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COVER NOTE

From:	José CARREIRA, Executive Director of European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
date of receipt:	16 November 2016
To:	General Secretariat of the Council
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU common list of safe countries of origin for the purposes of Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection, and amending Directive 2013/32/EU

Delegations will find attached the letter from the Executive Director of European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on the above subject. Please note that the reports can be downloaded here:

- [Albania Country Focus](#)
 - [Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Focus](#)
 - [Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Country Focus](#)
 - [Kosovo Country Focus](#)
 - [Montenegro Country Focus](#)
 - [Serbia Country Focus](#)
 - [Turkey Country Focus](#)
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**European Asylum Support Office**

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION

Valletta Harbour, 16 November 2016
EASO/ED/2016/427

Mr Ivan Korčok,
Government Plenipotentiary for the Slovak Presidency
of the Council of the European Union

Dear Mr Korčok,

I refer to the letter of 1 April 2016, where the Council requested an expert contribution from the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) on Turkey and the six Western Balkan countries. I have the pleasure to inform you that this contribution has now been finalised.

Today, EASO has published seven Country of Origin Information (COI) reports, on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, which include information relevant for both international protection status determination and safe country of origin considerations. The Country Focuses at hand provide factual information on topics of particular relevance to safe country designation, namely state structure, socio-political landscape, rule of law and state protection, security situation and human rights situation.

These reports were co-drafted and reviewed by EASO and researchers from a number of national asylum authorities represented in EASO's COI Network, in accordance with EASO's [COI Report Methodology](#). In line with this methodology and the EASO mandate, country information from a wide variety of sources is provided, while refraining from making any assessments or policy conclusions. This way, the reports aim to support the ongoing negotiations on the EU List of Safe Countries of Origin by offering a factual knowledge base for more informed policy discussions.

In addition to this COI report, EASO has also made a statistical overview on the six Western Balkan countries and Turkey, with relevant information regarding the key statistical indicators in the asylum procedure (applications, decisions, including recognition rates, and pending cases). This statistical overview is based on EASO's Early Warning and Preparedness Data collection and its distribution is therefore limited.

We trust that the above responds to your initial request and will support the ongoing legislative process regarding the Commission proposal for a Regulation establishing an EU common list of safe countries of origin.

Yours sincerely,

José Carreira
Executive Director

Attached: 7 COI reports: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia,
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Statistical Overview

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