



EUAA Consultative Forum Working Methods

CHAPTER ONE: OBJECTIVES AND WORKING PRINCIPLES

1. Objectives

The objectives of the Consultative Forum as stated herein are drawn from Article 50 of the [EUAA Regulation](#) as well as [Management Board Decision No 111](#) on the establishment and composition of the Consultative Forum and on the conditions for the transmission of information thereto¹.

The objectives of the Consultative Forum are to:

1. Enable the European Union Agency for Asylum (hereafter the Agency) to maintain a close dialogue with relevant civil society organisations and competent bodies operating in the field of asylum policy at local, regional, national, Union, or international level, and vice versa;
2. Constitute a mechanism for the exchange of information and the sharing of knowledge;
3. Provide civil society expertise and input into the Agency's work, activities and outputs;
4. Advise the Executive Director and the Management Board on asylum-related matters in accordance with the Agency's specific needs in areas identified as a priority for its work.

2. General working principles

In its work, the Consultative Forum shall be guided by the following principles:

- **Independence:** The Consultative Forum is part of the Agency's administrative and management structure, but – in view of its advisory role – shall exercise its functions independently thereof.
- **Mutual respect:** Consultative Forum members are expected to engage in a respectful and fruitful dialogue with each other as well as vis-à-vis the Agency². Emphasis is placed on collaborating to achieve common goals.
- **Commitment to engage:** All Consultative Forum members must be jointly committed to the work of the Consultative Forum, its activities, and outputs.

¹ Hereinafter "MB Decision No 111".

² See also Annex 1 of MB Decision No 111.



- **Inclusivity and respect for diversity:** The Consultative Forum respects and promotes individual and cultural differences by encouraging inclusivity and diversity in all of its activities.
- **Transparency:** The Consultative Forum shall operate in a predictable manner with transparency at all stages.

CHAPTER TWO: STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING

3. Overall structure of the Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum consists of:

- a. A Chair;
- b. A Deputy Chair;
- c. Consultative Forum members including the Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (having accepted the invitation to become a member to the Consultative Forum³) as well as civil society organisations and competent bodies whose expression of interest to join the Consultative Forum has been approved in accordance with Article 3 of MB Decision No 111;
- d. Thematic consultation groups in line with Article 5 of MB Decision No 111;
- e. Thematic rapporteurs who may be appointed by the Consultative Forum members to guide the Consultative Forum's work on specific themes.

The Consultative Forum is supported by a Secretariat, which is provided by the Agency.

4. Chair and Deputy Chair of the Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum shall elect a Chair and Deputy Chair to lead the work of the Consultative Forum.

The Consultative Forum Secretariat shall invite Consultative Forum members to nominate candidates for the Chairperson position from amongst individuals representing member organisations. Nominations for the Chair shall be submitted by the member organisations to the Consultative Forum Secretariat no later than three weeks before the date of the election.

On the basis of the nominations, the Secretariat shall draw up a list of all candidates which shall be submitted to the Consultative Forum members no later than two weeks before the date of the election.

Consultative Forum members will subsequently be invited to vote for their preferred Chairperson. Voting may either take place physically or electronically. When voting, all Consultative Forum members shall have one vote to cast each, with all votes of members being equal.

³ In accordance with Article 50(3) of the EUAA Regulation.

The candidate who receives more votes than any other candidate shall be elected Chair. The candidate who receives the second highest number of votes shall be elected Deputy Chair. If it is not possible to determine the candidate with the highest number of votes and/or the candidate with the second highest number of votes, a second round of voting shall be organised between those candidates who polled an equal number of votes.

The term of office of the Chair and Deputy Chair shall be for a period of two years, renewable once based on re-election. The term of office shall begin on the day following the election. Their term of office shall automatically end if they cease to be members of the Consultative Forum.

If the position of Chair becomes vacant, the Deputy Chair shall assume the position of Chair. The Deputy Chair position shall then be assumed by the candidate who received the highest number of votes in the initial election results and who accepts the position. The replacement Chair and Deputy Chair shall serve until the end of the term of office of the initially appointed Chair and Deputy Chair.

The main responsibility of the Consultative Forum Chair is to ensure the strategic direction and coordination of the Consultative Forum's work and to represent the Consultative Forum vis-à-vis the EUAA, particularly the other entities forming part of the Agency's administrative and management structure as well as the Agency's staff, and external interlocutors.

The Deputy Chair shall support the Chair in carrying out his or her duties and shall automatically replace the Chair if he or she is prevented from attending to his or her duties.

5. Registry of Consultative Forum members and their contacts

Each Consultative Forum member shall appoint at least one contact point for all communication purposes with the Agency and other Consultative Forum members including the Chair and the Deputy Chair.

The contact point(s) are nominated when expressing an interest to join the EUAA Consultative Forum via the [online expression of interest form](#).

All contacts shall be compiled in a Consultative Forum Registry, which contains the names of the member organisations and bodies, the country in which they have their main registered office and the contact details of the individual representing the member organisation/body.

The Registry is maintained and updated by the Secretariat. In case of any change in contact points, the Consultative Forum member shall promptly inform the Secretariat as well as the Chair and the Deputy Chair.

The Consultative Forum Registry is used by the Secretariat as a contact list for all communication purposes between the Agency and the Consultative Forum members including the Chair and the Deputy Chair.

The collection and processing of any personal data is done in accordance with the [Data Protection Notice](#) on EUAA Consultative Forum membership.

6. Tasks and responsibilities of the Consultative Forum members

The Consultative Forum members are responsible for contributing to the implementation of the Consultative Forum's objectives, its activities, and outputs.

To the extent that the Consultative Forum activities are relevant to the member organisations' activities and their thematic expertise, the Consultative Forum members shall, on a voluntary basis, contribute to the Consultative Forum by:

- a. Ensuring appropriate representation of their member organisation or body in Consultative Forum meetings and activities.
- b. Providing input/feedback in response to (electronic) consultations launched by the Agency.
- c. Sharing their knowledge and expertise on asylum including by communicating relevant conclusions and recommendations of conferences, seminars, meetings, and/or findings from studies or field work they carried out and which are relevant to the work of the Agency.
- d. Advising the Executive Director and the Management Board on asylum-related matters in accordance with the Agency's specific needs in areas identified as a priority for its work.
- e. Where relevant (i.e. for those members who constitute civil society organisations), representing the interests of broader civil society vis-à-vis the Agency, the Executive Director, and the Management Board. Where possible, representing the interests of asylum seekers and refugees and voicing their needs and concerns to the Executive Director and the Management Board on matters that fall within the scope of the Agency's tasks and activities.

7. Thematic rapporteurs

Without prejudice to the working methods of the thematic consultation groups as referred to in Article 5 of [Management Board Decision No 111](#), the Consultative Forum may decide to appoint other thematic rapporteurs to lead the Consultative Forum's work on other specific thematic areas.

The annual work plan shall define the areas of work for which a thematic rapporteur will be assigned.

Thematic rapporteurs are chosen from among individuals representing Consultative Forum members on the basis of a vote following a call for expression of interest. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes shall be appointed thematic rapporteur for that specific area.

The term of office of thematic rapporteurs shall be for two years, renewable. In case a thematic rapporteur resigns from the role, a new thematic rapporteur is chosen on the basis of a vote following the issuance of a call for expression of interest.

Thematic rapporteurs are responsible for:

- Coordinating the Consultative Forum's work on a particular thematic area.
- Liaising with relevant Agency staff on the thematic area of work.
- Where relevant, initiating and setting up meetings on the thematic subject matter in question and contributing to the preparation of those meetings.
- Organising the Consultative Forum's input concerning the thematic activities.
- Reporting back to the Chair, its Deputy, the Consultative Forum members, and the Secretariat about progress of respective activities.

8. Consultative Forum Secretariat

The Consultative Forum Secretariat is provided by the Agency and shall be responsible for supporting the preparation, implementation, and management of the Consultative Forum's work. The Agency is encouraged to provide the Secretariat with sufficient resources to carry out its tasks in an efficient and effective manner.

More specifically, the Secretariat's functions include:

- Providing support to the Chair and its Deputy in carrying out their functions.
- Providing support, as needed, to the thematic rapporteurs in carrying out their functions.
- Being the interface between the Consultative Forum and the Agency and facilitating communication of the Consultative Forum vis-à-vis the Management Board.
- Supporting the preparation of an annual work plan for the Consultative Forum under the guidance of the Chair and in line with inputs from the Consultative Forum members.
- Facilitating preparations and organisation of Consultative Forum meetings.
- Drafting and disseminating in a timely manner reports of Consultative Forum meetings.
- Launching and coordinating (electronic) consultations and channelling the feedback to the appropriate Agency staff.
- Monitoring the implementation of Consultative Forum activities.
- Administering the budget assigned to the Consultative Forum and ensuring that all Consultative Forum activities are implemented in line with applicable financial rules and the principle of sound financial management.
- Fostering a constructive relationship and dialogue between Consultative Forum members, the Chair and its Deputy as well as the Agency.

9. Decision-making

In all of its work and activities, the Consultative Forum shall endeavour to agree on all planning and implementation of work and activities including outputs by consensus of its members.

In instances where there is no consensus, the following steps shall be taken:

- The Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, shall work with Consultative Forum members to agree on an effective and timely way forward.
- Should this fail, all Consultative Forum members shall be invited to vote on the matter by simple majority. Voting shall either take place physically or electronically. When voting, all Consultative Forum members shall have one vote to cast each, with all votes of members being equal. Consultative Forum members may request to have their reasons for abstentions or votes against recorded.
- Where Consultative Forum members have declared a potential conflict of interests, the Agency may decide to exclude the concerned members from participating in a vote as a preventive measure in order to mitigate the risk that the conflict of interests materialises, in line with Article 7(5) of [Management Board Decision No 111](#). The decision is taken by the Agency on a case-by-case basis taking into account the level of risk of exposure to the conflicting interests.

10. Prevention and management of the Conflicts of Interest

A. Conflicts of interest connected to membership of the Consultative Forum

The prevention and management of conflicts of interest connected to membership of the Consultative Forum are governed by Article 7 of [Management Board Decision No 111/2022](#), complemented by the rules set out in [Management Board Decision No 122/2023](#).

The Chair shall periodically, and in any case at least every two years, remind all members of the Consultative Forum and individuals representing them of their respective obligations under those rules.

B. Conflicts of interests connected to the work of the Consultative Forum

All participants in any Consultative Forum or thematic consultation group meeting or activity shall declare to the Chair, in advance of the meeting or prior to a consultation, any direct or indirect interests that they or the organisations they represent might have and which could undermine their ability to fulfil their tasks in an impartial and objective manner. Participants shall be reminded of this obligation prior to a consultation and/or when the provisional agenda for a meeting is circulated.

The direct and indirect interests that must be declared are set out in Section 5 of Annex I to [Management Board Decision No 122](#), which shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to participants in meetings or activities of the Consultative Forum or thematic consultation groups.

After assessing the declared interest, the Chair may decide to take any of the remedial actions mentioned in Section 6.2 of Annex I of [Management Board Decision No 122](#). The same remedial actions may also be taken by the Chair when a participant fails to declare an actual or potential conflict of interest.

CHAPTER THREE: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSULTATIVE FORUM ACTIVITIES

11. Planning of the Consultative Forum's work

The Chair, with the support of the Consultative Forum Secretariat, shall draft an annual work plan setting out the planned activities for the Consultative Forum in a given calendar year. The work plan shall be drafted on a cooperative basis, considering the input and feedback from the Consultative Forum members as well as relevant Agency staff. It shall also take due account of the budget that has been made available to the Consultative Forum for a given year.

The annual work plan may be presented to the Management Board and can be made public thereafter.

The annual work plan remains a living document and may be adjusted according to emerging/changing priorities and needs.

12. Consultative Forum Meetings

A. Different types of meetings

In accordance with Article 50(7) of the EUAA Regulation, the Consultative Forum meets in plenary at least once per year and organises meetings of the thematic consultation groups as necessary.

In addition, the Consultative Forum may organise other meetings and/or exchanges in line with the annual work plan or emerging needs. This may, for example, include thematic meetings or workshops on topics of particular interest to the Consultative Forum members or may also include information webinars.

The Chair shall call meetings of the Consultative Forum, to the largest extent possible in accordance with the planning of activities as set out in the annual work plan. Based on needs or following developments, the Chair may also call a meeting on its own initiative or on the basis of a request from any of the thematic rapporteurs or one-third of Consultative Forum members.

B. Format of meetings

Consultative Forum meetings may take place virtually or physically (face-to-face).

As a general rule, the Plenary meeting should take place face-to-face or in hybrid format.

Other Consultative Forum meetings can either take place online or physically, depending on the budget available to the Consultative Forum. The Chair, supported by the Secretariat, shall decide which meetings take place physically and which ones would be organised online or as

a hybrid meeting. To the extent possible, the format of the meetings will be specified in the annual work plan of the Consultative Forum activities.

C. Agenda

The meeting agenda shall be decided by the Consultative Forum members in consultation with the Agency.

A provisional agenda, which may take account of any possible feedback provided by the Agency, shall be circulated to the meeting participants, at the latest three weeks prior to the meeting.

The final agenda for the meeting shall be adopted at the beginning of the meeting.

D. Participation by CF members

Participation in Consultative Forum meetings is open to all member organisations/bodies, with the exception of the thematic consultation groups that are restricted to those Consultative Forum members, that have been selected to be part of the respective consultation group. The [list of Consultative Forum members](#) and those who are included in the thematic consultation groups is publicly available and regularly updated on the Consultative Forum website.

As a general rule, member organisations/bodies shall be represented by one participant in a meeting, unless otherwise justified and agreed to with the Secretariat and Consultative Forum Chair.

In case of a physical meeting, invited participants will be eligible to have their costs in connection to attendance to a Consultative Forum meeting reimbursed in accordance with the rules for reimbursement⁴.

The member organization/body is free to appoint a different representative to participate in the meeting than the assigned contact point, depending on the thematic subject matter in question.

E. Participation by the Agency and the Management Board in Consultative Forum Meetings

The Chair may, on behalf of the Consultative Forum, invite the Agency and the Management Board to participate in Consultative Forum meetings. Such invitations shall be channeled through the Consultative Forum Secretariat.

The Agency and the Management Board respectively shall decide on appropriate representation in Consultative Forum meetings, depending on the type of meeting and the subject matter discussed.

⁴ EASO/EDD/2021/006, Decision of the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office on the rules for reimbursement of expenses incurred by participants invited to attend EASO activities.

F. Participation by the Fundamental Rights Officer in Consultative Forum Meetings

In line with Article 18, the Chair shall, where relevant, invite the Fundamental Rights Officer to participate in (parts of) the Consultative Forum meetings, including meetings of the thematic consultation groups.

G. Other participants

Following a proposal by the Chair, non-member organisations as well as experts in relevant areas may be invited to participate in a Consultative Forum meeting (or attend a specific agenda item of that meeting) to contribute actively to the discussions or to act as observers.

No sensitive information within the meaning of Article 9 of Management Board Decision No 111 shall be discussed in the presence of such non-member organisations or individuals or shared with or disclosed to them.

13. Participation by the Consultative Forum (Chair) in Management Board Meetings

When relevant, the Consultative Forum Chair may request an invitation to attend a Management Board Meeting. For example, the Consultative Forum Chair may suggest being invited to present the planning of the Consultative Forum's work, the annual report of activities, and/or to present suggestions/recommendations from the Consultative Forum that are addressed to the Management Board.

Where the Consultative Forum is invited to attend parts of the Management Board meeting, it shall be represented by the Consultative Forum Chair or Deputy Chair.

14. Consultations on key Agency documents

According to the EUAA Regulation, the Consultative Forum is to be consulted on various key Agency documents, as foreseen in Article 50(5) and (6) of the EUAA Regulation⁵. Consultation on key Agency documents can be done in writing and/or orally through meetings (and documented accordingly in meeting reports).

For (electronic) consultations in writing, the Secretariat will, on a case-by-case basis, agree with the Chair whether feedback is to be provided directly to the Secretariat or whether the feedback from the Consultative Forum members will be collected and consolidated by the Chair (e.g., possibly in the form of a recommendation, see Article 15).

Where feedback is to be provided directly to the Secretariat, the Secretariat shall launch and coordinate the consultation. The Consultative Forum members shall be invited to submit their

⁵ More specifically, the Consultative Forum shall make suggestions to the Management Board on the annual and multi-annual programming, provide feedback to the Management Board and suggest measures as follow-up to the Annual report on the Situation of Asylum. The Consultative Forum shall also be consulted on the preparation, adoption and implementation of the Fundamental Rights Strategy, the Code of Conduct, the setting up of the complaints mechanism and the development of the European Asylum Curriculum.

feedback to the Secretariat, while keeping the Chair and Deputy Chair informed. The Secretariat will compile and channel the feedback received to relevant staff in the Agency.

Where feedback is to be provided to the Chair, the Chair shall be responsible for launching and coordinating the consultation. The Chair shall collect feedback from the members, which it shall subsequently consolidate and transmit to the Agency and/or Management Board via the Secretariat.

The Agency may use different methods of written consultation and can ask for feedback on documents in an open-ended way or may also make use of specific questionnaires, and/or surveys.

Consultative Forum members shall be invited to provide their feedback within an appropriate deadline to allow effective involvement in the process and a substantial contribution to be provided.

The Chair may also request, either on its own initiative or upon a request by the Agency or one third of the Consultative Forum members, to organize a dedicated meeting to discuss a particular document or subject matter with the Agency, thereby collecting the Consultative Forum's views, input and feedback. The discussions and feedback provided would subsequently be consolidated in a meeting report and shall be shared with the Agency and/or Management Board, as appropriate.

15. Consultations on the development of the European Asylum Curriculum

In accordance with art. 50(6) of the EUAA Regulation, the Consultative Forum shall be consulted on the development of the European asylum curriculum referred to in Article 8(3) of the Regulation. To this purpose, the Agency organizes an annual dedicated meeting with the Consultative Forum to discuss training activities and planning for training development in a given year. The Agency shall also launch calls for the expression of interest for Consultative Forum members to be consulted on specific training modules. Consultative Forum members who express an interest and who possess relevant expertise in the concerned area will be invited to provide their feedback on the training module using a specific consultation template. After the consultation, the feedback received from the members of the Consultative Forum shall be taken into account by the content expert group and the EUAA Module Design Coordinator, and those Consultative Forum members who participated in the consultation will be acknowledged in the introduction of the training module.

16. Providing advice

In accordance with Article 50(4) of the EUAA Regulation, the Consultative Forum shall advise the Executive Director and the Management Board on asylum-related matters in accordance with the Agency's specific needs in areas identified as a priority for its work.

Advice from the Consultative Forum to the Executive Director and the Management Board may be provided in different manners, including for example:

- Orally during Consultative Forum meetings and reflected in the respective meeting report;
- In writing, in the form of suggestions or recommendations addressed to the Executive Director and/or Management Board. Such suggestions/recommendations shall be adopted in accordance with the rules on decision-making as laid down in Article 9. The suggestions/recommendations presented by the Consultative Forum shall indicate the relevant legal basis and fall within the scope of the Agency's mandate. Suggestions/recommendations shall be transmitted to the Executive Director and Management Board via the Consultative Forum Secretariat.

Key messages of advice from the Consultative Forum may also be included in the annual report of activities, as referred to in Article 17.

17. Feedback on the Consultative Forum's input and advice

The Consultative Forum finds it important to be informed about the follow-up to its input and advice. To this end, the Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, will conduct an annual survey in Q4 of each year to seek feedback from the Agency as to how the Consultative forum's input and advice have been considered.

CHAPTER FOUR: COOPERATION WITH THE EUAA FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OFFICER

18. Cooperation between the Consultative Forum and the EUAA's Fundamental Rights Officer

In line with Article 49 (4) of the EUAA Regulation, the Fundamental Rights Officer shall cooperate with the Consultative Forum.

Whilst the Consultative Forum and the Fundamental Rights Officer have different mandates, there are also synergies and complementarities in some of their activities. The Consultative Forum shall therefore strive to work closely with the Fundamental Rights Officer by:

- Regularly exchanging information: where relevant, the Chair shall invite the Fundamental Rights Officer to participate in Consultative Forum meetings (in line with Article 12 F), including meetings of the thematic consultation groups. Such meetings may be complemented with dedicated exchanges between the Consultative Forum and the Fundamental Rights Officer, to be organised upon the initiative of the Chair, the Fundamental Rights Officer, and/or following the request of one third of the Consultative Forum members.
- Providing advice to the Fundamental Rights Officer, upon his/her request. The Consultative Forum will be consulted on the preparation of the fundamental rights strategy. The Fundamental Rights Officer may, for example, also seek the Consultative Forum's advice on specific thematic areas related to fundamental rights.

Selected members of the Consultative Forum may further be consulted by the Fundamental Rights Officer in the context of his/her visits to the places where the Agency carries out operational activities.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

19. Communication tools

The main channel for any communication with the Agency shall be via e-mail, using the functional mailbox of the Consultative Forum Secretariat. Without prejudice to applicable rules relating to the protection of sensitive non-classified information, any communication from the Consultative Forum to the Management Board shall also be transmitted via the Secretariat.

To supplement communication via e-mail, the Agency shall explore the use of an online communication platform to further facilitate communication between the Agency and the Consultative Forum members. Such platform should if possible provide Consultative Forum members: the possibility to directly contact the Agency's Secretariat, the Chair and Deputy, and other Consultative Forum members; the possibility for Consultative Forum members to upload any documents, reports, conclusions of conferences/activities etc, so that these can easily be shared with the Agency and other members, for their information; the possibility for the Agency where relevant, to make use of the platform for the sharing of information regarding its activities. Should the use of such a platform be possible, and depending on the platform's functionalities, the Platform may in due time also be used for the purposes of electronic consultations if the Agency and the Consultative Forum mutually agree that the Platform would be more efficient to that end.

The Consultative Forum members are further free to exchange information between each other (without involvement of the Agency) in any other way, as they deem useful.

20. Transparency

The list of Consultative Forum members shall be made publicly available on the EUAA website (on the page dedicated to the Consultative Forum). The list shall also specify the members of the thematic consultation groups.

The Secretariat is responsible for regularly updating the list, when required, in case of any changes in membership and shall notify the Chair and Deputy Chair of any such changes.

The Consultative Forum Chair, with support of the Secretariat, drafts an annual report of its activities that can also include the key messages of advice provided to the Executive Director and the Management Board (see also Article 15). Upon invitation by the Management Board, the report may be presented by the Consultative Forum Chair and/or the Deputy Chair at a Management Board Meeting.

The annual report of activities shall be made public on the Consultative Forum webpage.

CHAPTER SIX: FINAL PROVISIONS

21. Expenses

The costs related to the activities of the Consultative Forum as well as those related to the participation of Consultative Forum members and other participants in Consultative Forum meetings shall be planned in accordance with the budget that has been made available to the Consultative Forum by the Agency.

The budget of the Consultative Forum is administered by the Consultative Forum Secretariat. The Secretariat shall regularly inform the Chair and Deputy Chair on budget implementation.

22. Adoption, monitoring and adjusting the Consultative Forum's working methods

These working methods shall be adopted and, where relevant, modified in accordance with the rules for decision-making, as laid down in Article 9.

An initial assessment of the working methods shall be carried out after one year following their adoption. Thereafter, The Consultative Forum shall review its working methods at least every four years. Where necessary, after consulting the Agency and the Management Board, the working methods shall be adjusted to ensure the impact of the Consultative Forum's work is being maximized.