1. Basic Information

1.1 CRIS Number: 2004/016-926.04.01

1.2 Title: Enhancement of the administrative structures regarding asylum procedures

1.3 Sector: Justice and Home Affairs

1.4 Location: Ministry of Interior, Asylum Service, Nicosia-Cyprus

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s):
Full compliance with and effective implementation of the relevant acquis and international law in the field of asylum.

2.2 Project purpose:
• Better coordination and a better communication of data among the departments involved in the asylum procedures and facilitation of the production of reports;
• Enhanced administrative effectiveness of the Reviewing Authority (which will shortly be appointed according to the law recently adopted by the House of Representatives);
• Effective implementation of the Dublin II Regulation procedures through the Dublin Office which is being operated by the Asylum Service.

2.3 Justification

According to Article 34 of the Accession Treaty, Justice and Home Affairs is listed in the priority sectors for assistance under the Transition Facility.

The Comprehensive Monitoring Report (November 2003) for Cyprus, Chapter 24 concluded that “Cyprus is partially meeting the commitments for membership in relation to the visa policy and in the area of asylum. Urgent action must be taken in order to ensure the proper implementation of the existing asylum legislation as well as the recently proposed measures as regards enhancement of the administrative structures for which amendments to the existing legislation are required. Attention should also be given to the technical and organizational preparations necessary to implement EURODAC and Dublin II.”

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

The Asylum Service, which was established by law on the 6th February 2004 in order to replace the Asylum Unit that was part of the Civil Registry and Migration Department and the activities of the Refugee Authority, has the responsibility of processing applications for international protection in Cyprus. The total number of applications received during 2003 rose up to 4,411, an increase of nearly 500% compared to 2002.

The amended law also provides for the establishment of an independent Reviewing Authority and the implementation of the Dublin II Regulation by the Asylum Service. The members of
the Reviewing Authority have been appointed by the Council of Ministers in August 2004. Most of the staff members for the Asylum Service have been recruited in June and July and are currently undergoing an initial training so as to be able to start working properly within the next months. Currently the Dublin Office is operated by Administrative Officers from the Asylum Service.

Apart from the Asylum Service, there are various governmental departments involved directly or indirectly in the asylum procedures namely the Reviewing Authority, the Civil Registry and Migration department (which is now operating through one office in Nicosia but is soon expected to operate in all districts), the district Social Welfare Offices, the district Labor Offices and the District Police Aliens and Immigration Departments.

It has been noted that the current communication of data regarding asylum seekers is inefficient being fragmented and paper-based. It is necessary that relevant information should be communicated among the departments involved through a common database.

In November 2002 a Twinning Light project was signed between the Asylum Unit of the Ministry of Interior of Cyprus and the Centre for International and European Economic Law of Thessaloniki, Greece. The objective of the project was to enhance the administrative and legal capacity of the authorities/departments concerned in the refugee/asylum field in Cyprus, thereby adhering to International/EU acquis standards. Three of the components of the twinning project were the following:

- **Further development of a database with emphasis on data protection**
  The Asylum Service operates with a small number of up-to-date PCs that are sporadically used by its personnel; however, they are not connected to a Database Server nor are the procedures for asylum seekers automated. An IT system was proposed by the Twinning Light officials from Greece that would computerize the workflow procedures and would keep statistics about the applications for asylum received in Cyprus, implementing Security Levels with regard to the automatic processing of Personal Data.

- **Assessment and improvement of existing cooperation modules between authorities responsible for refugee matters**
  It was recommended that a flexible network/form would be created which shall prevent the emergence of problems and resolve them the soonest possible in the most effective way.

- **Assessment of existing implementation measures of the Dublin Convention and EURODAC and recommendations for improvement**
  It was noted, among other things, that there should be better cooperation and mutual briefing between the relevant services (police authorities and the Asylum Unit) of the Republic of Cyprus, which are responsible for fingerprinting asylum seekers.

The proposed project will address the above problems identified by the Twinning Light, as well as the demands arising from the implementation of the Dublin II Regulation. It will also enhance the administrative capacity and effectiveness of the Reviewing Authority.

### 3.2 Linked activities:

- **Twinning light**
  With regards to the twinning light activities see 3.1 Background and Justification

- **European Refugee Fund**
  For 2004 Cyprus will be receiving for the first time funding by the ERF, which is set to be at € 168,000. The ERF program for 2004 will cover: improvement of the reception
conditions for asylum seekers, provision of legal assistance, development of an accommodation referral system, provision of social welfare assistance and vocational training.

3.3 Results:

- Database developed, with emphasis on data protection;
- Database implemented (with the acquisition of the required equipment);
- Procedures and guidelines established for the Reviewing Authority;
- Staff of the Reviewing Authority fully trained;
- Effective implementation of the Dublin II Regulation;

3.4 Activities:

I. Development of a Database to the Departments involved in dealing with asylum seekers.

The database will be operated by Asylum Service personnel although input of data will be performed by all the related departments. The access to the data for all the departments apart from the Asylum Service will be restrained. These departments are: the district Civil Registry and Migration departments (5 locations), the district Social Welfare Offices (5 locations), the district Labor Offices (5 locations) the District Police Aliens and Immigration Departments (7 locations) as well as the Reviewing Authority (1 location).

II. Implementation of a Database for asylum

The implementation of the Database shall comprise the following steps:

- Purchase of necessary equipment, which will include: 23 routers, 1 switch and 23 PCs. It is noted here that a dedicated PC will be required for the database to be installed in each location so that it is always accessible by any member of staff that is authorized to use it and so as to avoid the additional cost of having more that one users at the same time in each location. In this case, switches would be required (a switch has a cost of approximately € 1,700 whereas a PC costs approximately € 1,020) (See Annex 4)
- Establish communication from the server to each of the user locations
- Installation and testing
- User training

III. Provision of consulting services to the Reviewing Authority and the Dublin Office

The above units shall become fully operational in the near future (but before the start of the project). Their staff needs to be familiarised with the tasks to be carried out and receive adequate training. Standard procedures shall be worked out.

To this end it is envisaged that two consultants will provide services for the period of one year to the staff and members of the Reviewing Authority and also the staff of the Dublin Office. The consultants shall train the staff on the job and prepare working procedures and manuals. With regards to the Dublin Office, the training needed is not expected to exceed two months period and will not be done on a continuous basis. Therefore, in this case a Twinning exercise is not applicable.

It is expected that the Consultants will deliver training to a total number of 9 persons at the Reviewing Authority and 5 persons who are currently involved with the Dublin Office activities. The training for the Reviewing Authority is expected to cover the following areas:
• Refugee Status Determination procedures (i.e. Geneva Convention of 1951, Interviewing techniques, Credibility Analysis)
• Creation of templates for communicating the decisions to the applicants

The training for the Dublin Office should cover the following tasks:
• The Responsibilities of the Dublin Office and how to ensure that all EU deadlines can be met
• Full understanding of the EC Regulation 343/2003
• Where does EURODAC fit into this, establishing a workflow for EURODAC within the various authorities and ensuring prompt use of EURODAC data for Dublin purposes
• Production of statistics for Dublin

3.5 Lessons learned
The Asylum Service has recently had a training experience by a Consultant with international experience on Asylum issues who was brought here by UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) and delivered lectures to the caseworkers regarding Refugee Status Determination. The involvement of the Asylum Service to the designing of the project was limited to the selection of certain subjects that presented particular interest for Cyprus. This experience has proven to be very valuable for the Asylum caseworkers and it is believed that it would be equally useful for the Reviewing Authority members and staff.

Up-to date, only one Interim Evaluation Report for Cyprus was issued in June 2004, covering the National Pre-accession Programmes 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. According to the key achievements and findings project design was considered generally very good and relevance of projects with respect to the acquis requirements and to national needs has been scored highly. According to the evaluators the assistance is on course for achievement of immediate objectives and hence effectiveness is likely to be high. A similar situation applies with respect of impact. It is also stated that there are very few concerns about sustainability and prospects are good because of financial provision, staffing levels and warranty & maintenance arrangements.

The same approach as the one adopted for Pre-accession aid was followed regarding project design under the Transition Facility and for this reason it is expected that assessment will continue to be positive.

There were no specific recommendations in the Interim Evaluation Report relevant to earlier projects in the field.

4. Institutional Framework

The responsible institution for the project shall be the Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior. Its main purpose is the processing of applications for international protection on first instance. The structure provides for: the Head of the Service, one administrator for the Dublin Office, one Coordinator, six caseworkers, five secretarial staff and one messenger. Ten caseworkers have also been recruited for clearing the backlog. Their contracts are valid until the end of 2004 and will be further extended if deemed necessary. Due to the increase of asylum applications submitted during the last two months in 2003, it is expected that six caseworkers and four secretarial staff will be recruited as well in the near future.

Other cooperating institutions involved in the project are:

- the District Civil Registry and Migration departments, which are responsible for issuing residence permits to the asylum seekers and also to issue deportation orders for rejected asylum seekers
- the District Social Welfare Offices (DSWO), which are responsible for providing financial assistance to needy asylum seekers shortly after they apply for asylum and also for assisting asylum seekers to find accommodation on an ad-hoc basis;

- the District Labour Offices which are responsible for finding employment to asylum-seekers registered as unemployed. It should be noted here that prolonged public financial assistance to asylum seekers is only provided by the DSWO only if it is recorded that no employment is available or if they are unable to work for justified reasons (such as medical conditions);

- the District Police Aliens and Immigration Departments that are responsible for receiving applications and sending them to the Asylum Service and also for taking fingerprints;

- the Reviewing Authority is responsible for receiving and processing appeals on first instance decisions.

5. Detailed Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Support</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Total EU (1)</th>
<th>National Cofinancing *(3)</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>0,370</strong></td>
<td><strong>0,020</strong></td>
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</table>

* In cases of co-financing only

Note: expenditure for equipment should be put under Investment

(1) In relation to equipment, hardware

(2) In relation to database development, purchasing of software, licensing and consulting.

Consultancy fees have been estimated on the basis of existing arrangements under project titled “Establishment of a National Drugs Monitoring Centre and development and implementation of a National Drugs strategy” which is currently under implementation and is being financed by the 2001 pre-accession funds.

(3) Joint co-financing

6. Implementation Arrangements

6.1 Implementing Agency
The Asylum Service within the Ministry of Interior will be the Implementing Agency for this project.

The **Project Authorizing Officer (PAO)** for the project is:

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Ag. Head of the Asylum Service  
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Telefax: +357 22 867671  
Email: mpolydorou@crmd.moi.gov.cy

The **project leader** for the project is:

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Telefax: +357 22 867671  
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**Contact person** for the project is also:

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Administrative Officer, Asylum Service  
Demostheni Severi Avenue, 1457 Nicosia  
Telephone: +357 22 867764  
Telefax: +357 22 867671  
Email: kakiademetriou@yahoo.gr

6.2 **Twinning**  
N/A

6.3 **Contracts**  
The project will be implemented through:
- One service contract for the development of the database  
- One supply contract for the necessary hardware  
- One service contract for the consultancy services

7. **Implementation Schedule**

7.1 **Start of tendering/call for proposals:** October 2004  
7.2 **Start of project activity:** February 2005  
7.3 **Project Completion:** March 2006

8. **Sustainability**

- The structure of the Asylum Service provides for: one Head, one Coordinator, one coordinator for the Dublin Office, six caseworkers and six supporting staff. Currently, the structure of the service is as follows: one Head, one coordinator, fourteen administrative officers working on cases, one administrative officer purely on administration issues and seven supporting staff. It is noted here that one of the officers of the service has taken over the duties of coordinator for the Dublin Officer until the appointment of a coordinator sometime within the next year. The additional caseworkers have been recruited on a temporary basis in order to work on the big number of applications pending examination. Their contracts will be extended for as long as they are needed according to the existing
backlog of applications. The same structure has been included in the Budget of the Service submitted and approved by the Ministry of Finance for 2005. Therefore, it is ensured that adequate staff is always available for managing the database. Expenditure related to administrative function is covered through the annual National Budget.

- The required maintenance and update agreements will be covered by national funds through separate contracts that will be signed by the contracting authority. Adequate financial provisions will be included in the relevant financial year’s Government Budget.

9. **Conditionality and sequencing**
   Implementation of the project is conditional to the following:
   - Appointment of the Reviewing Authority members by the Council of Ministers is expected by the end of 2004.
   - As regards sequencing, the specifications of the equipment to be purchased will be specified after the completion of the initial phase for the development of the Database.
   - The most important milestones of the project in terms of impact are:
     (a) Installation and implementation of the database
     (b) Appointment of the consultants
ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format (compulsory)
2. Detailed implementation chart (compulsory)
3. Contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter for full duration of programme (including disbursement period) (compulsory)
4. List of equipment to be acquired for the implementation of the Database for Asylum
## ANNEX 1

### LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>CRIS number: <strong>2004/016-926.04.01</strong></td>
<td>Total Budget: <strong>0.390 MEUR</strong></td>
<td>EU Contribution: <strong>0.370 MEUR</strong></td>
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### Overall Objective

Full compliance with and effective implementation of the relevant acquis and international law in the field of asylum.

### Project purpose

1. Better coordination and a better communication of data among the departments involved in the asylum procedures and facilitation of the production of reports.
2. Enhanced administrative effectiveness of the Reviewing Authority (which will shortly be appointed according to the law recently passed by the House of Representatives).
3. Effective implementation of the Dublin Regulation through the Dublin Office which will be operated by the Asylum Service.

### Results

1. Database developed and implemented with emphasis on data protection;
2. Procedures and guidelines established for the Reviewing Authority;
3. Staff of the Reviewing Authority fully trained;
4. Effective implementation of the Dublin Regulation;

### Activities

1. Development and implementation of a Database to the

### Means

1. One service contract

### Objectively Verifiable Indicators

- Monitoring reports of the Commission and international NGOs

### Sources of Verification

- Commission and NGO reports

### Sources of Verification

- 1. Statistics produced by database
- 2. Reports of consultants

### Assumptions

- Continued commitment of the Government to support asylum administration as a priority

### Assumptions

- 1. Full commitment of the departments involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>departments involved with asylum seekers</th>
<th>2. One supply contract</th>
<th>and functionality of the system</th>
<th>of services and supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Implementation of a Database for asylum (acquisition of equipment)</td>
<td>3. Two long-term experts</td>
<td>3. Users manual</td>
<td>3. Staff to be trained in place</td>
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<td>3. Consulting services to the Reviewing Authority and the Dublin Office</td>
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**Preconditions**
Timely setting up of the Reviewing Authority and the Dublin Office
Project number:
Project title: Enhancement of the administrative structures regarding asylum procedures

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<td>X = Closure</td>
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D = Design  
C = Contracting  
I = Implementation  
X = Closure
CUMULATIVE CONTRACTING AND DISBURSEMENT SCHEDULE

Project number:
Project title: Enhancement of the administrative structures regarding asylum procedures

All figures in million EURO

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NB: 1. All contracting should normally be completed within 6-12 months and must be completed within 24 months of signature of the FM.

2. All disbursements must be completed within 36 months of signature of the FM.
List of hardware included in Asylum project Fiche

- 7 PCs and 7 routers for the District Aliens and Immigration Police departments
- 5 PCs and 5 routers for the District Social Welfare Offices
- 5 PCs and 5 routers for the District Labor Offices
- 5 PCs and 5 routers for the District Civil Registry and Migration
- 1 PC and 1 router for the Reviewing Authority
- 1 Switch for the Asylum Service