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IKP's first year anniversary

In January 2022, COA launched its International Knowledge Platform with a vision: to stimulate collaboration across borders, by sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices and by learning from each other. We now celebrate our first year anniversary. Time to look back.

We had an active first year. We have gathered up to 150 professionals in the field of asylum reception and support from almost 20 countries. We have shared knowledge, experiences and best practices on a variety of topics.

We did so at our international exchange event about support to unaccompanied minors with little chance to obtain asylum, in October 2022. 105 participants from 13 countries have participated in this hybrid event. Professionals working with unaccompanied minors met each other, exchanged knowledge and experiences and inspired each other. A successful first step towards more exchange and cross-bordering cooperation. One of the participants stated: "I don't feel alone anymore".

We also did so by organizing seven international study visits and dozens of online exchange meetings and written communication threads which focused on a variety of topics. To mention a few examples: Reception centre managers from Romania visited the Netherlands to learn more about the Dutch minimum requirements to be met when new reception centres are opened, as well as quality assurance, contingency planning and contracting issues. COA colleagues went to Turkey and Turkish PMM staff came to the Netherlands to discuss the screening and matching methodology. With professionals in Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway and Italy we discussed small-scale reception options. With colleagues from Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany we spoke about the increased influx of unaccompanied minors. With Greece, Cyprus and EUAA we are discussing management of asylum reception facilities. With Norway we spoke about framework agreements with external subcontractors. With France we exchanged about criminal exploitation, with Germany and Spain about study and work opportunities. These exchanges provide insight and help us all further in improving our work.

In addition, we held three workshops with COA coworkers about working internationally. On these occasions, they had online exchanges with professionals from Sweden, Italy and Belgium. After the workshops, the exchanges continued on specific themes. It is exactly this kind of exchange on reception practice that the Knowledge Platform encourages.

We also expanded our international network and launched this website.

There is much more to come in 2023. We will continue the work we started last year, but we will also launch new initiatives. For example, we will organise short-term internships for reception professionals. Also, we will organise the second international IKP event, in Mid-2023, on sustainability in the reception context.

If you have ideas about exchanging knowledge, experience and best practices in the sphere of asylum reception and support, please do not hesitate to contact us through the contact form on this website.