The project noted that there was a specific interest and need for exchanges aimed at practitioners, especially among states with newer resettlement programmes. Concretely, that would mean:

- Shaping the network in a way that enables **practical dialogue on an operational level**. This can be done by **creating sub-groups for operational staff**, or by arranging **thematic meetings and practical learning opportunities** around issues connected to different phases of the resettlement process.

## 2. Facilitating multilateral experience exchange and promoting continuity

The project noted a generally higher interest from states in taking part in events that bring together a group of actors, rather than purely bilateral set-ups. This mixed group of actors include both state and non-state actors, depending on what is fitting for the topic at hand. Examples of well-received group events are study visits to observe resettlement activities in practice, workshops where a number of states exchange experiences on a specific topic or minor exchanges where a few states share and discuss practices. At the beginning of the project, very few bilateral setups were organised, or asked for. As practitioners' networks and other exchanges progressed, states became more aware of what kinds of needs they had and what support they could get from each other. This led to an increased interest in bilateral exchanges or exchanges in minor setups sometimes initiated by states. On that note, EU-FRANK observed that it is valuable for states to learn from several different models or methods, rather than copying a specific model of another state. Therefore, the project recommends:

- **Creating structured experience exchange opportunities of a multilateral character.**
- **Creating opportunities for continued exchange** in relevant areas for practitioners – as practitioners have continued opportunities of exchange they have better conditions to assess and express their needs for support and can play an active role in forming these exchanges.

- As observed in the interim evaluation, focus on **establishing clear objectives and concrete outcomes** as well as ensuring commitment of participants. Therefore, EASO is also recommended to **ensure that network activities have clear and defined goals and outcomes**, and that **the impact of the activities is monitored** over time.

### 3. Selection and PDO – two fields that could constitute sub-groups

EU-FRANK provided opportunities for states to exchange experiences across the spectrum of phases and activities that constitutes the (standard) resettlement process. However, the project observed what seems to **be a natural division between the areas of selection and orientation (PDO/CO)**. In many countries, selection and orientation matters are handled by actors with different expertise and profiles, sometimes placed within separate departments or agencies. In other states, one or a few practitioners take the role of general experts or contact persons for the entire national resettlement process. In that sense, EU-FRANK recommends:

- That an operational resettlement network for EU MS could provide opportunities to **meet in sub-groups dedicated to at least these two areas (PDO and selection)**;
- Noting the large interest in networking around PDO issues, the project would recommend EASO to **explore the possibilities of creating a network or sub-network for PDO experts**. Continued dialogue is suggested to be held with IOM and other actors that were active within the EU-FRANK PDO network on how this group of practitioners can continue to be supported.

In the area of PDO, the project has additional recommendations in four areas<sup>7</sup>:

#### 1. *Strengthening cooperation: enhancing peer-to-peer learning*

- Create opportunities for exchanges **in the field combining theoretical and practical learning**. Meetings before and after attending PDO programmes in third countries as well as continued mapping of states' missions would be useful.
  - Regional<sup>8</sup> peer learning: Regional as well as cross-regional cooperation, eventually creating communities of practice (CoP).
- Keeping engagement with **non-state actors** (such as IOM, ICMC, EU-RITA et al.) as experts in their area of activity<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the specific report on PDO practices produced by EU-FRANK for detailed background on the recommendations.

<sup>8</sup> Experiences from other intra state cooperation platforms on issues on migration have shown that state cooperation also starts to flow in a regional cooperation setting (examples are from Prague Process, a migration platform engaging states in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Turkey and Central Asia). The underlying rationale is that it is likely that common features will arise when it comes to cultural, historical, etc. background that also helps define outlook, and sometimes also policy, towards how to work on certain issues.

<sup>9</sup> For discussions on efforts linking pre-departure and post-arrival services this is essential since many states have non-state actors, such as civil society organisations, responsible for a range of post-arrival services.

## 2. *Innovation: innovative solutions and possibilities to increase capacity within PDO*

- Look into successful ways to do **remote PDO** and how to support states in that process.
- Encouraging the **use of new technology and multimedia**, preferably by providing support and/or platforms for states to develop their own multimedia tools or use pre-developed ones. Creating a tool or checklist on the steps of how to develop remote PDO including good practice on technological solutions could be a priority.
- Development of **common materials and films**:
  - In pre-departure phase:
    - Common films to be included in PDO (remote or not), such as on topic of traveling to the resettlement country, EU Law, Fundamental Rights Charter and other common issues addressed by several countries in their PDO<sup>10</sup>.
    - Create an app (or similar) where the information is also available off-line. Examples of possible content are material from PDO programmes, mini-courses in the new language, short films on travel and key information for the journey.
  - In post-arrival phase – for municipalities and other actors in the resettlement country (linking pre-departure and post-arrival services to facilitate integration):
    - Information films on the country of origin (i.e. films on Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC); describing history briefly, recent events, major reasons for why forced migration takes place, level of traumatisation, etc.
    - How to engage with local municipalities and/or civil society organisations, depending on who is tasked with responsibilities for post-arrival services, for example by developing a checklist or tool for good practices on this.

## 3. *Supporting practitioners: tools, mechanisms and initiatives specifically targeted to operational staff*

- **Tool box**: Future state cooperation could look into how to further elaborate on already published EU-FRANK/EASO tools, both on updating existing tools as well as developing new tools and checklists on specific themes.
- Developing PDO **materials for children and youth and other specific sub-groups** – for all types of training situations (remote PDO, face-to-face sessions and workbook for self-study). Some additional materials can be a specific website, on national level, or creating a youth/child friendly version of an app with information on the new country.

<sup>10</sup> Content on many PDO programmes are found to be 30–50% similar.

- EASO Training Curriculum module on resettlement: may be regularly updated to fit training needs of states.
- More possibilities to share experiences both on *what* but also *how* training is delivered.

#### 4. **Developing, monitoring and evaluating PDO programmes**

- The main recommendation is to focus on **supporting states in developing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems**, including: how to develop indicators for M&E purposes, how to create and maintain feedback loops, and how to set up a database for PDO. It also includes increasing knowledge in setting up M&E systems and promoting opportunities to learn in practice how this can be done. There are two main sides to this recommendation: increasing knowledge and providing practical support.
- Furthermore, supporting other efforts such as sharing experiences on how to **organise focus groups** with resettled refugees thereby involving refugee voices.
- In terms of programme development, promoting opportunities to discuss and compare **how states tackle sensitive issues in PDO**, in both strategic and practical terms, as well as how to build content for specific groups (and which groups are relevant).

Specific additional recommendations regarding focus on selection missions are:

- To continue with **thematic operational experience exchanges for operational selection mission state officials**. Issues that were identified by several project participants to explore further are: age assessments for unaccompanied minors in the field, how to interview children (and from which age), remote interviewing/processing, biometrics: routines and logistics and security assessments;
- In addition to the above, to **organise regular/annual meetings for operational resettlement selection staff/heads of selection missions** in order for them to **exchange concrete operational experiences** and knowledge and build a structure for support between the practitioners.

#### 4. **Tailored versus ‘ready-made’ activities**

EU-FRANK noted that many states, especially those new to resettlement, find it difficult to point to specific areas in which they would like to receive support, or to define questions that they need to address to develop their programmes. Instead, many express a general interest in building knowledge or capacity across the resettlement process. This is especially true for states new to resettlement or cases of one-off events, but there is a shift as interaction and networking among practitioners progress (see topic 2). The project observed that many states welcome capacity building or learning opportunities (such as study visits) that are planned and set up around a specific theme. While exchanges are ideally targeted to fit participants’ needs (for instance based on preparatory dialogue or assessments), the opportunity to join a ‘ready-made’ event seems attractive. As states become more experienced

and have more opportunities to exchange knowledge and practices with peers, it becomes easier to point to specific areas where they would like to have support and can thus initiate activities. Concretely, EU-FRANK recommends EASO to:

- Consider the possibilities of **arranging thematic meetings and exchange opportunities that states can take part in without having to be the ones to initiate them**. By actively promoting new opportunities and offering different activities, EASO can push states to consider new aspects or receive information that they may not have been exposed to otherwise that can broaden their professional network.

## 5. Active management and coordination

As stated in the previous section, EU-FRANK worked actively to arrange a variety of activities to provide states with new learning opportunities. This required both financial and human resources. EU-FRANK had the opportunity to cover travel and accommodation costs for participants who took part in project events, and chose to handle most of the participants' travel arrangements. To be able to do so, the project invested in administrative capacity. In addition, the project worked actively to initiate and propose new activities, with the support of partners and other actors who offered to showcase their practices initiating new activities, a task that also required time, knowledge and skills.

These initiatives however suffered from the lack of information available on what areas of expertise or knowledge states hold in specific areas, which made it challenging to match states needing support with activities available. Access to this information relied heavily on personal knowledge and experience of different states' models among project staff and partners. In order for the project to be able to deliver a well-planned matching of states, more resources would have had to be devoted to this task. Based on these experiences, this concretely means:

- EU-FRANK would like to recommend that EASO devote appropriate **human and financial resources to maintain and support a dynamic resettlement network** that can adapt to the needs and preferences of states and can facilitate as well as initiate exchange opportunities between them.

## 6. Considering contribution of non-EU and non-State actors

While focusing on EU Member States (or EU+), EU-FRANK established successful cooperation with non-EU actors such as Canada and the U.S., as well as with other projects and non-state organisations such as the UNHCR, IOM, ICMC, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC)/EURITA project. This cooperation with a plurality of actors was crucial to the success of several events. Non-EU actors and non-state actors provide perspectives that can benefit European governments. This became especially clear in the PDO network piloted within the framework of EU-FRANK, in which actors such as IOM and ICMC played an important role (see more specifically under topic 3), but is extended to other areas within resettlement. Open dialogue and practical exchange around operational matters are not common

today, yet the project experienced that they bring added value and knowledge to states. Concretely,

- EU-FRANK would like to recommend that EASO consider how **non-EU and non-state actors could be brought in** to contribute (continuously or ad hoc) to an EU MS resettlement network.
- EU-FRANK also recommends that **EASO work actively to create synergies with existing initiatives**, working in similar topics to make use of the work already available. This includes, but is not limited to resettlement tools and monitoring and evaluation initiatives. In that area, it is also particularly relevant to liaise closely with other main actors in the field working with implementation, including international organisations and NGOs.
- In addition, it is also important to consider how the EU resettlement network can **complement, and interact with, global resettlement meeting structures** such as the APCR/WGR and the Core Groups.

## 7. Tools and information made available online

EU-FRANK identified a need to increase the general information about states' resettlement programmes and areas of expertise. To support state-to-state cooperation in the long term, states must know which partners to reach out to in relation to different questions. Access to information about states' programmes is not only important for states themselves, but can also be useful for actors aiming to provide support, such as EASO.

EU-FRANK explored ways to collect and display information about planned and delivered resettlement activities between EU Member States, as well as other characteristics of states' programmes that may be helpful for other states to be aware of. The project suggested a matrix overview of resettlement programmes that is currently being incorporated by EASO, and has been using its own website to share and publish material for the different networks of participants upon request. This shows an interest in digital information sharing through channels other than emails. In light of this, EU-FRANK recommends:

- That EASO continue investing in the creation of a **digital space or platform** where general information, and possibly also opportunities for interaction, can be made available to network participants;
- To continue with the **mapping and sharing of planned resettlement activities** for EU+ member states in order to enable continued visibility;
- To connect a sort of **coordinator/liaison officer to the mapping of planned activities in order to be able to match states** who are flagging a need for support in certain areas, as well as identify opportunities for formal and informal experience exchanges and cooperation between states;
- To continue with the **development of the resettlement programme overview** that has been initiated in cooperation with MPI Europe.

## 8. Supporting states in monitoring and evaluating resettlement programmes

Many of the lessons that arose from the EU-FRANK M&E work are captured in the report, *Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement: A Monitoring and Evaluation Road Map*<sup>11</sup>, which also includes a detailed six-step road map for countries interested in starting or expanding their resettlement M&E. Recommendations in this area are of course distinct for states and organisations, but its importance for both groups is not to be missed, but rather to be seen as a key step towards ensuring quality resettlement programmes and was thus highlighted by the European Commission in its recommendations on legal pathways to protection in the EU<sup>12</sup>. To a transnational body such as EASO, key recommendations are:

- **Promoting occasions for multilateral exchanges within M&E:** providing opportunities for states to meet at workshops and exchanges enables national M&E “champions”, i.e. key drivers of M&E in the national contexts, to meet and inspire each other, driving the work forward. It is important to note in this context that meeting other key actors is also relevant, including international organisations and other international and local non-state actors, both involved in M&E work, but also who are part of resettlement implementation. A variation of this would be supporting meetings including other actors, such as local stakeholders and universities doing research on refugees, strengthening the linkages between them and national resettlement units. This could become a relevant subgroup to invest in within the Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network, in addition to PDO and selection (see topic #3).
- **Including M&E in a systematic support pilot** (information overview and planning overview) **to states early on:** as EASO develops different tools and formats to support states in building resettlement programmes, it is important to include M&E as part of the conversation from the start. Making sure to include it as part of support materials and check-lists is key.
- **Creating possibilities for M&E mentoring “programme”:** as states kick-off their M&E efforts, it is possible they need specific support with questions that often cannot wait for workshops or meetings in the not-so-near future. Having an established M&E programme where state participants can get quick mentoring advice and support would provide opportunities for speedy developments. This programme could run ad-hoc as states’ needs vary over time and shift in intensity.
- **Develop economies of scale:** EASO, as a transnational actor, can work together with other international bodies, research institutes and experts to lower the entry barriers for states that want to set up an M&E framework. It may be possible and beneficial to share lists of indicators in

<sup>11</sup> Report produced by MPI Europe under the framework of EU-FRANK, can be accessed here: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/refugee-resettlement-monitoring-evaluation-road-map>.

<sup>12</sup> See p.9 at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commission\\_recommendation\\_on\\_legal\\_pathways\\_to\\_protection\\_in\\_the\\_eu\\_promoting\\_resettlement\\_humanitarian\\_admission\\_and\\_other\\_complementary\\_pathways.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commission_recommendation_on_legal_pathways_to_protection_in_the_eu_promoting_resettlement_humanitarian_admission_and_other_complementary_pathways.pdf)

order to make programmes more comparable and, ultimately, identify best practices that could be replicated across states. EASO could also act as a clearing house for data collection tools, for instance providing sample surveys that countries could use to gather data from resettled refugees and implementing partners.

## Conclusion

The above recommendations were compiled by the EU-FRANK project management in consultation with the project assignment leaders and partners during 2019 and further updated in 2020 as the project's operations drew to a close.

In summary and based on the above, EU-FRANK welcomes the establishment of an EASO Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Network that can support EU MS resettlement practitioners. Providing an operational layer to international cooperation around resettlement, such a network can complement other international meetings and provide prerequisites for increased coordination and peer-to-peer support among EU MS. The establishment of a resettlement network is in line with the general observations made by the project, and with discussions held between the project and EASO over the project period. EU-FRANK is also happy to provide more specific recommendations and observations that can be incorporated by the network and taken further by EASO in its role of supporting Member States. The last five years have been of intense learning and development for the European resettlement community, and we trust these recommendations set the scene for more years of development to come.