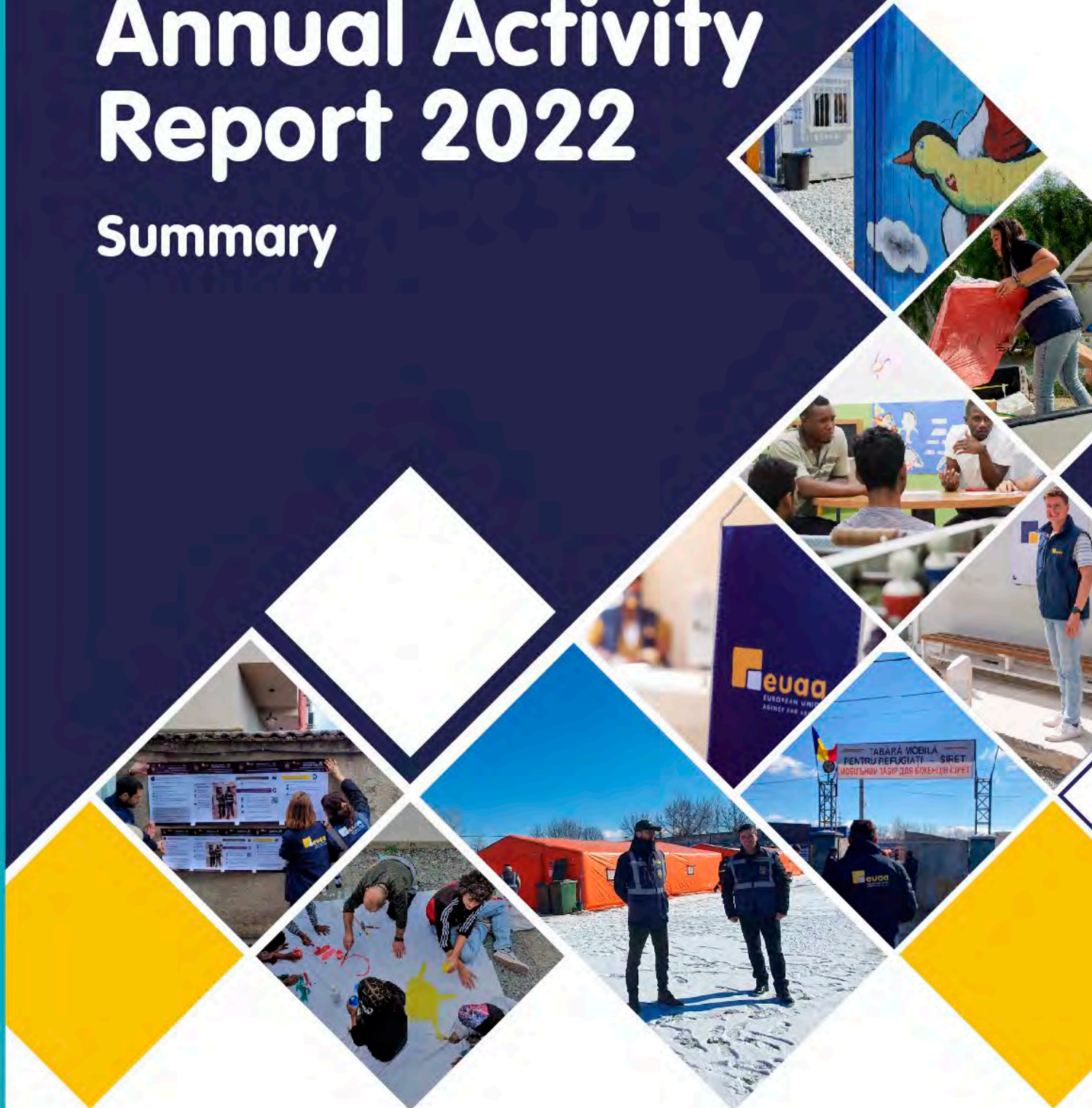


# Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022

## Summary

June 2023



# **Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) of the European Union Agency for Asylum**

## **Adopted by the Management Board in June 2023**

### **Summary**



Manuscript completed in June 2023

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# I. Policy achievements

## The year in brief

The reporting year was marked by Russia's unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine, initiated on 24 February, which caused the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

On 4 March the Council activated the [temporary protection directive](#), which enabled Member States to provide quick and effective protection to people fleeing the war in Ukraine, instead of applying the lengthier asylum procedure. This exceptional measure was taken for the first time in over 20 years since the adoption of the directive. It was based on the consideration that the mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine would put at risk the efficiency of the asylum system and would have a negative impact on the persons seeking protection.

The Council mandated the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), along with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), to provide operational support to Member States requesting assistance in coping with the situation, including as regards the implementation of the temporary protection directive. By the end of 2022, almost 4 million persons benefited from temporary protection, according to [Eurostat](#).

On 22 June, 18 EU Member States and Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland signed a declaration defining the *modus operandi* of a [voluntary solidarity mechanism](#) to support Mediterranean Member States of first entry under migratory pressure. The declaration, which acknowledged the intensification of migration challenges as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, marked a significant progress within the framework of the Commission's [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), together with the adoption by the Council, on the same day, of [negotiating mandates on the Eurodac and screening regulations](#).

Overall, EU+ countries<sup>1</sup> received 996,000 asylum applications in 2022<sup>2</sup>, the highest number since the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. Migratory pressure at the EU external border increased, particularly along the Western Balkan and Central Mediterranean routes<sup>3</sup>.

Syria and Afghanistan continued to be the [main countries of origin](#), accounting together for more than a quarter (270,000) of all applications lodged in 2022. Türkiye, with 58,000 applications, was the third country of origin, followed by Venezuela (51,000 applications) and Colombia (43,000 applications).

In 2022, 42,000 asylum applications were lodged in the EU+ countries by unaccompanied minors. This represented an increase of three-fifths from the previous year and the greatest

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<sup>1</sup> EU+ countries include the 27 European Union's Member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup> Based on [Eurostat as of 13 April 2023](#). Annual data for Iceland are estimated using the sum of [monthly data](#).

<sup>3</sup> According to [Frontex as of 13 January 2023](#).



number since 2016<sup>4</sup>. Almost half of the applications were submitted by Afghans who, together with Syrians, accounted for over two thirds of all applications lodged by unaccompanied minors in EU+ countries.

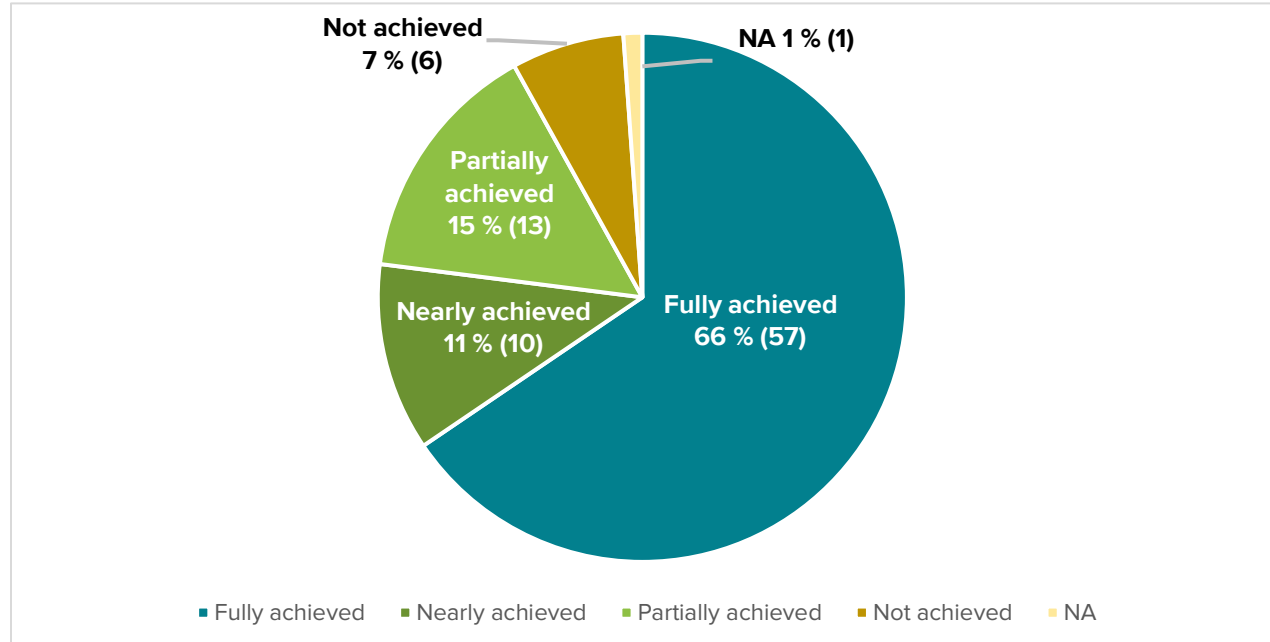
EU+ asylum authorities issued some 646,000 decisions at first instance in 2022, increasing by a fifth from the previous year<sup>5</sup>. The number of applications increased at a faster pace, resulting in 636,000 cases awaiting a first instance decision at the end of 2022, the highest number since early 2017<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, despite a decrease in the caseload at second and higher instances, nearly 899,000 asylum applications were awaiting a decision at all instances at the end of 2022, i.e. almost one-fifth more than a year earlier<sup>7</sup>.

## Key results

The annual work programme of the Agency, as detailed in the [Single Programming Document \(SPD\) 2022-2024](#) adopted by the Management Board on 13 September 2022, identified 87 annual objectives in six activity areas.

As shown in the chart below, 67 objectives were fully or nearly achieved. Of the remaining 20 objectives, 13 were partially achieved and 7 were not achieved due to operational constraints, change of priorities ensuing from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and increased workload related to the entry into force of the new mandate.

Chart 1: Categorisation of annual objectives\*.



\* Figures are rounded to the next number.

<sup>4</sup> Based on [Eurostat as of 13 April 2023](#). Data for Iceland were missing.

<sup>5</sup> Based on [Eurostat as of 13 April 2023](#).

<sup>6</sup> Based on the EUAA's early warning and preparedness system data, which are preliminary.

<sup>7</sup> Based on [Eurostat as of 13 April 2023](#).





Further information on the annual objectives, the reasons for their achievement (or lack thereof) and the status of their respective indicators are provided in the full report.

Against the exceptional backdrop of the military aggression of Ukraine, the Agency went through an internal reorganisation that was necessary to deliver on the enhanced mandate resulting from the entry into force of the EUAA regulation. A dedicated transition programme coordinated a number of changes stemming from the new regulation, delivering nine projects responsible for establishing new tasks and functions.

In 2022 the EUAA scaled up its operational and technical assistance. An asylum reserve pool was established for the purposes of deploying asylum support teams and included, by the end of December, more than 300 experts from 21 Member States.

In May, for the first time in its history, the Agency deployed personnel to a non-EU country, Moldova. Following a request made by the Commission, the EUAA supported a voluntary transfer programme assisting persons fleeing the war in Ukraine to relocate in Europe and apply for temporary protection. During the reporting year the Agency implemented [operational plans in 14 Member States](#), thus expanding its operations to six additional EU countries<sup>8</sup>, upon request of the relevant national authorities.

In 2022 the Agency supported some 48,300 registrations for international protection in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta and more than 49,000 registrations for temporary protection in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Romania. The EUAA continued to assist Cyprus, Greece and Malta in first-instance status determination, conducting around 19,700 interviews and drafting around 8,000 concluding remarks.

The EUAA continued expanding the European asylum curriculum and delivering training to national administrations and personnel deployed within the framework of operational plans. The Agency recorded almost 9,000 participations in its training courses, of which 160 from third country officials. In addition, the Agency's train-the-trainer sessions had close to 600 participations.

Practical cooperation was promoted among EU+ countries on asylum matters through a wide range of activities and products realised within the framework of the EUAA's thematic networks.

Almost 3,000 pages of country-of-origin-information products were created and more than 1,000 individual medical requests were addressed and made available online on the restricted medical-country-of-origin-information web portal. A new country guidance on Somalia was published and country guidance on Afghanistan and Iraq were updated. The Agency increased the production of situational analyses, also as a consequence of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine

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<sup>8</sup> In 2022 the Agency started operations in Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovenia, while operational and technical assistance was already being provided to Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Spain.



and the launch of new country operations, and continued developing, disseminating and promoting operational standards, indicators, guidelines and best practices.

In 2022 an unprecedented number of 576 members of courts and tribunals participated in the EUAA's judicial support activities on specialised international protection topics. All activities were organised with the active support of the EUAA judicial experts' pool, which grew by one third, totalling 99 members in 2022.

The EUAA Consultative Forum was reconstituted in June 2022 with a new set of rules deriving from the EUAA regulation. Following a call for expressions of interest by civil society and other relevant organisations, by the end of December the newly established forum counted more than 100 members.

The EUAA continued to be strongly engaged in the external dimension of the CEAS. The Resettlement Support Facility in Istanbul supported 2,585 persons through 13 selection and 3 pre-departure missions from 6 EU+ countries. Moreover, in 2022 the facility assisted for the first time in the realisation of medical assessments of refugees on behalf of a EU+ country (Switzerland). The EUAA also confirmed its capacity building support to the Turkish Presidency for Migration Management.

The Agency assisted Western Balkan countries through the provision of institutional capacity building, training and on-the-job coaching on core asylum procedures in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>9</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The implementation of the EUAA-Egypt roadmap continued and support activities involving Niger and all North African countries were organised with a view to establishing a practitioners' network.

The reorganisation that followed the entry into force of the new mandate was sustained by the Agency's internal control system. The EUAA improved its ability to identify, prioritise and manage risks stemming from an increase of operational activities, financial and human resources.

Continuing the positive trend from previous years, in 2022 the Agency further reduced the percentage of late payments, as well as the number and the value ratio of exceptions and non-compliances versus its total budget. Of the 15 outstanding observations made in previous years by the European Court of Auditors, 10 were closed and 4 were internally assessed as completed.

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<sup>9</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with the United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1244 on the situation relating to Kosovo and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on Kosovo's declaration of independence.

## II. Budgetary and financial information

The EUAA budget for the year 2022 was originally adopted by the Management Board, as part of the SPD 2022-2024, on 25 October 2021.

After the adoption, on 24 November 2021, of the EU general budget for the financial year 2022, on 20 December 2021 the Management Board adopted revision 1 of the SPD 2022-2024, which increased the budget of the Agency by EUR 380,000, bringing it to EUR 171.78 million.

Subsequently, two budget amendments were adopted by the Management Board.

The first amendment, on 13 September 2022, incorporated the following elements:

- an additional EU subsidy of EUR 12 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 6 million in payment appropriations to address the increased needs that followed Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine;
- the second instalment of Denmark's voluntary contribution for the implementation of the roadmap for cooperation with Egypt, equivalent to EUR 94,063 (DKK 700,000);
- the first pre-financing of a contribution agreement signed with the Commission within the phase III of the instrument for pre-accession assistance, amounting to EUR 2,968,129.

The second amendment, of 29 November 2022, reduced the payment appropriations by EUR 12 million, due to unforeseen delays in the implementation of some operational plans, in the deployment of experts and in the invoicing of interpretation services.

As a result, the final amended budget for 2022 amounted to EUR 168,842,192.

### **Income in 2022**

The main source of income in 2022 was the EU contribution.

External assigned revenue in 2022 consisted of contributions from:

- associated countries, namely Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein;
- a grant agreement and a contribution agreement signed with the Commission;
- direct voluntary contributions from Member States for the EUAA regional pilot project for North Africa and Niger and for the roadmap for cooperation with Egypt.

### **Overall budget execution (all fund sources)**

In 2022 the Agency implemented 96 % of commitment appropriations, thus exceeding its relevant governance monitoring indicator's target of 95 %, and executed 90 % of payment appropriations, which is in line with the corresponding target.



### III. Human resources, internal control and evaluations

#### Human resources

The EUAA was assigned 90 short-term (two-year) contract agent posts to support the ever increasing operational tasks related to the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The establishment plan, i.e. the list of temporary posts by grade and function group authorised within the limits of the budget, remained relatively stable. Compared with 2021, the Agency received five additional posts, which brought the total number of authorised temporary agent posts to 371. The occupancy rate of the establishment plan was 90 % at the end of the year.

The overall annual turnover rate, i.e. the percentage of staff (including short-term operational contract agents, project-funded contract agents and seconded national experts) leaving the Agency in 2022, reached 12 %, compared to 6.6 % in 2021. The Agency is investigating the causes of the high turnover, which might be the result of various factors, including the short duration of contracts, the geographical location of the EUAA's headquarters or the competitive job market.

#### Internal controls

Based on the COSO<sup>10</sup> 2013 Internal Control – Integrated Framework, the Agency's internal control framework was adopted by the Management Board on [21 December 2018](#). In 2022 the Agency assessed its 17 internal control principles as either effective (seven) or fully effective (10). Therefore, all principles are present and functioning, while moderate or minor deficiencies remain and require some improvements.

#### Audits

In 2022, the **Internal Audit Service of the Commission (IAS)** conducted a multi-entity audit on coordination between DG HOME and the EU decentralised agencies and a fact-finding mission at the EUAA.

In 2022, the **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** did not issue any new observations in its audit report for financial year 2021.

#### Evaluations

The EUAA conducts internal or external mid-term and *ex post* evaluations of programmes and activities that entail significant spending. Fourteen evaluations were concluded in 2022, the highest number in the last eight years.

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<sup>10</sup> [Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission](#).



Following an analysis of each evaluation report, the Agency's management agrees a response plan to address the recommendations made by the evaluators.

At the end of 2022, the EUAA was engaged in the implementation of recommendations stemming from 18 evaluations.





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