



Newsletter No. 12 December 2011 European Asylum Curriculum (EAC)

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www.asylum-curriculum.eu

Prologue

Dear EAC friends, dear colleagues,

The Christmas time has come again announcing that the end of the year 2011 is inevitably approaching. This brings an important landmark for a group of people who have spent last few years dedicated to the management and enrichment of EAC life.

The EAC in its 'project' shape ends. It is said that when something old dies something new is born. This is also the case with EAC. It will be transformed into a 'programme' implemented by EASO since 2012. Therefore the people from the 'EAC family' will continue to have an opportunity to meet during upcoming EAC international activities, either within the framework of EASO EAC expert pools, as NCPs, etc.

With the end of the Project you are presented the last EAC newsletter edited by the project management group. However we can hope that the idea of the newsletter, reaching a wide audience with an update on EAC activities, will be somehow maintained by EASO EAC team and we will have a pleasure of having a nice 'cup of tea' reading in the future as well.

The December newsletter contains a number of articles giving both the picture of latest EAC activities as well as a kind of outlook of EAC life in 2012. The newsletter starts with a short overview of EAC modules updating works. This is followed by information on activities related to the development of two new modules. A presentation of a scheme of 'EAC Club' will demonstrate the popularity of EAC in the French asylum office OFPRA.

Adam Kittl from EASO will further brief you on the outcomes of recent Didactics Seminar and the NCP meeting, both organised by EASO in Malta. Adam will also provide you with an insight into the perspective of next EAC development when fully taken over by EASO in 2012.

At last but not least, a farewell contribution by EAC Project manager Andre Nilen will sum up the most important achievements of EAC Project history.

If you have any further questions or suggestions concerning the future of EAC, don't hesitate to contact Adam Kittl, a person responsible for EAC within EASO.

You can reach him by e-mail at:
Adam.KITTL@ext.ec.europa.eu.

Update of EAC modules

Updating the training material is crucial in order to maintain its relevance and improve the quality of it. During this last phase of the project the ambition was therefore to update six training modules.

Since the beginning of this year EAC has updated the modules for *International Refugee Law and Human Rights, the Inclusion, the Dublin Regulation, and the COI,*

In the update plan we had also the module for *Interviewing technique* and the *Introduction to EU law and policy.*

However for the *Interviewing module*, which was one of the very first modules EAC developed, there was a need for a quite a new structure and improvement in both didactics and content and therefore the EAC project will not manage to finalize that update this year. However the update will be done during the first part of next year under the lead of EASO.

The *EU law* module had to be postponed because of unforeseen sickness of the appointed expert, but will also be updated next year.

Since the project was extended by four months, from September to December 2011, there was time to update two more modules – *The Evidence assessment* and the module for *Interviewing Children.*

Thus when we hand all the modules over to the EASO office at the end of December 2011, six of them will be updated. In the update of the modules we have considered opinions from training evaluations and input from different partners. We have as well improved the didactics and adjusted the training manuals for each module. The EAC team is very grateful for the massive work done by the national experts involved in this process.

For the future, EASO has plans to update all the thirteen modules annually.



Development of EAC new modules:

Two Reception Conditions Directive Modules coming soon

Since the beginning of the year 2011 a group of experts gathering representatives of Member States, NGO and of the Odysseus Academic Network met repeatedly to think about the conception of an EAC training module concerning the reception conditions directive.

This work ended in two projects of modules: a *skills and perspectives module* and a *knowledge module.*

The **skills and perspectives module** will aim to identify the role of the reception worker in meeting the asylum seekers. The module will provide skills to put this role into practice.

The following subjects would among others be addressed:

- The role of the reception worker.
- Working with other cultures.
- Assessment of capabilities and vulnerabilities of asylum seekers.
- Cooperation with local community.
- Awareness of physical and personal security for residents and staff.
- Migration and exile reactions.
- Communications skills: conflict theory, conflict prevention and conflict solving; communicating expectations and perspectives; communication tools and techniques, including working with interpreters.
- Trauma and post traumatic stress syndrome.
- Best practices in reception.

At the end of the training, participants will be able to identify good and bad practice and to implement policies in practice.

The **knowledge module** will aim to provide all persons dealing with the reception of asylum seekers with knowledge on the main minimum standards, principles and guaranties that all Member States shall implement in their national reception system in accordance with

the 2003 Council directive for the reception of asylum seekers. When relevant, links will be made with International and Regional Human Rights and Refugee Law as well as with the asylum procedure directive.

The following subjects would among others be addressed:

- The links between minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers and fundamental rights.
- The links between minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers and asylum procedure directive.
- The persons who have right to the minimum conditions of reception.
- The period during which the persons have right to the minimum conditions of reception.
- The content of the material reception conditions the asylum seekers may enjoy from and the general principles which apply to those benefits.
- The content, the modalities and the possible limitations and/or conditions of the other benefits the asylum seekers may enjoy from such as for example: the right to information, the right to health care and medical screening, the right to schooling and education of minors, the right in reception centres to receive visits from legal advisors, counsellors, representatives of UNHCR or NGOs, etc.
- The case of detention of asylum seekers.
- The taking into account of the situation of vulnerable asylum seekers with special needs.
- The possibility to refuse, reduce or withdraw the reception conditions and other sanctions.

At the end of the training participants will know about:

- The benefits the asylum seekers must enjoy from and the obligations they must comply relating to the reception conditions in accordance with the reception conditions directive.

- The impact of the International and Regional Human Rights and Refugee Law on the reception of asylum seekers.
- The links between the asylum procedure directive and the reception conditions directive.

For **both the two modules**, as usually, the methods of training will be: case studies combined with E-learning, self-assessment tests, use of audio-visual materials, written assignments, short papers and discussion.

Taking into account the transfer of EAC to EASO, the writing of the Reception Conditions Directive Modules have been postponed. 2012 should however see this project becoming a reality.

The "EAC Club"



Created in June 2011 at the initiative and under the guidance of the Secretary General of the *French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons* (OFPRA), the "EAC Club" is an ad hoc innovation that aims at:

- Familiarizing OFPRA staff with EAC trainings;
- Identifying and promoting best practices;
- An informal validation of the principal aspects of EAC implementation policy in OFPRA through professional exchanges between professionals;
- Establishing an internal EAC expert network.

This club appears indeed as a **forum of discussions and debate**, which gathers the **main internal actors involved in the EAC project**.

The **issue being transversal**, many services are represented, i.e. representatives of concerned OFPRA agents (trainers, trainees and drafters), the European and International Affairs unit (MAEI), in charge of the follow-up of EAC, and the Human Resources department, in charge of the training program. In fact, this panel aims to be as representative as possible (case-workers as well as management, new

recruits as well as experimented agents are welcome).

The “EAC Club” does not intend to define policies concerning EAC and the training in general, but seeks to provide **useful information** regarding EAC implementation in OFPRA and help **foster communication and dialogue** among the different stakeholders.

► Challenges and Opportunities

Since its creation, there were **3 meetings** of the “EAC Club”; the frequency of its sessions is at quarterly intervals.

These meetings, as mentioned earlier, can tackle all the **issues of importance** to the parties but also **practical topics**, such as:

- **Feedbacks of trainers and trainees** (evaluation of the modules, evaluation of the trainings and of the organization of the trainings, wishes of the agents to be trained on specific modules among the different ones available, impact of EAC on the daily work...). These feedbacks are indeed one of the principal issues that can be discussed, particularly for the Human resources department as they give essential information in order to plan the 2012 training program;
- **Evaluation of EAC internal implementation** (difficulties, lessons learnt, acceptance by management, evaluation of timeframes defined by EAC and by the Human Resources department, definition of the categories of staff targeted by the trainings...);
- **Information of the stakeholders concerning the present and future of EAC project** (implementation at the European level, good practices observed in other Member States, transfer to EASO...).

OFPRA training policy can be explained and discussed at the “EAC Club”. Consequently, with regards to the very positive feedbacks to date, the Human Resources department chose to **focus on EAC** trainings when drafting the 2012 training program. As well, these discussions helped to **select the modules** that are or will be implemented according to the

evaluation made, the wishes of the agents and the needs of the establishment.

The “EAC Club” also appears to be a **source of proposals** for the top management of OFPRA. Thus, the question of creating a **“toolkit”**, i.e. pooling and sharing teaching and learning materials, good practices and advice experimented by the different EAC trainers, has been raised at the Club and will be soon implemented.

Last but not least, with respect to its **promotion, communication and sensitization duties**, the “EAC Club” aims at organising an **annual presentation of the EAC project** for OFPRA global staff.

Given the positive record of the “EAC Club”, the strong implication of the different participants, the quality of the cross-cutting debates and the relevance of the suggestions and proposals made, this atypical workshop must be perpetuated and strengthened.

EAC Didactic Seminar & NCP meeting

Malta, December 2011

Although not formally managing the EAC, EASO already organized two important events in Malta (with a great help of EAC Project and Didactic Experts from NL and BE). The main aim of the Didactic Seminar was to strengthen and extend the didactic skills of EAC Trainers and Didactic Experts gathered through the EAC Expert Pool. During the NCP Meeting new developments in transferring the EAC project activities under the EASO were presented as well as planned EAC activities in 2012 managed already by EASO. Several workshops were organised during both meetings.



During the Didactic Seminar, which EASO would like to keep as an annual event, over 35 trainers gathered not only to receive additional didactic training, but also to share practices and experiences and to discuss different issues when it comes to practical arrangement in training. It was very nice to meet all the dedicated trainers around EAC and to set up this informal network of “EAC addicts”.

The main point of the NCP Meeting was to inform EAC NCP’s on development of transferring the EAC project under EASO. Besides presentations on 2012 EAC plans and on the practical arrangements once managed by the EASO, more cross-over topics and further prospects of EAC Training were discussed. Again networking and best practice exchange was important part of that meeting and very substantial outcomes from two workshops organized during the meeting were highly appreciated by EASO.

In both cases it was clear that the possibility to meet face-to-face and discuss different experiences and practices is very valuable not only for trainers but for NCP’s as well as for the EAC Team and it is for sure that these meeting will be – in the future – organised periodically.



EAC under EASO from 1st January 2012



Since 1st January 2012 EAC Trainings will be transferred and fully managed by EASO. EASO is committed to provide all member States with training sessions in all EAC Modules during 2012. In coherence with the EASO 2012 Work Plan **13-14 training sessions in all EAC modules** as well as updates of all

EAC modules. In this respect EASO will also introduce an “*Annual Updating Scheme*” which means that all modules will be updated annually, which will also allow EASO to plan all updates in advance and in regular manner and will lead to higher coherence and quality within EAC training. The draft version of the 2012 Training Plan as well as the 2012 Updating Plan can be found on EAC website.

The **EAC Expert Pool** has been established by EASO during autumn 2011 and is now counting over **160 experts from 17 Member States**, the Commission and UNHCR. Experts from the EAC Expert Pool will be deployed already during the first quarter 2012 for planned EAC training sessions and module updates.

When it comes to practicalities not will change, although under the Office, it will become a little bit more formal than it used to be under the project. Since 1st January 2012 all experts (trainers, didactic experts, and content experts) will be called through the EAC Expert pool which will serve as the main “reservoir” of experts for EAC under EASO. The concrete experts will be nominated upon an official letter send from EASO to the respective office in the Member State. Reimbursement will be held in similar way as for now, covering travels, accommodation and daily allowances.

Beautiful End and a Bright, Bright Future

In the next days the EAC project will end and the Curriculum will be integrated in the EASO work operational program. Thus next year EAC train-the-trainer sessions will be fully organised by the Malta office who also will have the responsibility to further develop and implement the EAC in the EU. EASO has strongly expressed its commitment to this task and consider EAC as a pillar in their work. This is also clearly mirrored in their ambitious work program for next year.

EAC can proudly announce that the current shape of the Curriculum is complete and the thirteen training modules ordered by the GDISC network has been developed and trained in. Numerous content experts have contributed generously made available by

their home organisations in the Member States, NGO's, academia, UNHCR, IARLJ, ULB/CTE and the European Commission. Some of them will now constitute the backbone of the newly established EAC expert pool. We have reached over 2000 participants with our training and we have trained and supported over 400 new trainers. EAC has worked hard to lift the importance of the trainer and the organizational support around the trainers work. Now EASO will carry this work forward inter alia by making the trainer's part of the above mentioned pool. The NCP network, the communication line between EAC and its customers, has grown stronger both in terms of size and importance. Together with the NCP's EAC has planned the training program and developed proposals how to further implement and improve the Curriculum and its components. Without the NCP's the implementation of EAC would stop.

EAC has a well-established and elaborated webpage with plenty of information, news as well as it is the portal for the EAC training. We can gladly inform our many regular visitors and future ones that this will remain the same at least during a transitional phase next year.

Two experts from the Swedish Migration Board will be seconded four months to EASO in order to support the transfer and integration of EAC. Otherwise EASO will rely on a new and competent team headed by Mr Francois Bienfait, former deputy director of CGRA in Belgium. With this team the future of EAC looks bright.

After five years of intensive work the EAC project office will close down in a couple of days. It has been a true pleasure working with such an innovative, ambitious and sometimes controversial project. From the 1st January 2012 EASO will run EAC and things will in the beginning look exactly the same.

Thank you for your extensive contribution and support! EAC has had some marvellous years together with you. Remember - EAC is your training program!



Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year to you all!

The EAC team

