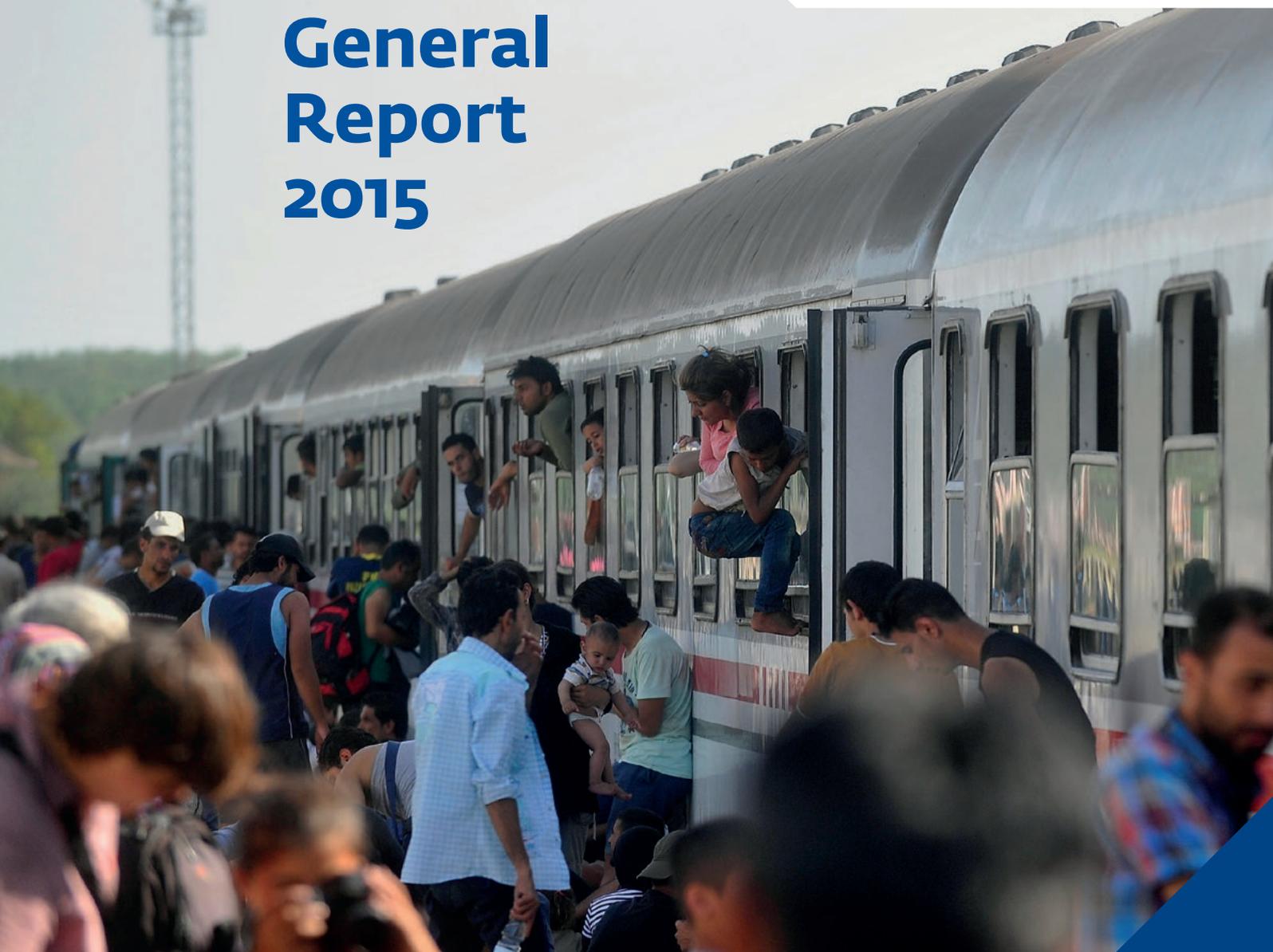


# General Report 2015







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# List of abbreviations used

<b>BCP</b>	border crossing point
<b>CF</b>	Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights
<b>CSDP</b>	Common Security and Defence Policy
<b>EASO</b>	European Asylum Support Office
<b>EB-RAN</b>	Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network
<b>EBGT</b>	European Border Guard Teams
<b>ECA</b>	European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education
<b>ED4BG</b>	European Day for Border Guards
<b>EDF-RAN</b>	European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network
<b>EES</b>	entry/exit system
<b>EFS</b>	EUROSUR Fusion Services
<b>EMPACT</b>	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
<b>EMSA</b>	European Maritime Safety Agency
<b>ESP</b>	European Situational Picture
<b>eu-LISA</b>	the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice
<b>EUROSUR</b>	European Border Surveillance System
<b>EURTF</b>	EU Regional Task Force
<b>EU SatCen</b>	European Union Satellite Centre
<b>FRA</b>	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>FRAN</b>	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
<b>FRO</b>	Fundamental Rights Officer
<b>ICMPD</b>	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>JO</b>	joint operation
<b>JORA</b>	Joint Operations Reporting Application
<b>JRO</b>	joint return operations
<b>MS</b>	Member State
<b>OMNTE</b>	Overall Minimum Numbers of Technical Equipment
<b>OPA</b>	Optional Piloted Aircraft
<b>PNR</b>	passenger name record
<b>RPAS</b>	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems
<b>RTP</b>	registered traveller programme
<b>SAC</b>	Schengen Associated Country
<b>SAR</b>	search and rescue
<b>SGO</b>	Seconded Guest Officers
<b>SQF</b>	Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding
<b>TEP</b>	Technical Equipment Pool
<b>UNHCR</b>	the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WB-RAN</b>	Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network
<b>WCO</b>	World Customs Organization

# Foreword

The year 2015, when Frontex celebrated its tenth anniversary, also represented the most challenging time the Agency has experienced since its creation. Several factors made last year a real stress test for the Agency and the Schengen Area, stretching the limit of national and EU actors' capacities.

The first and foremost factor were the 1.8 Million irregular border crossings registered last year which in net migration terms corresponded to approximately 1 Million people who reached the EU Member States or Schengen Associated Countries. This was compounded by the fact that the mixed migratory pressure was geographically focused on particular and very exposed sections of the EU external borders of some EU Member States, namely Italy and Greece. Finally, the foreign fighter phenomena and difficulties for border management authorities to detect them in order to prevent exit or entry has increased the complexity of the situation by adding a major internal security threat to the migration including asylum management challenges.

The Agency's response is to be put fully into the context of the EU Political Response to these challenges, which was marked in particular by the so-called hotspot approach developed by the European Commission. The EU had to work last year in crisis mode at political and operational level, which also meant boosting operational actors such as Frontex. The strategy was to address the migration and asylum management challenges at the EU external borders hence the importance of strengthening Frontex along with other EU operational actors such as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Europol.



The first priority was to increase our search and rescue capacity following the tragic events during spring 2015, where hundreds of people lost their lives in the Central Mediterranean Sea. The Agency responded quickly after a decision of the EU budgetary authority allowing it to triple the funds devoted to the two main Maritime Joint Operations in the Central Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. This was reflected in the Operational Plans and translated into a significant increase of deployed assets, for instance, in Joint Operations Triton and Poseidon, the number of assets deployed tripled. Frontex deployed 15 vessels along with several helicopters and planes in Italy, and 17 vessels along with aerial means in Greece. Last year, the Agency contributed to the saving of more than 250,000 people at sea. While initially the public's attention was focused on the Central Mediterranean due to the tragic events, the Agency remained vigilant on other areas, in particular the Greek external borders, and followed a flexible approach allowing it to immediately increase its presence and shift resources to the Aegean Sea.



However, the most important novelty last year was the enlargement of the scope of the Agency's support to national authorities in the identification and registration, including fingerprinting of migrants at the hotspot areas. This demanded a massive increase of guest officers on the ground for processing the large number of migrants in the Greek Islands. From May-June, the Agency managed to expand its presence in Greece and Italy by deploying over 1000 officers representing a huge increase compared to approximately 350, which was the average number of guest officers deployed during the first months in 2015.

The larger presence of law enforcement officers deployed through Frontex Joint Operations also supported the performance of mandatory security checks against the Schengen Information System at the hotspots. The objective was not only to support migration management efforts including pre-return and return activities, but also to contribute to internal security, in particular after the

terror attacks in Paris in November 2015. The signature of the Agreement on Operational Cooperation between Frontex and Europol in Brussels on the 4th December 2015 paved the way for the processing and transmission to Europol of personal data of suspects of cross-border crime in particular for migrant smuggling.

Frontex has also concluded an agreement with CSDP Mission EUNAVFOR Med for operational coordination and exchange of information regarding maritime surveillance in the Central Mediterranean Sea. This was the first time that Frontex cooperated so closely, including the exchange of liaison officers with a Military Mission aiming at dismantling the smuggling business model.

This increased demand for reinforcing the inter-agency cooperation on the ground was complemented with the creation of EU Regional Task Forces (EURTF), first in Catania and later in Piraeus. Frontex via the EURTF did not only provide administrative support to partners such as EASO, Europol, Eurojust, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and EUNAVFOR Med; but also supported their cooperation with the national counterparts which are also part of the EURTF.

However, the Agency has not only acted as crisis response mechanism, but also as capacity building actor and some new strands of work and activities were launched last year. For instance, the Eurodac (fingerprint) registration pilot in the Greek Islands which was conducted together with eu-LISA and EASO and which led to improvements in the business processes and the capacities put in place by the host Member States for the identification and registration of mixed

migration flows. Frontex also launched a pilot project and finally concluded a framework contract for the acquisition of aerial surveillance services to complete the range of capabilities for implementing its Joint Operations. The Agency has also enhanced its training portfolio in particular with the launching of the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management. Finally the Agency also prepared the ground and signed the grant Agreement for its most important technical assistance project so far, namely the IPA II funded Regional Programme for Protection-Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In conclusion, 2015 was a year with important changes which started in January with the Agency moving to its new premises in Plac Europejski, Warsaw and ended with the European Commission Proposal in December establishing a European Border and Coast Guard. This proposal, which is being currently in the legislative process, will further strengthen the mandate and resources of the Agency.

We at Frontex, including the Management Board and the Agency's management and staff, have already started preparations for the implementation of the new tasks, since there is no time to waste when it comes to reinforcing further the management of the EU external borders and consolidating the Schengen Area's Governance.

**MARKO GAŠPERLIN**  
Chair of the Management Board  
&  
**FABRICE LEGGERI**  
Executive Director





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# 1. Introduction

## Mission

Frontex supports, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the Treaties, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and other international obligations. Frontex supports the Member States in order that they can achieve an efficient, high and uniform level of border control in accordance with the relevant EU Acquis, in particular the Schengen Borders Code. Frontex coordinates operational and EU measures to jointly respond to exceptional situations at the external borders. Frontex develops capacities of Member States and at the European level as combined instruments to tackle challenges, focusing on migration flows but also contributing to fighting cross-border crime and terrorism at the external borders.

## Vision

Frontex is the trustworthy European Border Agency, strengthening the European area in terms of Freedom, Security and Justice. Frontex supports the Member States in order that they can fulfil their responsibilities by providing operational solidarity, especially to those facing disproportionate pressures at their external borders. Frontex utilises the concept of Integrated Border Management, with a balanced focus on effective border control and the fight against cross-border crime. The Agency uses effectively all means available, including enhanced inter-agency cooperation and cooperation with non-EU and third countries, to fulfil its remit. Frontex promotes European border guard culture, with the full respect and promotion of fundamental rights as an integral element thereof. Special focus is applied to the right to

asylum and international protection and the principle of non-refoulement. Frontex builds capacities and capabilities in the Member States, aiming to develop a functioning European System for Border Guards. Professional staff and a set of operational and administrative capabilities enable Frontex to add value to the European Union. Frontex is the preferred provider of operational support and expertise on border management to Member States, the Commission and other EU Agencies.

## Values

Within a teamwork-focused framework, enabled by open communication, Frontex's staff members share and live the corporate values. Consequently, they perform their activities in a highly professional way. Humanity links Frontex's activities with the promotion of and respect for fundamental rights as an unconditional and integral component of effective integrated border management, resulting in trust in Frontex.

## Purpose of the report

The Frontex General Report 2015 takes the Programme of Work 2015 as a reference but does not aim to report against each and every objective set. It gives the reader a broad overview of activities carried out during 2015, and additionally highlights individual operational activities and achievements. This information is then complemented with general financial information and annexes presenting lists of different types of activity, comparative analysis of joint operations and summaries of budgetary and human resources. Some information is repeated between chapters so as to provide context.

## 2. Developments

### 2.1. The situation at the external borders in 2015

In 2015, Member States reported more than 1 820 000 detections of illegal border-crossing along the external borders. This never-before-seen figure was more than six times the number of detections reported in 2014, which was itself an unprecedented year, with record monthly averages observed since April 2014.

2015 began with extremely high levels for the month of January (more than 20 000 detections, against the 2009–2014 January average of 4 700 detections), and each subsequent month set a new monthly record. A turning point was reached in July, with more than 100 000 detections, coinciding with a change in the law of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia enabling migrants to transit the country legally but requiring them to either leave the country within 72 hours or claim asylum. That resulted in a further increase of the flow, and throughout the summer-months scenes of chaos from the border areas spoke of a situation that seemed to be out of control. In September, public authorities ordered the supply of bus and train services in Western Balkan countries and in some Member States, but the flow continued to grow until October. From November onwards, the situation eased a little, but the EU total for December, at more than 220 000 detections, was still much higher than the figure for the whole 2013.

There is no EU system capable of tracing people's movements within the EU following illegal border-crossing. Therefore it is not possible to establish the number of persons who have illegally crossed two sections of the external borders of the EU. Only an estimate of about

1 000 000 persons can be provided, based on the assumption that all migrants first detected irregularly crossing into Greece were then detected for a second time entering from the Western Balkans.

The largest number of detections of illegal border-crossing was reported on the Eastern Mediterranean route (885 386), mostly between Turkey and the Greek islands in the Eastern Aegean Sea. However, few applied for asylum in Greece, instead leaving Greece at the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and continuing through the Western Balkans, initially at the Hungarian border with Serbia, where they applied for asylum and then continued to their final destination in the EU. From mid-September, the flow shifted towards the Croatian border with Serbia, following the building of a temporary technical obstacle in Hungary and the establishing of transit areas for immediate processing of asylum applicants with the possibility of return to Serbia.

In contrast, on the Central Mediterranean route the number of detections of illegal border-crossing was about 154 000, a slight decrease compared to last year, but this figure remains larger than the total number of detections recorded for the EU as a whole in 2011, the year of the 'Arab Spring' (141 051). The drop is due to a decrease in the number of Syrians detected (about 40 000 in 2014, and 7 448 in 2015) after a shift towards the Eastern Mediterranean route.

On the Western Mediterranean route the cooperation between Spain and Morocco is the key in maintaining detections on the land route between Morocco and Spain at a relatively low level. As



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a result, sub-Saharan migrants opting to take the sea route towards Spain increasingly tend to depart from Libya, as the likelihood of being returned to their country of origin after reaching Italy is, for some nationalities, lower than that of being returned from Spain.

On the Western African route, which connects Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco with the Spanish Canary Islands after a dangerous journey in the Atlantic Ocean, the numbers remain negligible, despite an increasing trend for departures from Morocco. This low number is attributed to the joint surveillance activities and the effective return of those detected irregularly crossing the border.



On the eastern land border a new route emerged at the land borders of Norway and Finland with the Russian Federation (referred to as the Arctic route). The main targeted border crossing point (BCP) was the Norwegian BCP at Storskog, which registered an unusually high number of applications for asylum in 2015 (more than 6 200). The situation at Norwegian-Russian border eased in December, when the Russian Federation resumed its practice of preventing the exit of travellers not in possession of an adequate travel document to continue to the EU.

Regarding Finland, the phenomenon started in September 2015 and expanded

in particular in December when irregular migration to the Storskog BCP in Norway was stopped. The phenomena at the two most northern BCPs in Finland (Salla and Raja-Jooseppi) is continuing. In 2015, 694 irregular migrants arrived at the Salla and Raja-Jooseppi BCPs from the Russian Federation.

Persons stating they are coming from Syria (600 767) and Afghanistan (267 485) represented the highest shares of migrants irregularly entering the EU in 2015. While Syrians undeniably constitute the largest proportion of migrants, their exact number is difficult to establish, due to the fact that many other migrants also claim to be from Syria in

order to speed up their journey. Establishing the identity of a large number of poorly documented migrants is one of the main challenges border control authorities are confronted with.

Since 2014, the number of detected Western Africans has been steadily increasing, reaching more than 64 000 detections in 2015, nearly 85% of whom were on the Central Mediterranean route. This is a growing trend that needs to be addressed. In contrast to Eastern Africans, who tend to apply for asylum in other Member States, Western Africans do apply for asylum in Italy and in fact account for the largest share of asylum applicants in that country.

While Greece and Italy have been under particularly intense pressure as the two main entry points, reporting several thousand arrivals per day, large-scale inflows of migrants have been a new experience for several other Member States. The main challenges include the widening of the surveillance areas, the growing need for search and rescue interventions, the lack of both facilities to receive and accommodate thousands of persons over a short time and expertise in detecting non-typical travel documents, difficulties in addressing fraudulent declaration of nationality or age, and the non-systematic entry of finger-printing into the Eurodac-system<sup>1</sup>. Last, but not least, the registration at the borders should take into account the risks to internal security more thoroughly.

1 The Eurodac system enables European Union (EU) countries to help identify asylum applicants and persons who have been apprehended in connection with an irregular crossing of an external border of the Union.

The Paris attacks on 13 November 2015 clearly demonstrated that irregular flows can be used by terrorists to enter the EU. Two of the terrorists involved had previously irregularly entered via Leros and had been registered by the Greek authorities, presenting fraudulent Syrian documents in order to speed up their registration process.

As the vast majority of migrants arrive undocumented, screening activities are essential to properly verify their declaration of nationality. False declarations of nationality are common among nationals who are unlikely to obtain asylum in the EU or who are liable to be returned to their country of origin or transit, or who perceive an advantage in speeding up their journey. With large numbers of arrivals remaining essentially doubtful for a variety of reasons, false identification documents, no identification documents, concerns over the validity of claimed nationality, etc., and with no thorough check nor any penalty for those making such false declarations, there is a risk that some persons repre-

senting a security threat for the EU will take advantage of this situation.

The unprecedented number of detections of illegal border-crossing has also led to a surge in violent incidents along the EU's external borders. Motivated by profit, people smugglers increasingly put migrants' lives at risk and even threaten border guards in order to recover boats or escape apprehension. Large numbers of people crossing the border in groups has led to violence requiring public order policing, i.e. a task for which border control authorities are neither adequately equipped nor trained.

It is dauntingly difficult to estimate fatalities among migrants irregularly crossing the border, because it is not possible to keep an accurate count of missing persons. Frontex does not record such data and can only report the number of bodies recovered during joint operations. In 2015, 470 dead bodies were reported in the Mediterranean area, an increase of 112% compared to 2014. According to IOM estimates, more than 3 770 persons went missing or died in the Mediterranean area in 2015.



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## 2.2. Developments at the Policy Level

2015 saw the unfortunate situation of thousands of migrants putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas. Extremely high migratory pressure at the external EU borders started in January and each subsequent month set a new monthly record of persons coming to the EU in an irregular way.

In May, the European Commission, with a view to addressing the crisis situation in the Mediterranean, as well as the medium- to long-term priorities to shape the EU migration management policy, presented a European Agenda on Migration.

The agenda was built upon four pillars: reducing the incentives for irregular migration; saving lives and securing the borders; strengthening the common asylum policy; and developing a new policy on legal migration. Following this logic, during 2015 three comprehensive implementing

packages were prepared. Some elements addressed acute needs of the Member States; some have been the subject of legislative proceedings by the European Parliament and the European Council.

### The Border Package

In December 2015, the European Commission presented a set of measures aimed at securing the EU's borders, managing migration more effectively and improving the internal security of the European Union, while safeguarding the principle of free movement of persons. The proposals will now pass through the ordinary legislative procedure and be negotiated by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU over the course of 2016. The package of proposals and reports encompasses five important elements.

#### (i) A European Border and Coast Guard Agency

The European Commission released a draft proposal for a Regulation on a European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004, Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC.

This proposal would significantly reinforce the mandate of Frontex in the fields of external border management and return. Frontex would be renamed, to reflect its new mandate, as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

The Regulation would establish a European Border and Coast Guard combining the independent resources of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ("the Agency") and the Member State authorities responsible for border management. The European Border and Coast Guard would share responsibility for implementing an integrated border management approach, as well as ensuring

the effective application of strong common border management standards and providing operational support and intervention where necessary to promptly respond to emerging crises at the external border.

The proposal tabled by the European Commission not only strengthens the Integrated Border Management, but it also improves the governance of the EU's external borders by giving new powers to the Agency and reinforcing its autonomy regarding operational capacity.

The new rules proposed also set up a complaints mechanism for the Agency, providing an opportunity for persons who feel that they have been subject to a violation of fundamental rights in the course of operational engagement by the Agency to file a complaint.

#### **(ii) Schengen Borders Code Revision**

The Commission's proposal responded to an explicit request in the Council conclusions of 9 and 20 November 2015 which invited the Commission to "present a proposal for a targeted revision of the Schengen Borders Code to provide for systematic controls of EU nationals, including the verification of biometric information, against relevant databases at external borders of the Schengen area, making full use of technical solutions

in order not to hamper the fluidity of movement".

#### **(iii) A European travel document for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals**

The proposal aims to create an improved EU standard travel document for the expulsion of third-country nationals. This new document would have improved security features and replace the model which has been used since 1994. The new proposal aims to improve the effectiveness of negotiations with third countries to take back their nationals illegally staying in the EU, and increase the application of existing readmission agreements.

#### **(iv) EUROSUR Handbook**

The Commission Recommendation adopting the Practical Handbook for implementing and managing the European Border Surveillance System was presented as a part of the border package. Making this handbook ready was possible thanks to the collective work of the Member States, Frontex and the European Commission experts.

#### **(v) The eighth bi-annual report on the Schengen area**

A bi-annual Commission report presents an overview on the functioning of Schengen to EU institutions twice a year. It addresses two major challenges faced in the Schengen area: the refugee crisis and the terrorist threat. The report underlines that an essential prerequisite in addressing effectively the current crisis is strengthened protection of the EU's external borders.

#### **The EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling (2015–2020)**

In May 2015, the Commission issued this EU Action Plan to set out the unambiguous actions necessary to implement the European Agenda on Security and the European Agenda on Migration. This document highlights and indicates the specific tasks aimed to efficiently tackle the criminal networks facilitating irregular migration.

#### **The EU Action Plan on Returns**

In September, the European Commission presented the Action Plan on Returns to the European Parliament and the Council. The plan defines immediate and mid-term measures to be taken by Member States (i) to enhance voluntary return, (ii) to strengthen the implementation of the Return Directive (2008/115/EC), (iii) to improve information sharing, (iv) to strengthen the role and mandate of Frontex in return operations, and finally (v) to create an integrated system of return management. In parallel, the Commission adopted a Return Handbook, which offers competent national authorities practical instructions when carrying out returns of those migrants who do not have the right to stay in the European Union.



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## A Common European List of Safe Countries of Origin

The European Commission's proposal for a regulation aims at creating a Europe-wide list of safe countries of origin, allowing swifter processing of individual asylum applications from candidates originating from countries considered to be safe. The proposal would also sanction faster returns if the individual assessment of an application confirms no right of asylum. Following discussions with, and the current practices of, the Member States, the Commission proposed adding Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey to the EU's list of safe countries of origin.

## The EU Passenger Name Record Directive

This having initially been proposed by the European Commission in 2011, in early December 2015 the European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on a compromise text of an EU directive regulating the use of passenger name record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime. The directive aims to regulate both the transfer of PNR data of passengers on international flights from airlines to Member States and the processing of that data by the competent authorities. The directive establishes that PNR data collected may only be processed for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime.

## The Smart Borders Package

In 2013, the Commission initially presented its 'Smart Borders Package' including proposals for three regulations: a regulation establishing an entry/exit system (EES), a regulation establishing a registered traveller programme (RTP), and a regulation amending the Schen-



gen Borders Code in order to incorporate the functioning of these two systems. Due to a number of technical and budgetary questions raised by the European Parliament and the Council, on the request of the European Commission eLISA<sup>2</sup> launched a feasibility study and a pilot project to test the technical possibilities for the two proposals. The pilot-project report was delivered in late 2015 and, along with the feasibility study conducted in 2014, it will now feed into the European Commission's revised Regulation proposals to be presented in March 2016. The Smart Borders package will aim at improving the management of external borders by restraining irregular migration whilst facilitating the crossing of those borders by pre-vetted frequent travellers.

## Strengthened Cooperation with Europol

In 2015, Frontex and Europol signed an Agreement on Operational Cooperation to enhance their cooperation on combating cross-border criminal activities by exchanging operational information, further developing the cooperation in the field of risk analysis and the fight against cross border crime, and joint planning of operational activities. Under the new agreement Frontex can send personal data regarding suspected criminals to Europol. The transfer of personal data from Frontex to Europol is limited to information about people suspected of being involved in cross-border criminal activities gathered by the Member States during Frontex-coordinated operational activities.

<sup>2</sup> The European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice

## Cooperation with Third-Country Partners

As a result of a Frontex Management Board decision taken during 2015, Frontex can send its first liaison officer to a partner third country. Due to the migratory situation on the Eastern Mediterranean route of migration, and the history of good cooperation, priority has been given to Turkey. The Frontex Liaison Officer will be responsible for the facilitation of operational cooperation with Turkish border management authorities and will contribute to the EU-Turkey action plan in the field of migration.

In the sequence of the implementation of the “Joint EASO-Frontex Technical Assistance project (under the ENPI Programme<sup>3</sup>) to familiarise Moroccan and Tunisian authorities with the work

of the Agencies”, an important step was taken with the Moroccan authorities towards the creation of a working arrangement. Between 2006, when the Management Board mandated Frontex to negotiate a working arrangement with Morocco, and the end of 2015 both parties agreed on the text of an arrangement that is ready to be signed in 2016.

New prospects for closer cooperation with Kosovo<sup>4</sup> resulted from the adoption, during the September session of the Management Board, of a mandate for Frontex to negotiate a working arrangement with the competent border authorities of that country.

In 2015, Frontex continued the implementation of the Eastern Partnership Integrated Border Management Capacity Building Project in six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument aims at reinforcing cooperation between the European Union (EU) and partner country regions located along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

The main aim of the project, run in cooperation with the WCO, the IOM and the ICMPD, is to ensure border security and to facilitate legitimate movements of persons and goods in the region while safeguarding the fight against corruption.

Striving to enhance its involvement in technical assistance projects for border authorities in partner third countries, Frontex signed a grant agreement with the European Commission with regard to the implementation of the “Regional support to protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey” project for the years 2016 to 2018. This project, better known as ‘IPA II’, is coordinated by Frontex, while implementing partners include the EASO, the IOM and the UNHCR.

A sister agreement will be led by the IOM, with Frontex having an advisory role, focusing on enhancing the exchange of non-personal information in the region and contributing to the establishment of assisted voluntary mechanisms in the beneficiary countries.



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## 2.3. Developments at the Agency Level

### 2.3.1. Highlights

#### A difficult year at the blue borders

2015 was marked by an unprecedented increase in irregular sea border crossings into the territory of the Member States of the EU, in particular in the Eastern and Central Mediterranean area. Migrants were incoming, in huge numbers, in overloaded and/or unseaworthy boats regardless of the weather conditions, which triggered the need for search and rescue activities.

Following the extraordinary European Council on migration of 23 April 2015, Frontex's budget for maritime operations hosted by Italy and Greece was almost tripled, to EUR 70.4 million, resulting in a higher volume of operational activities.

Frontex proved capable of extending its maritime operations to a new scale. In the most intense operational period, up to 1 000 officers from the Member States were performing border control duties in operational areas under Joint Operations EPN-Poseidon and EPN-Triton. Altogether, the maritime and aerial assets deployed to Frontex-coordinated joint maritime operations delivered more than 81 000 patrolling hours, double the number in 2014. Their surveillance activities contributed to the rescue of more than 254 000 persons in distress at sea, on average almost 700 persons per day.

As a token of recognition for this endeavour undertaken by the seamen and aircraft crews, Frontex and the Hellenic Coast Guard were awarded the Lloyd's List Shipping Award 2015 for special achievement in the area of safety.

#### The Hotspot concept and an EU Regional Task Force

As part of the immediate action to assist Member States facing emergency situations at their external borders, the EU put forward the development of a Hotspot concept and the establishing of EU Regional Task Forces (EURTF) in Greece and Italy. Frontex was called on to operationalise and implement the two. Within a few months, both the Hotspots and the EU Regional Task Force were up and running. That took a major logistical effort to install mobile offices equipped with all the necessary ICT equipment, especially on the relevant islands.

Hotspots provide a platform for EU agencies (the EASO, Frontex, Europol and Eurojust) to support Member State facing high migratory pressure of mixed migratory flows in an integrated manner, while the EU Regional Task Force (EURTF) serves as a coordination platform for the implementation thereof.



Each EU agency leads its own business area (modules), while Frontex acts additionally as a service provider for the others, putting in place all of the instruments needed to perform daily duties. The two existing EURTFs are located in Piraeus (Greece) and Catania (Italy).

The existence of EURTFs provides the basis for the coordination of the work of different deployed teams and facilitates situation monitoring and the exchange of information between them and the relevant national authorities of the Member State hosting the EURTFs.

By the end of 2015, four Hotspots were operational or ready to be launched: one in Greece (on Lesbos) and three in Italy (Lampedusa, Trapani and Pozallo). Experts and technical resources deployed by the Member States within the joint maritime operations hosted by Greece and Italy contributed to the implemen-

tation of the Hotspot approach by supporting several activities:

- sea border surveillance activities;
- search and rescue of persons in distress;
- land coastal patrolling and transportation of migrants;
- screening of persons with the aim of establishing their nationality, and checking of identification or travel documents;
- identification (including fingerprinting) and registration of persons;
- referral of persons in need of protection;
- return of persons whose asylum applications were refused at the end of the asylum process or other persons who did not have the right to remain in the EU;
- collection of information for risk analysis purposes.

### **Enhanced civil-military cooperation in the Central Mediterranean**

2015 was a year when Frontex had to demonstrate its capability to interlink border management operations with the military activities performed by the EU military partners.

In April, the European Council urged all EU actors to mobilise their efforts to prevent loss of life taking place in the Central Mediterranean, and to address the root causes of the human emergency via cooperation with countries of origin and transit. One of the elements listed as a response to the situation was fighting human smugglers and traffickers who exploit desperate people.

As part of the European Union's comprehensive response to this difficult situation, in June 2015 a European



### Frontex's multi-purpose operations went beyond stakeholder expectations

Frontex supports the Member States in addressing cross-border crime and the implementation of Coast Guard functions while carrying out joint maritime operations. In addition to detection of migrant smuggling, joint maritime operations coordinated by Frontex supported the MS' efforts in Coast Guard functions to uncover other types of crimes, including drug trafficking.

Some 106 tonnes of hashish, worth more than EUR 160 million, plus 10.3 kg of cocaine, 11.3 kg of heroin and 5.4 kg marijuana, worth a total of EUR 1.3 million, were seized (compared to 43 tonnes of hashish, worth more than EUR 65 million, and 35 kg of cocaine, worth EUR 2 million, seized in 2014) and 239 suspected drug traffickers were arrested. Most of the drugs were seized in the Western and Central Mediterranean areas.

Moreover, 336 million contraband cigarettes, worth EUR 38 million, were also seized (compared to 24 million cigarettes, worth EUR 2.8 million, in 2014) and seven cases of possible illegal fishing and one case of possible sea pollution were detected and reported. Moreover, vessels suspected of transporting large amounts of weapons and ammunition were seized by the Host MS' authorities during JO EPN Poseidon Sea 2015.

To sum up, Frontex has been the largest EU operational actor in the maritime sector, operating continuously in a vast operational area starting in the Atlantic Ocean and covering the whole Mediterranean Sea, with a significant allocation of approximately EUR 70 million for joint maritime activities and other related services in 2015; and it has managed to achieve significant results.

### Modern Day Slavery: Trafficking in Human Beings

One of Frontex's priorities for 2015 was the fight against serious crime, implemented within the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). Frontex took part in 23 operational actions focused on three areas: the facilitation of illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and illicit firearms trafficking.

A great example of such activity coordinated by Frontex was Joint Operation VEGA Children 2015. The aim of that operation was to identify and detect vulnerable children on the move at the EU's external air borders and to refer them to the appropriate welfare and protection institutions, by applying the standard operational procedures outlined in a publication titled "VEGA Handbook: Children at airports", which was published by Frontex in 2015.

The scope of the Joint operation was to enhance the exchange of professional knowledge with international organisations and other key stakeholders, to collect best practices to be implemented in future activities, and to disrupt the activities of criminal networks.

With the support of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer and the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights, joint operational teams composed of border guards and experts from international organisations and NGOs were deployed to 12 international airports in Member States.

To raise awareness and explain the concept of VEGA Children, two public seminars were organised at Stockholm and Bucharest airports in cooperation with local airport representatives.

The participating airports reported 22 incidents. There were nine confirmed incidents relating to unaccompanied children detected during the operation: four of those incidents were reported by Paris (Charles de Gaulle), three by Stockholm (Arlanda) and two by Brussels (Brussels-Zaventem). The reported incidents involved 11 children (nationals of the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Eritrea, Brazil, the Central African Republic and France).

During the joint operation two persons were detained on suspicion of child smuggling: a Bulgarian woman was arrested at Brussels-Zaventem and a Swedish woman was arrested at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. In future the concept of VEGA Children activities could be expanded to Frontex activities at sea and land borders.

Union military operation against human smugglers, code-named Sophia,<sup>5</sup> was launched in the Central Mediterranean. The aim of this operation is to identify, board, seize and divert vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas.

Throughout 2015, Frontex was coordinating Joint Operation Triton in the Central Mediterranean. It was a natural step for Frontex and the EU military forces to streamline cooperation and operating procedures. In an exchange of letters Frontex's Executive Director and the Commander of Operation Sophia agreed on the modalities of cooperation and the division of responsibilities between border-control and military operations.

<sup>5</sup> Initially Operation Sophia was called Operation EU NAVFOR MED

## Pilot Project on the acquiring of aerial surveillance services for joint operational activities

Following the encouraging results of the Pilot Project on the acquisition of aerial surveillance services for joint operations implemented in 2014, in the third quarter of 2015 Frontex concluded a framework contract for the acquisition of aerial surveillance services, assets and expert support for Frontex-coordinated joint operations.

The purpose of the framework contract is to develop Frontex's own operational capacity for aerial surveillance activities during joint operations, pilot projects, rapid interventions and technical assistance projects in order to better meet Frontex's operational needs in cases of an emergency, as well as in the event that the Member States or Schengen Associated Countries cannot provide Frontex with aerial surveillance for a specific period and location.

The framework contract consists of two lots: lot one covers maritime surveillance and lot two covers land border surveillance. The services, assets and support required for lot one are provided by six commercial companies, with five commercial companies providing those needed for lot two. Some companies provide services/assets/support for both lots.

In order to test the capacity of the framework contract for the acquisition of aerial surveillance services, assets and expert support, in November and December 2015 Frontex carried out a pilot project within the framework contract and deployed an aerial surveillance system at the EU's external land border between Bulgaria and Turkey and the external land border between Hungary and Serbia.

Evaluation of the pilot project has shown that the framework contract provides a good working mid-term solution for Frontex to fill in operational gaps in terms of aerial surveillance. The services are qualitative and cost-efficient.

## The European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management

On 7 September 2015, Frontex launched the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management (EJMSBM), an innovative degree created in response to increasing challenges to European border security and management of migration flows that need to be addressed strategically, in the framework of international cooperation and partnership.

25 border guard leaders from authorities with border management responsibilities within the EU and the SAC, from Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Italy,

Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and eu-LISA have the opportunity to study together for one and a half years.

The programme is delivered over three stages, each representing one semester of full-study. The first phase, composed of six modules, has been delivered already, with successful student performance. The programme will continue in 2016, with the second semester and the third stage (dissertation), which will require the students to act as reflective practitioners and work independently on a well-defined problem to be addressed in a final dissertation on a subject of current interest for national and European border security.

The topic areas of the Master's include: strategic planning and evaluation; management and leadership; EU policies; technology and innovation in border security; risks and threat management; the global context of border security; and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. It also has underpinning elements of professional ethics, cooperation in border security and fundamental rights.

Each module is delivered by a different academic partner, offering an opportunity for the students to be exposed to the different border management practices at various national external



borders in the Netherlands, Spain, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The consortium established for the joint delivery and awarding of the master's degree includes the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Rezekne University in Latvia, Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania, the University of Salamanca and UNED (both in Spain), and the Defence Academy of the Netherlands.

Frontex plays a key role in the consortium, ensuring the central administration and management of the programme, as well as the maintenance of the same quality standards across the consortium. The academic partners work in close collaboration with the national border guard academies, the complementary institutions. The teaching staff of the programme come from 14 countries, 20 universities, eight border-guard academies, five international organisations and Frontex.

At the end of 18 months of intensive study and applied research, the students will receive an internationally recognised joint degree, an award that, as such, is an innovation in the field of higher education. The international accreditation panel that validated the programme, organised under the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA), appreciated that this programme is a "trail blazer" in designing joint degrees and that it adheres to the demand for senior professionals who are strategic thinkers and have acquired the skills to address new solutions in the rapidly changing context of border management.

### **Maritime Border Surveillance Officer Training**

A new Regulation, (EU) No 656/2014, established rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by Frontex. One of the Regulation's focuses the safety of the people intercepted or rescued at sea. In the last few years, especially in 2015, the intensity of irregular immigration by sea has increased re-



markably. Maritime Border Surveillance Officer training prepared by Frontex is a tool for creating and enhancing the capacities of the participating Member State units in Frontex-coordinated Joint operations at sea.

The first pilot training sessions were carried out in March 2015, followed by the Simulator Pilot Training in August 2015. A training needs assessment was carried out at the end of 2015, all of the parts of the modular course were tested and the first version of curriculum was prepared. The introduction of the training will start in February 2016.

The total time needed to complete the course is three weeks, with the course consisting of four modules: legislation, surveillance, Search And Rescue (SAR), and simulation. Three first modules are carried out as distance learning, which means that the trainees are not physically present in the same place. The course starts with an induction program, when trainees and trainers meet each other and the trainees receive basic information about the course, the goals, and

the rules concerning the course. During the induction the trainees become familiar with Moodle - a distance-learning environment. After the induction there is a period of approximately two months in which the students study all of the necessary, and partly interactive, materials via distance learning. After the distance learning element, all of the trainees are invited to participate in a capstone module: simulator training. In the simulator all of the gained theoretical knowledge is tested and enhanced. During this module cooperation between trainees will develop via common learning and doing.

By structuring the course in the above-mentioned way, an added value is fitting a huge amount of substance into a reasonable timeframe without gathering all of the trainees in one place, turning the theoretical knowledge into practical skills and also, by exercising in the simulator, increasing cooperation abilities. All this will create commonly understood working standards for the actions needed in joint operations.



Quarterly reports constitute an important part of the quality assurance regarding the data collected for risk analysis purposes, as well as a tool for joint analytical activities. It was felt that the analytical work within three risk analysis communities, i.e. the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN), the Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network (WB-RAN) and the Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network (EB-RAN), had matured to the point that a shift from data description to a more problem-oriented approach was feasible and also necessary for maintaining the relevance of the networks.

The quarterly reports are now more reader-friendly: they are more concise and visual. An effort was made to develop new data visualisations and maps.

### **The first Handbook on Impostor Risk Profiles**

There is only one EU-wide data collection scheme on travel document fraud in the EU. The unique European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network (EDF-RAN) was launched in September 2011 in order for there to be a sophisticated and regularly-updated situational picture of the extent and nature of document fraud at the EU's external borders.

Detections of impostors, i.e. persons who use other person's documents taking advantage of their physical resemblance to the genuine holder, have been on the increase according to data from the EDF-RAN, because of the enhanced security features of travel documents. Despite the wide use of the latest technologies and biometric data chips in currently issued passports, physical checking of a person may still be problematic, as the equipment enabling an automated comparison is not always in place. The handbook is meant to address this problem and provide border guards with an additional practical tool to detect impostors.

The handbook was developed in collaboration with national experts represented in the EDF-RAN, and it will be kept updated.

### **2.3.2. Situational Awareness<sup>6</sup>**

Frontex comprehensively manages information on migration and crime related to the EU's external borders. It delivers comprehensive analysis supporting the Member States, serving as a basis for targeted operational cooperation and for meeting the needs of the relevant European institutions.

#### **Debriefing activities**

During the year Frontex increased the deployment of teams of debriefing experts that interview migrants in order to acquire intelligence. Frontex has made significant efforts in order to guarantee that the debriefing experts in the field are properly trained to face the situation in the operational area, and are familiar with the intelligence require-

ments that they are meant to address for risk analysis.

The increased volume and quality of debriefing interviews, in addition to enhancing the opportunity to gain insight regarding the factors that determine the migratory and refugee flows from the countries of origin, modus operandi and understanding of the functioning of the routes across transit and destination countries, also allowed the gathering of a growing amount of personal data in the field.

This has resulted in a significant increase in debriefing interviews containing information on people suspected of being involved in human smuggling in Italy and Greece by Europol, and to an improved mapping of the criminal networks operating in North Africa, Turkey, Italy and Greece, with direct input to investigations run by the Member States' authorities.

#### **A new approach: Problem-Oriented Reporting**

The concept for the quarterly reports drawn up as part of regular risk analysis network activities was reviewed in 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Understanding of the environment – important for decision-making in the area of border security

## EUROSUR Fusion Services

The EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS) are a set of information services delivered to the Member States and other stakeholders, such as Europol and the EMSA, by Frontex. The EFS were launched in 2014, and have since developed into a set of diverse services, fusing a wide range of data, providing Frontex stakeholders with an enhanced situational picture of the EU's external borders. The overall aim is to improve the situational awareness of the Member States, in order to enhance their reaction capabilities to different situations, ranging from weapon trafficking to search and rescue.

The focus of the EFS developments in 2015 was on constantly improving existing services and promoting the integration of new services and information to enrich the European Situational Picture.

Among the developments of EFS in 2015 the Maritime Simulation Module (MSM) was extended in response to the latest *modi operandi*. This service provides simulations of probable future vessel positions based on current and forecasted environmental conditions.

Also, the service providing detailed environmental information about atmospheric and sea conditions was improved significantly throughout the year. This service now comprises a vast range of different parameters helping operational officers in the Member States to plan their operational activities and search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean area on a day-to-day basis.

In 2015, Frontex has also made increased use of earth observation data visualised in the Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA) and distributed via the EUROSUR Application Network to internal and external stakeholders. A total of 376 satellite images of specific areas (such as ports and other coastal areas) were delivered to Frontex stakeholders, 165 of which were delivered by the European Union Satellite Centre (EU SatCen) and 211 by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

EFS have been used as well by police and border forces working on facilitating of illegal border-crossing, with the aim to connect the work of criminal police and border control authorities, and to provide support to their investigations at the national and EU level.

Even though the EFS were launched relatively recently, they contributed to a number of operational achievements at the EU's external borders over the course of 2015.

## New Situation Monitoring Products

As well as the EUROSUR Fusion Services Frontex introduced in 2015 a number of new situation monitoring products, such as: Situational Reports for tracking Vessels of Interest, Daily Regional Overview Reports (Western Balkans), Weekly Reports for the European Commission and Special Media Monitoring reports (including thematic series on the Western Balkans and Libya crisis situations).

## Cooperation with EU NAVFOR MED

Since the early preparation and implementation of the first phase of the EU NAVFOR MED operation (code-named Sophia) in the Central Mediterranean, Frontex has liaised with the intelligence unit of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission in order to ascertain the intelligence requirements and tailor the future cooperation. Following the initial agreement and an exchange of letters, Frontex has shared with EU NAVFOR MED its analytical products and data on incidents in the central Mediterranean Sea, providing a significant contribution to the building of knowledge that would be of operational interest to its counterparty.

Frontex has shared with EU NAVFOR MED the earth observation services acquired for its activities and has agreed a procedure for sharing mutually new acquisitions, whenever possible. The Agency has provided EU NAVFOR MED

## VDS detection of boats with migrants

In October 2015, the Vessel Detection Service (VDS) contributed to saving people in the Mediterranean region during the Joint Operation EPN-Triton 2015. A VDS scan of the area north of Libya indicated four objects not associable to any known vessel in the area. This information was swiftly forwarded to the Italian authorities, which notified the military authorities (EU NAVFOR MED - Sophia) operating in the area. The fast communication enabled a quick response by a EU NAVFOR MED - Sophia vessel, which encountered four boats with 370 migrants in the indicated area. These people were rescued and brought to the safety of the Italian coast.

## Interception of a tracked vessel smuggling weapons

Another operational achievement is connected to the Tracking Vessels of Interest Service in connection with the joint operation EPN-Poseidon Sea 2015. 'Haddad I', a vessel sailing under the Bolivian flag, was tracked for several months after being identified as potentially engaged in illegal activities. In September 2015, following unusual behaviour at sea, the vessel was stopped and checked by Greek authorities. They discovered some 5 000 weapons and 500 000 rounds of ammunition on board, together with smuggled cigarettes. The vessel was bound for Libya.

with a connection to its operational system, where information about incidents is constantly updated and, in addition, provided access to a range of EUROSUR Fusion Services.

The two organisations have agreed on the deployment of liaison officers in the operational area and respective command structures.

A coordination procedure has been agreed in order to avoid the duplication of maritime patrolling efforts at sea.



## Frontex's own equipment

### The purchase of Aerial Surveillance Services

Frontex concluded a framework contract in the third quarter of 2015 for the acquisition of aerial surveillance services, assets and expert support for Frontex-coordinated joint operations. The contract aims to develop Frontex's own operational capacity for aerial surveillance activities during joint operations. The framework contract is for a period of two years, with the possibility of being extended for another two years. The framework contract contains two lots: one for maritime surveillance and another for land border surveillance.

### Mobile field offices

To meet operational needs, in June Frontex organised the emergency rental of 12 mobile fully furnished field offices (containers) for an initial period of six months, with the possibility of extension. The containers were deployed to Sicily in Italy, Motril in Spain, Elhovo in Bulgaria, and on a number of Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. In the longer term, Frontex will organise a long-term framework contract for the provision of mobile offices to meet on-going operational needs. The containers are used mainly for the office needs of Frontex staff and screening/registration, as well as finger-printing and debriefing purposes.

### Night vision goggles, hand-held scanners for document checking, hygienic products for handling migrants, Frontex visibility vests for Frontex Staff and Deployed Officers

In response to requests for operational equipment Frontex initiated tender procedures and prepared the necessary documentation for the purchase and delivery of various items of equipment urgently needed in the operational areas.

### 2.3.3. Supporting Response

Frontex coordinates tailored joint operations at sea, land and air borders and joint return operations, thus: (i) strengthening the capacities of the Member States under specific and disproportionate pressure; (ii) enhancing proactive response to changing humanitarian and security challenges at external borders; and (iii) safeguarding positive achievements in demanding situations.

#### Opera 2.0

In addition to experts, modern border control requires the use of technical equipment. Planning and deployment of pieces of equipment from one Member State to another is facilitated by an ICT tool developed by Frontex: Opera. In 2015, a new version of Opera was rolled out for Frontex and Member State users

for all operations. The updated application contains a completely new module designed to manage the Technical Equipment Pool (TEP) and the Overall Minimum Numbers of Technical Equipment (OMNTE). It also contains a new dictionaries module and an improved reporting module. Opera now also manages Seconded Guest Officer (SGO) deployments and the minimum numbers of the EBGT pool. The appearance, speed and uniformity of the working, user friendliness and reporting mechanisms have been improved. In addition, the application now includes many automated features and more self-checking mechanisms to ensure the accurate input and reporting of data. Opera 2.0 generates historical data and has more powerful search capabilities. The application is used as the main source of information for deployment, operational and pool data.

## Leasing of vehicles for operational activities

Following the results of a gap analysis, in 2015 Frontex decided to launch a pilot project for the leasing of vehicles to be used for operational activities in Hungary, Greece and Bulgaria. A contract was signed in October for three months valued at approximately EUR 30 000 for the provision of mini-busses, passenger cars and four-wheel-drive vehicles to be used for transporting guest officers in operational areas. The pilot project is set to conclude in February 2016 and the results obtained to be used for the preparation of a framework contract for the supply of vehicles in all operational areas.

## Successful use of the Focal Points platform

Secondary migration from Greece has significantly affected the number of illegal border-crossing at the EU's external land borders with the Western Balkan countries. The development of the migration situation, especially at the Hungarian-Serbia border, called for enhanced flexibility and coordination capability. Due to the increased flow of irregular migration at this border section, Hungarian Focal Points were reinforced with additional human resources and technical means for border checking as well as for green border surveillance within the framework of Joint Operation Focal Points 2015 Land. In order to ensure operational response to the pressure at this specific border section, permanent support was provided at the Hungarian-Serbian border. All of the resources deployed within the two operations - JO Focal Points 2015 Land and JO Flexible Operational Activities - were fully synchronised. During the year the deployment of experts within the framework of Frontex-coordinated joint operations has been changing depending on the needs expressed by the host Member States and continuous assessment of the situation.

Due the fact that the number of clandestine entries at the border crossing points at the Bulgarian-Turkish border had increased, Bulgarian Focal Points were reinforced with additional human resources and technical means (CO<sub>2</sub> detectors, service dogs) for border checking within the framework of the JO Focal Points 2015 Land.

A new activity under the umbrella of Joint Operation Focal Points Land was launched at the beginning of December 2015 in order to assist Greece with the registration and fingerprinting of asylum seekers and migrants. This action was launched with the aim of contributing to the control of secondary movements towards the Western Balkans and to tackle cross-border crime. A new Focal Point was established at the Greek-fYROM border and the number of deployed resources has been gradually increased.

Focal Points are a platform for exchanges of operational information and professional experiences, therefore the establishing of synergies between the different host Member States' Focal Points is particularly important in this operation. For the first time a Focal Point Staff Exchange was implemented within the framework of this operation. The main objective of the project was to enhance cooperation and exchange of information, and best practices, between the Focal Points on the level of Border

Crossing Point/Focal Point Commanders and Local Coordinators.

In order to provide efficient operational support to the host Member States, as well as to respond to the changing operational needs in a flexible way, the deployment of Joint Border Check Teams was further improved and took place at those Focal Points which were identified as critical border-crossing points during the year.

In total, 38 Focal Points were active in 2015. Compared to Joint Operation Focal Points in 2014, three new Focal Points were established (FP Luhamaa at the Estonian-Russian border, FP Kastanies at the Greek-Turkish border, and FP Idomeni at the Greek-fYROM border).

## Joint Operation Alexis 2015

Within the framework of JO Alexis 2015 Frontex carried out joint operational activities focusing on strengthening the operational capabilities of EU airports as compared to the needs/vulnerabilities as perceived by Member States.

The main aim was to set operational procedures and to strengthen the capabilities of EU international airports. Two Alexis operations were implemented, differing in scope and objectives:

1. The operational aim of Joint Operation Alexis I 2015 was to enhance the capabilities of EU airport border



guards' expertise regarding document abuses related to transit to/from third countries.

2. The operational aim of Joint Operation Alexis II 2015 was to enhance the capabilities of EU airport border guards to detect abuses when performing first-line checks and arrival and departure gate checks.

In total, 24 Member States, 30 participating airports, and eight non-EU countries took part in the implementation of Alexis activities. During the two joint operations 73 officers were deployed at different airports. In addition to the participation of non-EU officers, Interpol deployed experts to Budapest and Riga airports to support border control activities related to the joint operation.

In order to raise awareness about recommended operational procedures and counter-measures to the targeted abuses, an instruction manual was distributed during both Alexis activities.

At the start of the operational implementation Frontex organised dedi-

cated document training sessions, "Road Shows", which were carried out by eight document expert training teams at eight EU airports for local staff and for guest officers deployed at those airports.

### JO Pegasus 2015

The operational aim of this joint operation was to support border checks at selected airports with specific skills in interviewing irregular migrants, with a focus on those whose profiles matched specific pre-identified threats. The objective of the exercise was to increase the knowledge about such threats at selected EU airports.

As a follow-up, an operational response stage was launched in the course of the joint operation to respond with dedicated operational measures to the challenges identified in the first steps of the joint operation.

In total, 16 Member States and 13 participating airports took part in the implementation of the joint operation. During

the implementation 11 officers (including three seconded guest officers) with specific language skills were deployed at those airports, according to operational needs, for a total of 740 man-days, covering the profiles of Second-Line Interview Officer and/or Advanced-Level Document Officer.

### Future of Border Checks 2015 (FOBC)

The overarching goal of FOBC was to harmonise and build Member States' border control capacities, including the harmonisation of technical equipment and working practices, with a view to increasing security and enhancing travel facilitation at the borders.

It also aims at providing technical assistance, and analytical support to the Member States in addressing their needs as end-users. Apart from the Member States, the beneficiary of FOBC is the European Commission, as the project provides support in policy development in



the area of border control (i.e. the Smart Borders Package and the pilot).

The specific objectives of FOBC cover:

1. further development of best practices and guidelines in the area of border checks;
2. technical support and expertise to Member States in applying best practices and guidelines, as well as to the European Commission in relation to the Smart Borders Package and its implementation;
3. assistance to Member States on the roll-out of new technology for border checks and dissemination of information about the current practices, benefits and capability gaps among all relevant stakeholders;
4. technical support and expertise, by implementing of pilot projects, including contributions to the execution of the Smart Borders pilot and the initiation of a risk-based pilot project between the Member States and third-country partners.

## STREAMS 2015

This project is a continuation of the STREAMS 2014 project that aimed to build up a portfolio of capacities in border surveillance through continuous development of capability tools and deployable products in close cooperation with the Member States, industry and academia. The aim is to increase border-control security and provide support to the Member States in addressing their needs as end-users, and to the European Commission with regard to policy development in the sector of border control.

The 2015 project built upon the previous activities in the sector of border surveillance and detection technologies, aiming at addressing unanswered questions regarding the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of land and maritime border surveillance solutions and technologies, as well as identifying common accepted 'best' practices in various areas of border surveillance, aiming at harmonisation.

The objective of STREAMS 2015 activities were divided in five activity clusters:

1. The Land Border Surveillance Cluster focused on the development and operational assessment of integrated systems solutions for land borders (i.e. mobile surveillance, control and communication systems), including field tests of promising solutions.
2. The Maritime Border Surveillance Cluster put special emphasis on cost-efficiency and identifying operational effective solutions for aerial maritime surveillance, more specifically the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) and Optional Piloted Aircraft (OPA).
3. The Sea Arrivals at EU Ports Cluster focused on the identification and dissemination of an inventory of 'good' practices for border control involving sea arrivals at EU ports. The cataloguing effort covered four general areas: legislation, information exchange, checks, and risk analysis.
4. The Knowledge Dissemination Cluster covered the presentation by Frontex of the findings and outcomes from activities conducted in 2015 during meetings, workshops and demo events.
5. The "Registration package" proof-of-concept test is an inter-agency initiative set up with the aim of developing a permanent solution that will be available upon request to Member States in order to complement their existing capacities for performing identification and Eurodac registration processes when needing to handle large numbers of irregular migrants arriving on their territories.

## Strengthening Frontex's monitoring and contribution to Border Security Research 2015 (SFBSR)

The SFBSR-2015 project builds on the previous efforts of Frontex in the field of research for border security. The overarching goal was to strengthen Frontex's monitoring of, and contribution to

European border security research and to coordinate and enhance the activity and the involvement of the border guard community in this field.

The project aimed specifically at:

1. increasing the awareness of Frontex and Member States' experts of the existing cutting-edge technology developments pertinent to the border control specific missions;
2. increasing the knowledge of the Member States' border guard authorities on appropriate instruments, methodologies and methods for testing and evaluating border security technologies, solutions and products;
3. providing a link between border guards and the evolving world of research and development and contribute to border security solutions that take into consideration the feedback of the end-user community from the early stages of the research and development phases, so as to increase the awareness of Frontex and Member States of relevant research related to border control technologies;
4. contributing to a rethinking of the current status quo on managing and setting up security-related research in Europe, obtaining consolidated knowledge on how it is addressed outside Europe by authorities, agencies and public bodies with responsibilities in this field and identifying aspects that could be translated to the European approach;
5. providing technical support for the European Commission and Member States, border guard authorities under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme and Horizon 2020 programmes;
6. consolidating the knowledge of Member States and Frontex on the implications of the use of border security technologies on privacy, ethics, data protection and the fundamental rights of people crossing the borders.



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### 2.3.4. Emergency Response

Frontex assists the Member States in exceptional situations having a significant impact on EU border security.

#### Poseidon Rapid Intervention

At the end of 2015, the regular Joint Operation EPN Poseidon Sea 2015 was replaced by Poseidon Rapid Intervention (PRI) following a request from Greece for support in handling the unprecedented number of migrants landing on its islands. Member States contributed to PRI various profiles of experts and types of technical equipment in order to implement the operational concept of joint operation, especially with a focus on speeding up the registration and identification process on the Greek islands, allowing for a larger number of migrants to be registered and fingerprinted more quickly.

The deployments gradually rose to more than 700 officers (including interpreters and crew members) on the ground. Competences of officers deployed from different Member States varied from screening and debriefing, through fingerprinting and detection of forged documents to border surveillance and coordination. The screening officers play a key role in helping authorities to determine the nationality of the incoming migrants for identification and registration process. Debriefing experts gather information about the activities of smuggling networks, which Frontex shares with national authorities and Europol.

PRI is taking place in the same operational area as the earlier Joint Operation EPN Poseidon Sea but with a particular focus on the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros. In addition to the activities indicated above, a greater emphasis is being put on coastal patrols at the disembarkation points and transpor-

tation of migrants to registration sites, as well as supporting security checks.

While participation in Frontex joint operations is voluntary, Member States are required to send border guards and technical equipment for rapid deployment, unless they themselves face an exceptional situation substantially affecting the discharging of national tasks. Despite the efforts of the Member States, the operational needs of Poseidon Rapid Intervention were not covered by the contributions provided.

#### Rapid Intervention Exercise REX 2015

REX 2015 was held between 19 August and 14 October along the Greek-Turkish land border. The aims of the exercise were:

1. to test the operational and logistical capacities of Frontex and the Member States during the summer period;
2. to test the capacity of Frontex to coordinate a rapid intervention with on-going Frontex joint operations or on-going national operations organised by the host Member State;
3. to familiarise the host Member State with the rapid-intervention mechanism; and
4. to test the rapid-intervention mechanism itself.

19 Member States contributed resources to the operation. A total of 16 border surveillance officers, five first-line officers, two debriefing experts and two interpreters were deployed, as well as four patrol cars, one dog team and two heartbeat detectors.

REX 2015 was carried out at very short notice, with less than two months between the initiation of the exercise and its implementation.

## Return operations

In 2015 the number of returnees increased by 64% in the context of Frontex operations, compared to the previous year, reaching the level of 3,565. They were returned on 66 joint return flights.

As the migration flow increased, pressure mounted to facilitate the participation of front-line Member States in return operations. Gap analysis indicated that a lack of available funding

and the absence of a framework contract for charters in Greece had a direct impact on the ability to return irregular migrants. Alternatives to facilitate Greek participation on flights and organisation of Joint Return Operations (JRO) were successfully explored, agreed and implemented. Frontex launched a request for support from Member States and quickly negotiated arrangements whereby Denmark chartered an aircraft for Greece to organise a return operation

to Pakistan with two other participating Member States.

Similar support has been provided to Italy as another front-line Member State, with the same arrangement: a Danish chartered aircraft being used by an Italian organised Joint Return Operation to Nigeria. Furthermore, when “returnable irregular migrants” were identified, routing of existing Joint Return Operations was adjusted to provide a stopover in both front-line Member States to collect returnees.





© The Polish Border Guard – Piotr Wiciejowski and Piotr Zakielarz

### 2.3.5. Development

Frontex strengthens the border management capacity of Member States to the full potential by using its portfolio as a whole, promoting interoperability and harmonisation, and by prioritising the measures which have an impact at the European level.

Following its values, Frontex acts as the custodian of the European best practices in border management, and delivers to Member States and other stakeholders in line with the EU concept of Integrated Border Management.

### Operational Training for EU Border Guard Mid-management in Border Guarding (MLC)

The MLC is a newly designed course for mid-level officers of the national border guard authorities already part of, or foreseen to be part of, the European Border Guard Teams (EBGT), ready to be deployed during Frontex-coordinated joint operations. The new course was developed in 2014 and 2015 by Frontex with the help of national border-guard experts and contains four modules: (i) management and practical leadership within EU BG activities; (ii) fundamental rights in operational management; (iii) border management in the European context; and (iv) operational cooperation in EU border guarding. It lasts for 18 weeks, of which five are live-learning weeks, and it has been developed for 625 hours of learning, accreditable with 25 credit points.

The course was successfully piloted in 2015: 15 participants from 15 Member States attended the course and 18 train-

ers contributed to its delivery and the assessment of the learners. The following countries hosted live-learning weeks: the Netherlands, Romania, Germany, Slovenia and Spain.

According to feedback gathered from participants, trainers and organisers the course well designed in terms of content and organisation. Participants assessed the course was as extremely interesting and relevant to the current situation in EU border guarding.

### EBGT Land Border Surveillance Officer Training

The development of this new training course started in 2014, when evaluation of Rapid Intervention Exercise REX 2013 was ready. The pilot-course was conducted in the spring of 2015 and three more courses followed until December 2015. It closes a gap in operational cooperation between deployed EBGT land border-surveillance officers and host Member State officers as a Joint Team for land border surveillance in order to tackle cross-border crime and irregular migration and to promote the principles of fundamental rights.

The basis of this training is the “EBGT Land Border Surveillance Officer Handbook”, which has been developed in cooperation with experts from Member States and Schengen Associated Countries. This handbook provides practical advice for deployed and host officers as a Joint Team. The handbook is available to all participants of the course for pre-reading and is linked to a four-day training session in which a joint operation is simulated. Participants work within a team and experience different typical border-related situations where they face situations such as trafficking in human beings, first aid or illegal border-crossing.

## Situation Monitoring

Over the course of 2015 the Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA) system was upgraded and enhanced throughout the year, with 11 releases of JORA introduced to more than 4 000 end-users. Each release delivered new or enhanced functionalities, which were introduced via several conferences and workshops. Apart from services such as Maritime Simulation Module or Meteo & Satellite Imagery Service, the following services provided under the EUROSUR Fusion Services were either improved or extensively tested throughout the year:

### The Tracking Vessels of Interest Service

This service provides daily updates to the Member States on the position and movements of, and other information on, vessels suspected of being involved in illegal activities. The information provided is based on data delivered by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and additional sources, such as satellite imagery.

### The Vessel Detection Service

Based on user feedback, an alerting mechanism was implemented which informs operational users in the Member States about vessels detected by satellite. The implementation of this mechanism allows for a more timely operational response with regard to interception and search & rescue operations.

### The Visual Data Discovery Service

This service provides access to dynamic reports, giving users enhanced tools for visualising and using a wide range of operational data.

### The Anomaly Detection Service

This service informs users about, among other things, vessel movements and activities deviating from expected behavioural patterns. This allows for more timely re-

sponses and an improved reaction capability in detecting vessels with irregular migrants on board and potential cross-border criminal activities. Over the course of 2015 this service was tested in two separate operational trial exercises, to assess its use under real operational conditions.

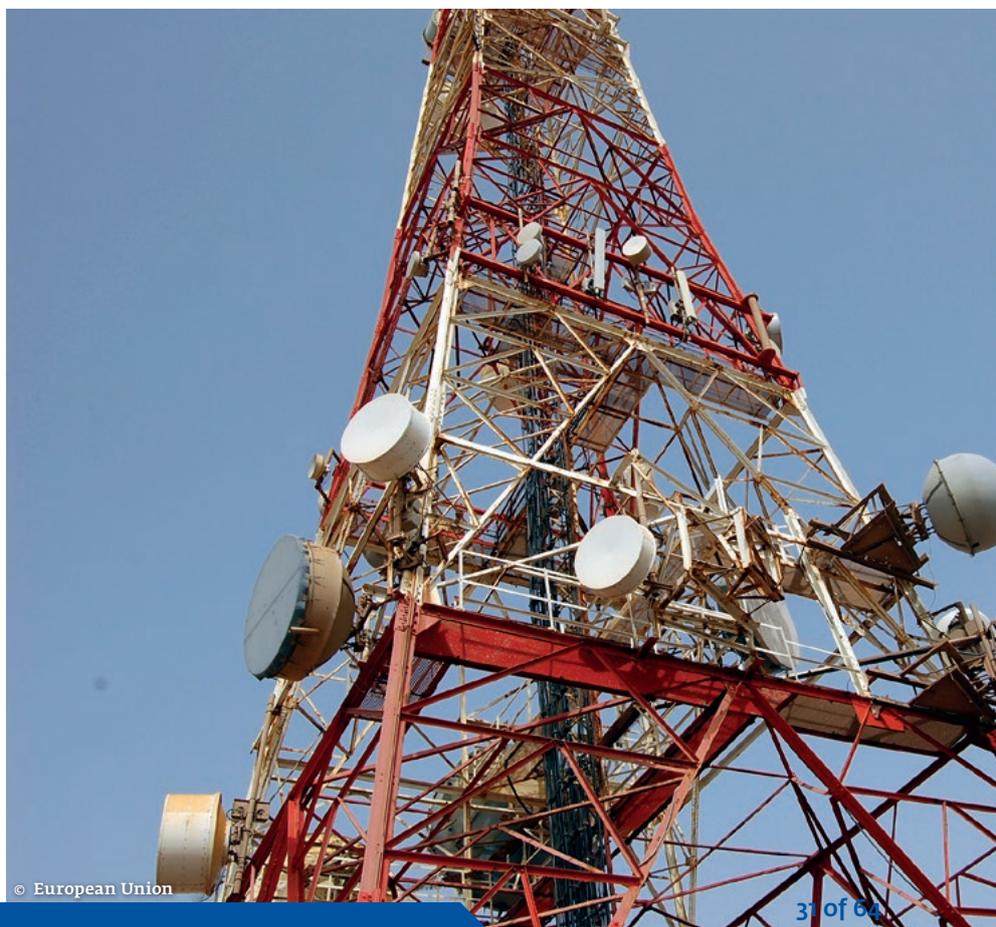
## EUROSUR

The European surveillance system run and maintained by Frontex was the subject of continuous improvements during 2015. The changes included the extension of the functionalities of the application and its management tools, the improvement of the synchronisation mechanism between the nodes, and security improvements that will be necessary for the processing of classified information at the “Restreint UE - EU Restricted” level. The requirements were developed for the installation of an appropriate level of encryption that will allow the exchange of restricted information.

## EUROSUR Operator Training

Following the adoption of the EUROSUR Regulation, and the development of the EUROSUR Handbook, a course for EUROSUR National Coordination Centre operators was developed in 2015. People involved in the development of thereof were specialists from Member States and Schengen Associated Countries. This new course will help Member States ensuring uniform implementation of EU standards in the EUROSUR framework and availability of relevant expertise in the National Coordination Centres.

Under the joint certification system, officers nominated by Member States and Schengen Associated Countries are trained centrally, based on a European curriculum, common training tools and a course programme facilitated by Frontex the assigned trainers. At the end of the course participants receive certification after an assessment of skills linked to the correct application of the EUROSUR Regulation.



## JO Focal Points 2015 Air Intermediate Managers

The idea of intermediate manager deployments was implemented for the first time in 2010, based on a proposal from one Member State, and since that time it has received significant support from many Member States. It is a unique joint operation aimed at the establishing of permanent platforms for exchange of information and best practices at the intermediate managerial level, which has a positive effect on the enhancement and the quality of operational cooperation between Member States, Schengen Associated Countries and third countries. When it comes to newly established contacts with a third country, this joint operation gives a good opportunity to start with joint operational cooperation for building mutual trust, increasing common understanding and establishing the first operational contacts between the involved airports. In 2015, 60 intermediate managers were deployed in to-

tal at different airports, for a total of 636 man-days, both inside and outside of the European Union.

The deployments of intermediate managers also contributed to the enhancement of Integrated Border Management (IBM) and to an increase of mutual cooperation at the external borders of the European Union, by exchanges of knowledge, information and best practices.

### Assistance regarding return activities

In the field of pre-return assistance, Bulgaria received support in the training of its own national escorts and organising a joint return operation. Following on from that course, the officers consolidated the training by using the skills acquired to set up the first ever national escort training course in Sofia, additionally training 20 Bulgarian escort officers.

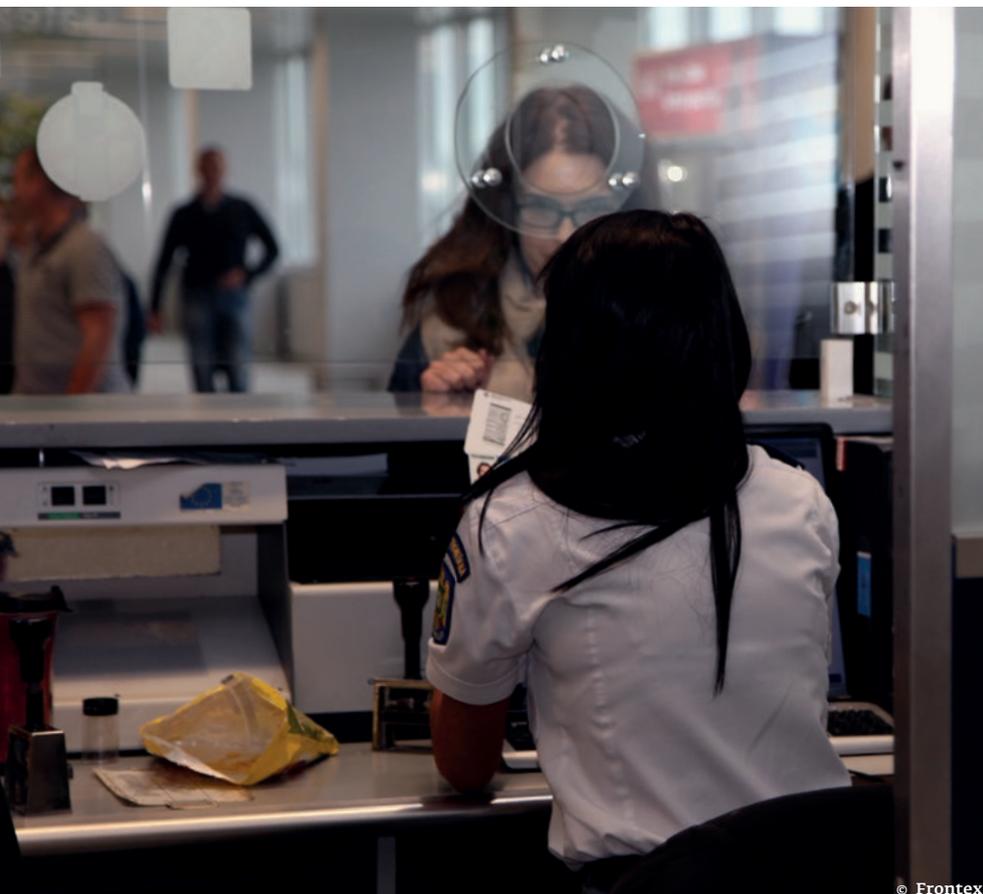
For the first time Bulgaria was the organiser of a Frontex coordinated joint return operation, to Pakistan, with Aus-

tria, Spain, Poland, Germany and the Netherlands as participating Member States. Bulgaria has gained the skilled staff, expertise and confidence to share its capacity and to act as an organising member state for future Frontex coordinated joint return operations.

Frontex has successfully implemented a model for “Collecting Joint Return Operations”, whereby the destination country’s escorts and aircraft are used to collect irregular migrants in an EU Member State and return them to their country of origin. Following Frontex-organised training, and relevant advice and guidance setting out the required standards, the model was applied with Serbia: the first test-flight took place with Germany as the organising Member State, with Belgium and the Netherlands as participating Member States, and a total of 65 returnees successfully removed. The Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO), a monitor from the Ombudsman office of Serbia, and two independent monitors from Belgium monitored the return operation. Now three countries, Georgia, Albania and Serbia, are willing and able to carry out Collecting Joint Return Operations for EU Member States in line with Frontex codes.

Frontex has developed and tested the Frontex Application for Returns (FAR); the application is now in the final preparation stage for rollout. The FAR application pulls together, in one easily accessible and user-friendly format, the planned return operations by Member States, the announcement of participation in those operations, and all communication relating to a Frontex coordinated return operations as well as pre-return assistance. The advantage of the FAR application is the provision of planning and implementation progress of return operations at the European level.

Development of new tools and implementation of increased emergency budget led to the 64% overall increase in returns in 2015; 66 return operations were organised, compared to 45 in 2014.



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### 2.3.6. Organisation

Frontex acts as a flexible, transparent and agile organisation, in compliance with fundamental rights, and implements an effective internal control system for the delivery of quality services. Activities are continuously prioritised and result-oriented. Sound and transparent governance strengthens cost-effectiveness and the positive reputation of the Agency.

#### Transparency and Access to Information

In 2015, Frontex continued to strive for transparency and active provision of information to the general public and other stakeholders. New reports, publications and public versions of risk analysis products were published on Frontex's websites and via its social-media accounts.

Frontex decided to make its quarterly reports on the Eastern European Borders and the Western Balkans available to the general public, and continued the publication of both "Annual Information on the Commitments of Member States to the European Border Guard Teams and the Technical Equipment Pool" and "Frontex's Annual Report on the implementation of EU Regulation 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders".

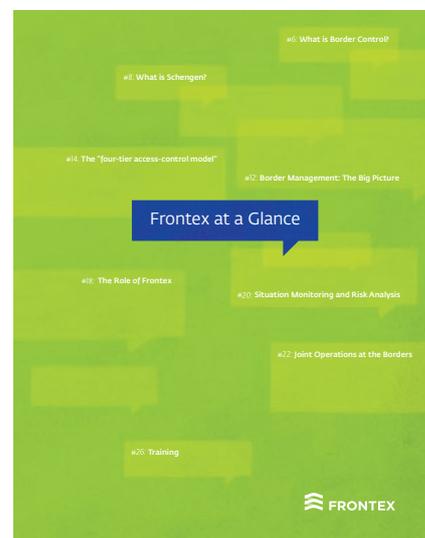
As part of its endeavours to explain border control and the current phenomena at the external borders the Agency published a booklet titled "Frontex at Glance", which explains Frontex and Schengen in a very accessible way. It also released a number of movies explaining the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) and Triton (a joint operation taking place in the Central Mediterranean), and a dozen short movies in which border officers from different countries explain their work and talk about the future.

The unprecedented migratory pressure at the EU's external borders resulted in an increase in media requests directed to Frontex. In the second part of the year, when the migratory pressure peaked, Frontex handled 800 requests for information each month. The Agency facilitated physical access to operational areas to more than 500 journalists, more than 60 of whom were embedded in operational maritime patrols in Italy.

In order to increase operational transparency and assist the media on the ground, Frontex continued the deployment of Field Press Officers (FPO). Over the course of last year five Field Press Officers were deployed to Joint Operation Triton in Italy. The FPOs are drawn from the European Border Guard pool and are typically national border agencies' press officers seconded to help Frontex handle media in the operational area. Their tasks include helping journalists move around operational areas, facilitating embedding in patrols and interviews with national officers, and collecting operational photo and video material for the press.

Direct contact with EU citizens and researchers interested in the work of Frontex took place during the celebrations of Europe Day in Brussels and Warsaw, the Docs against Gravity film festival in Warsaw, and more than 30 study visits to Frontex headquarters.

Frontex continued to organise the European Day for Border Guards (ED4BG), an annual event celebrating border guards from all Member States and Schengen Associated countries. The 2015 edition gathered more than 800 guests, who discussed issues related to the future of border management, the Schengen area and passenger traffic, as well as evaluating ten years of the Agency's work. More than 40 national authorities, EU Agencies and international organisations, as well as the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights, had exhibitions during the day, presenting their work and exchanging best practices amongst border-management practitioners.



This annual event strengthens the community of European border guards by promoting their work, providing a forum for discussion and the exchange of best practices. It gives border-guard professionals an opportunity to engage with each other, and share experiences while helping to enhance connectivity, understanding and collaboration across many different border authorities.

2015 saw more and more visitors to Frontex's on-line communication channels, such as its website, its video-sharing platforms (YouTube and Vimeo), the ED4BG Facebook page and the recently launched Twitter account.

During 2015 Frontex invested resources in building future communication tools that will help increase transparency and facilitate communication with stakeholders. The first steps have been taken towards building a working collaborative platform, a document system and a multimedia management system.



## EUROPEAN DAY for BORDER GUARDS

### Docs against Gravity

As part of this year's outreach events, Frontex took part in Docs against Gravity, one of the world's largest documentary film festivals, taking place in Warsaw. Frontex had its own dedicated movie section "Borderlands", with documentaries dedicated to the topic of migration and border management. The audience was engaged in a related debate and had a chance to listen and talk to representatives of the Polish Border Guard, academics and Frontex.

During 2015, Frontex received 60 applications for public access to documents under the remit of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

Each application contained one or more requests for documents. The most common requests related to Frontex Operational Plans and evaluation reports, as well as to serious incident reports and to data on illegal border crossings. The profiles of the applicants varied, and included students, researchers and journalists.

Frontex granted partial access to the documents requested by the majority of applicants, with only limited parts of the documents blanked out pursuant to the exceptions stipulated in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001; only a small number of applicants were refused access altogether. The rest were granted full access (see: Annual Report on Access to Documents).

### The Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer (FRO)

In the course of 2015, the FRO was involved in a variety of activities and issues within the remit of her mandate and tasks. The principal objective of such engagement was to ensure adequate



protection and guarantees of fundamental rights during operations coordinated by Frontex and all Frontex activities. In 2015, the FRO particularly concentrated her work in the following four fields:

1. revision of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy and its corresponding Action Plan;
2. monitoring and reporting;
3. support given in the field of operational activities coordinated by Frontex;
4. support given in the field of capacity building.

One of the main objectives of the work of the Fundamental Rights Officer is to support Frontex in the implementation of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy (FRS) and to ensure respect for and promotion of fundamental rights in all Frontex activities, with a focus on operational activities. For this purpose, the FRO launched a process of the revision of the existing FRS, which included an in-depth analysis of the already received contributions reported by the various entities within Frontex, annexed in prior General Reports of Frontex, a compilation of recommendations provided by several international organisations, NGOs and other bodies to Frontex since 2012, and a subsequent draft proposal prepared by the FRO.

In the field of monitoring and reporting, the FRO continued to fulfil her role

of following up on incidents of alleged fundamental rights violations reported during joint operations, providing a preliminary assessment on the fundamental rights implications and, in several cases, also giving recommendations. Those recommendations mainly identified possible preventive and corrective measures to be introduced to the monitoring system in order to achieve better protection of fundamental rights in the activities at the borders

During 2015 and in the field of operational activities, the FRO continued to support the planning and preparation of operations through the provision of fundamental rights assessments and suggestions regarding proposed joint operations and analysis of potential challenges and risks that could occur in the context of a joint operation and that could have a negative impact on fundamental rights. With reference to fieldwork, the FRO also undertook several visits to operations at sea, land and air borders, as well as to joint return operations and collecting joint return operations to gather information on fundamental rights concerns in each such field. Furthermore, the FRO supported the Risk Analysis Unit with regard to matters related to fundamental rights when requested to do so.

In the field of returns activities, the FRO actively supported the process of the

revision of the Best Practices for Joint Return Operations, to be called a “Guide for JROs coordinated by Frontex”. The FRO was actively involved in a contribution to Frontex’s complex answer to the European Ombudsman’s own initiative inquiry concerning the protection of fundamental rights in Joint Return Operations coordinated by Frontex, which was launched back in October 2014. In this respect, the FRO also provided a separate annex with her observations on this topic, which mainly focused on child protection and medical issues during return operations. Furthermore, in the course of 2015, the FRO was actively supporting the ICMPD project on Forced Returns Monitoring (FReM) by providing training to the participating monitors and providing substantial input to the training and project materials.

The FRO has also been very much engaged in supporting the Joint Operation VEGA Children. The FRO highlighted the importance of the matter of providing adequate procedures, training and resources for border guard authorities to identify children at risk at the external borders of the EU Member States. Child identification and referral with efficient border management were explicitly addressed as a common objective of corresponding operational activities and in the Frontex Annual Risk Assessment 2015 as a field of specific concern and



needs for MS in their border management system.

In the fields of capacity building, the FRO contributed significantly to the IPA II project “Regional support to protection sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey” during its needs assessment phase. The FRO also provided an overview of Frontex’s activities and tools in the field of fundamental rights for the ENPI project on asylum and border management in Tunisia and Morocco.

With regard to the raising of internal awareness on the role of border guards in access to international protection, the FRO, in cooperation with the Frontex Information & Transparency team, organised at Frontex’s headquarters an internal session on the relevant aspects developed in the Asylum Procedures Directive. The invited external experts, from the EASO and the UNHCR, presented the latest record figures on displacement and the scope and impli-

cations of the Asylum Procedure Directive for the daily work of border guards. Furthermore, in the field of promotion of fundamental rights, the FRO moderated a panel discussion in the framework of the European Day for Border Guards (ED4BG), which focused on children at the borders. During the panel discussion the subject of children at the borders was discussed from different perspectives, with speakers from civil society organisations, e.g. Save the Children and the IOM, and experts from national authorities.

Also in the context of capacity building, the FRO took part in providing fundamental rights and practitioner’s perspectives to the first phase of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) project on “Biometric data in large scale EU IT-systems in the areas of borders, visas and asylum fundamental rights implications”.

In the field of fundamental rights training, the FRO supported the work on

the Fundamental Rights Training Manual for Border Guards (training of trainers), by working on adapting it as an e-learning tool. The FRO supported the further updating and further implementation of basic fundamental rights training for Frontex staff and highlighted the need to expand it so as to offer more specialised modules (operational, risk analysis).

### **The Consultative Forum**

During 2015, the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights (CF) continued to provide strategic advice to Frontex’s Executive Director and Frontex’s Management Board. In line with its working methods, the CF held three formal meetings during the year, which proved to be further opportunities to work with Frontex staff.

In the area of training, the CF’s members provided observations and recommendations that contributed to ensuring



a fundamental rights perspective in Frontex training activities, including input to the pilot Operational Training for EU Mid-Management in Border Guarding and the EBGT Land Border Surveillance Officer Training. CF members continued to support with their expertise the European Joint Master's Programme on Strategic Border Management and started to contribute to the development of the e-learning course on fundamental rights training for border guards. The CF Working Group on Training regularly exchanged views with the Frontex Training Unit in order to plan cooperation and exchanges.

CF members supported Frontex's operational activities in the area of Joint operations, return and risk analysis. The CF provided recommendations and advice with regard to the Best Practices for Joint Return Operations and participated in the second phase of Joint Operation VEGA Children. In this regard, CF members were deployed at different

EU airports together with border guard authorities aiming at strengthening the protection of children at the borders and enhancing cooperation between the different stakeholders in this field. A CF delegation conducted a visit to Joint Operation Triton in October 2015. The observations of the visit were discussed with Frontex and Management Board representatives through the organisation of focus group discussions. In addition to exchanging views on key challenges, the discussions helped to set up initiatives to advance fundamental rights in Frontex operations.

In 2015, the CF also started to gather information about gender approach and mainstreaming within the activities coordinated by Frontex and initiated a series of meetings with Frontex in order to jointly reflect, in practical terms, on the fundamental rights implications of Frontex joint operations in different real scenarios. In this context, the CF also provided its views on the implementa-

tion of the Charter of FR during the evaluation of the Agency as per Article 33 of the Frontex Regulation.

In September 2015, the Management Board decided on the new composition of the Consultative Forum, due to the expiration of its mandate. Representatives from civil society organisations were selected on the basis of a public call made by Frontex, while international organisations renewed their membership by exchanges of letters. The current mandate of the elected CF members will expire on 31 December 2018.

The CF published its second annual report in July 2015 and that report is available on Frontex's website.





# 3. Summary of budgetary, staff and organisational issues

## 3.1. Budgetary Developments

The originally adopted budget of EUR 114.0 million was to cover the activities initially indicated in the 2015 Programme of Work. However, in the light of the migratory pressure in the Mediterranean observed since the spring of 2015 and the Council's conclusions of 23 April, Frontex carried out intensive reinforcement of the operational activities in the Mediterranean. Particular attention was paid to the request of the Council to reinforce joint operations, especially Triton in Italy and Poseidon in Greece. The reinforcement focused on the extension of the operational areas concerned, more flexibility in the deployment of assets and experts, intensification of the aerial and maritime surveillance, and increased screening and debriefing activities. In the course of the year, and as a reaction to the developing crisis on the Greek islands, Frontex-coor-

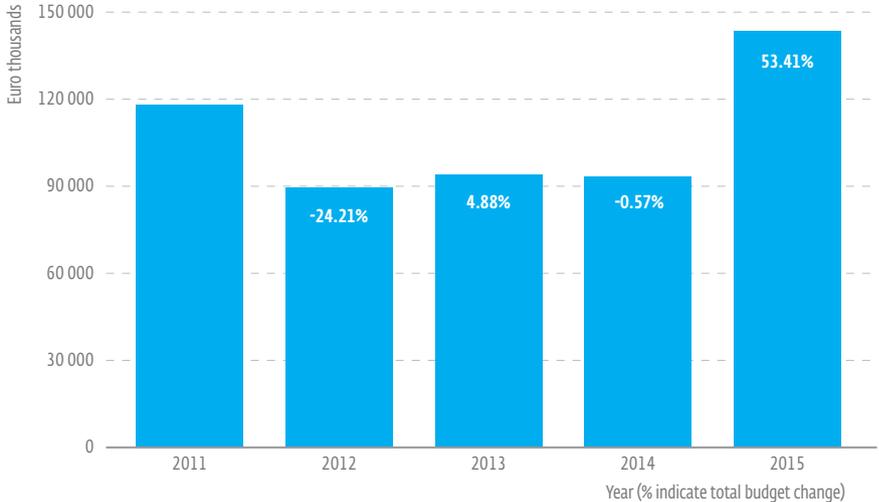
dated joint activities were extended with fingerprinting.

As a result, three budget amendments were adopted in the course of 2015, two of them related to the alignment with the European Council conclusions and aimed at tripling the budget for the relevant operations in the Mediterranean, and the last one covering the costs of additional posts that the Agency had been granted in order to cope with the increased workload. As a result, the final Frontex budget for 2015 amounted to EUR 143.3 million.

Despite the increased workload resulting from the significantly higher budget allocation, the Agency managed by 31 December 2015 to commit 100% of its appropriations. 69% of its appropriations had been used for payments by that date.

The remaining 31% of appropriations, which are already committed to serve a certain operational purpose or to honour contractual obligations, are planned to be paid out in 2016.

Figure 1 Budget development 2011-2015



### 3.2. General Budget

The distribution of the 2015 budget reflects the importance given to operational activities. There is a 79:21 distribution ratio between operational and administrative titles.

In addition to the traditional budget approach – operational versus administrative expenditure (Figure 2) as of 2014 Frontex also shows its budget in the form of Activity Based Budgeting (Figure 3). The idea behind ABB is that all resources, both human and financial, which are needed to carry out an activity, will be allocated to that activity.

Core governance level activities, such as joint operations, training or fundamental rights work (to name but a few), were endorsed by the Management Board

and form the basis for the allocation of direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are human and financial resources which can be directly attributed to an activity. Indirect costs are those costs which stem from indirect staff costs (such as, for example, staff from corporate services or from finance and procurement which support the activities) and indirect costs (for example rental costs).

The calculation of Frontex budget for 2015 based on ABB indicated that 90% of the Agency’s human and financial resources were directly attributable to Frontex’s core operational activities.

The Agency has identified the potential offered by the ABB approach and will use the opportunities to improve its resource utilisation and performance management.

### Operational Budget

From the traditional budgeting perspective, the operational budget amounted to EUR 113.5 million; 84.3% of the available funds were committed to joint operations (land, sea and air borders and return operations), as indicated in the chart below. The Frontex Programme of Work as adopted by Frontex’s Management Board guides this allocation of funds. The additional funds from the budget amendments in May, July and November 2015 were allocated to the relevant areas of work in order to reinforce operational activities in the Mediterranean area; therefore sea border operations received by far the largest allocation of all operational activities.

Figure 2. Regular budget distribution

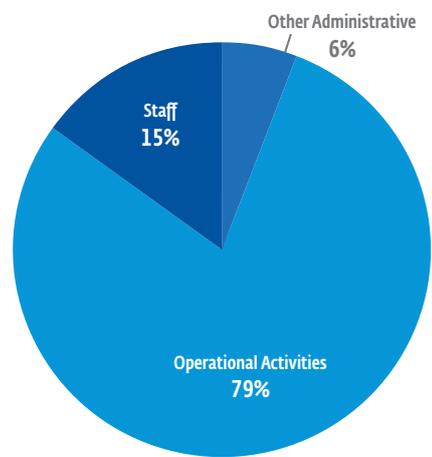


Figure 3. Activity based budgeting distribution

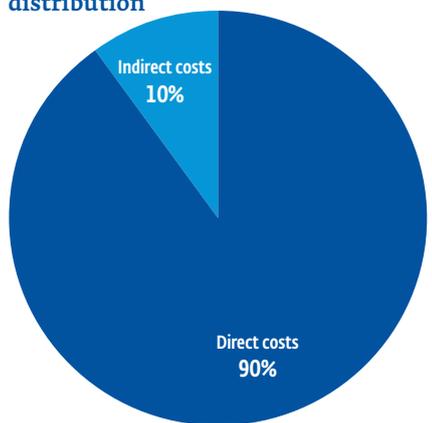
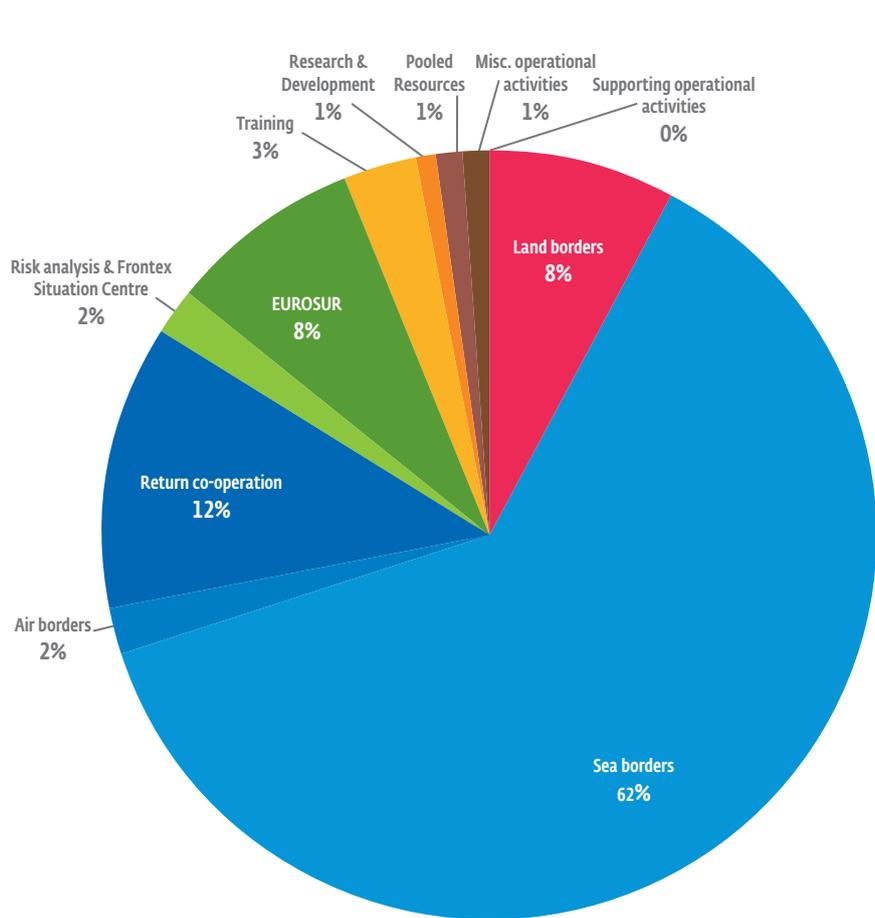


Figure 4. Final operational budget distribution



### 3.3. Use of appropriations from 2014 carried forward to 2015

By 31 December 2015, Frontex had used to a large extent the payment appropriations made in 2014. Out of the total amount carried forward from 2014 to 2015, EUR 23.6 million was paid out in 2015, while EUR 4.6 million needed to be cancelled. The main reasons for the cancellations were related to the non-implementation of contracts or due to the fact that grant beneficiaries finally claimed lower amounts than estimated at the beginning of an operational activity. Nevertheless, the total budget utilisation of the appropriations made available to Frontex in 2014 was 94%.

### 3.4. Procurement

The Agency also spends its budget via procurement procedures, purchasing products and services from contractors; one needs to note that Frontex does not outsource any of its operational activities.

Overall, 1 137 procurement procedures were carried out in 2015. These procedures consisted of either launching own tenders or using framework contracts already in place concluded by the Agency or by the European Commission.

### 3.5. Organisational changes

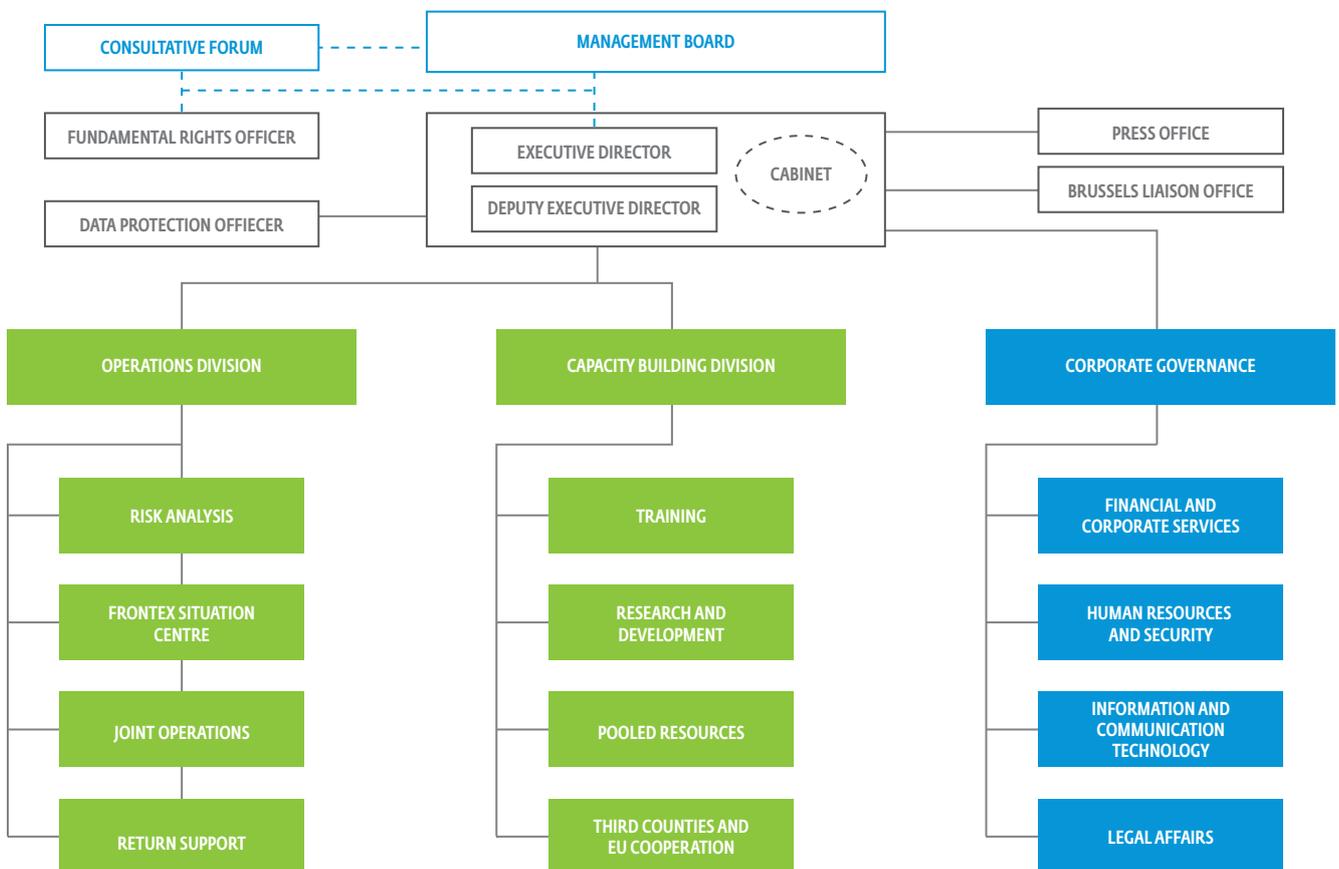
In 2015, Frontex initiated a re-structuring phase, the aim of which was to have a new structure in place as of January

2016. The main reasoning behind this change was to respond to new business requirements. The main modifications are related to the creation of two new units: a Return Support Unit, within the Operations Division; and a Third Countries and EU Cooperation Unit, within the Capacity Building Division.

The former Executive Support was streamlined and reduced to a Cabinet reporting directly to executive management. All other functions that were formerly assigned to the Executive Support were reallocated to relevant business entities in the three divisions.

It has been also proposed to change the names of three entities: Corporate Governance (formerly the Administration Division), the Finance and Corporate

Figure 5. Organisational Structure



Services Unit (formerly the Finance and Procurement Unit), and the Human Resources and Security Unit (formerly the Human Resources and Services Unit). Following the introduction of the new organisation structure some staff members will be allocated to the new entities.

### 3.6. Recruitment

In 2015, a total of 2 243 applications were received for vacant positions: temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts. Thirty-four recruitment procedures were launched; 10 procedures initiated in 2014 were closed in 2015; 14 procedures initiated in 2015 will be finalised in 2016. Forty-seven new staff members were recruited; 139 interviews and written tests were conducted for temporary and contract agents, with another 39 for seconded national expert posts.

Out of the new staffing figures approved in July and November of 2015, Frontex reached a total of 308 at the end of 2015. For the remaining 103 new posts recruitment was on-going in December 2015. The new Executive Director took up his post on 16 January 2015. The pro-

cedure of selecting the Deputy Executive Director was finalised in November 2015. The first Frontex Liaison Officer in a third country Turkey has been selected.

Breakdowns of staff by Frontex unit and the number of temporary agents are attached as annexes to this General Report.

Due to increased demand from the Frontex business areas, a contract with an external company to provide interim HR services on a short-term basis has been continued. In 2015, the number of individuals providing services under this contract reached 19, working a total of 167 man-months.

### 3.7. Staff Development and Training<sup>7</sup>

In 2015, in addition to twenty language courses, four fundamental rights training sessions, four sessions on new approaches to appraisal, and fifty-four

other training courses were organised, including risk management training, as well as training on EU Staff Regulations.

Also in 2015, the Frontex initiated cooperation with the British Council (a well-known provider of language and communication skills training), which delivered two well-received training courses for Frontex staff: one on business excellence communication and another on proposal and report writing.

It is also worth mentioning that an open tender procedure for the provision of in-house language courses was launched in 2015. The outcome of this procedure will be known in the first quarter of 2016.

A total of 34 traineeships were taken up in 2015 (of which seven were extended from 2014), from a pool of 700 applications, contributing greatly to the areas to which they were assigned.

The first ever reclassification of contract staff was launched in November 2015. The preparatory work has been conducted in order to introduce a new appraisal system as from 2016.

<sup>7</sup> This chapter refers to training and development of Frontex staff; training activities provided to Member States' officers are described in Chapter 2.

# Annexes



## List of Management Board Members

Country	Name	Position/Rank	Institution
Commission	Mr. Matthias Ruete	Director General Migration and Home Affairs Directorate General	European Commission
	Mr. Laurent Muschel	Director Directorate Migration and Protection	European Commission
Austria	Mr. Robert Strondl	Major General Head of Department of Operational Affairs	Ministry of the Interior
Belgium	Mr. Herbert Veyt	Director of Operations Chief Commissioner	Federal Police
Bulgaria	Mr. Zaharin Penov	Director General of Chief Directorate Border Police Chief Commissioner	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria
	Mr. Milen Emilov Penev	Director of Chief Directorate Border Police	
	Mr. Antonio Angelov	Director of Chief Directorate Border Police	
Croatia	Mr. Zlatko Sokolar	Head of Border Police Directorate	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia
Cyprus	Mr. Glykerios Leontiou	Superintendent A Commander of Aliens and Immigration Unit	Cyprus Police
Czech Rep.	Mr. Martin Vondrášek	Colonel Deputy Police President	Czech Police Forces
Denmark	Mr. Richard Østerlund la Cour	Chief Superintendent	Danish National Police
Estonia	Mr Rando Kruusmaa	Deputy Director General Lieutenant Colonel	Police and Border Guard Board
	Mr. Joosep Kaasik	Deputy Director General	
Finland	Mr. Ilkka Laitinen	Deputy Chief Major General	Finnish Border Guard
France	Mr. Benoît Brocart	Director of Immigration	Ministry of the Interior
Germany	Mr. Ralf Göbel	Chairman of the Frontex Management Board Deputy Director General	Federal Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of the Federal Police Matters
Greece	Mr. Alexandros Soukoulis	Director of Border Protection Division Police Brigadier General	Hellenic Police Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection
Hungary	Mr. Zsolt Halmosi	Major General Director General in Charge of Policing	Hungarian National Police
Italy	Mr. Giovanni Pinto	Director of Immigration and Border Police	Ministry of Interior
Latvia	Mr. Normunds Garbars	General Chief of the State Border Guard	State Border Guard
Lithuania	Mr. Vainius Butinas	Commander of the State Border Guard Service General	State Border Guard Service
	Mr. Renatas Požėla	Commander of the State Border Guard Service	
Luxembourg	Mr. Thierry Fehr	Director	National Airport Police Unit
Malta	Mr. Neville Xuereb	Superintendent Immigration/Commissioner of Police	Malta Police Force

Country	Name	Position/Rank	Institution
Netherlands	Mr. J.A.J Hans Leijtens	Commander Lieutenant General	Royal Netherlands Marechaussee
	Mr. Harrie van den Brink	Commander	
Poland	Mr. Dominik Tracz	Commander-in-Chief Major General	Polish Border Guard
Portugal	Mr. António Beça Pereira	National Director	Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service
Romania	Mr. Ioan Buda	General Inspector	Romanian Border Police
Slovakia	Mr. Ľudovít Bíró	Director Colonel	Border and Aliens Police Ministry of the Interior
Slovenia	Mr. Marko Gašperlin	Deputy Chairman of the Frontex Management Board Assistant Director Senior Police Superintendent	Ministry of the Interior General Police Directorate
Spain	Mr. Emilio Baos Arrabal	General Commissioner for Aliens and Borders	National Police Force
Sweden	Mr. Sören Clerton	Deputy Police Commissioner	Central Border Management Division National Bureau of Investigations
	Mr. Patrik Engström	Head of Border Policing Section Superintendent	Operations Division Swedish Police Authority
Iceland	Mr. Ólafur Helgi Kjartansson	Police Commissioner	Sudurnes Police District
Norway	Mr. Jan Eirik Thomassen	Assistant National Police Commissioner	National Police Directorate
Switzerland	Mr. Héribert Wider	Chief of the Operations Sector Lieutenant Colonel	Swiss Border Guard
Lichtenstein	Mr. Uwe Langenbahn	Deputy Chief	National Police
Ireland	Mr. John O'Driscoll	Head of Bureau Detective Chief Superintendent	Garda National Immigration Bureau
	Mr. David Dowling	Head of Bureau Chief Superintendent	
UK	Mr. Paul Morgan	Director	Border Force Home Office

Frontex's Management Board is tasked with efficiently controlling the functions of the Agency. Among other responsibilities, the Board establishes the budget and verifies its execution, ensures transparent decision-making procedures are in place, and appoints the Executive and Deputy Executive Directors.

It is composed of representatives of the heads of the border authorities of the

26 EU Member States that are signatories of the Schengen *acquis*, plus two members of the European Commission. Representatives from the United Kingdom and Ireland are also invited to participate in Management Board meetings.

Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (countries which are not EU Member States, but which are associated with the implementation, application

and development of the Schengen *acquis*) also participate in the Management Board meetings. Each of them sends one representative to the Management Board but retains limited voting rights.

## List of Management Board Decision

Number	Title	Date
01/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Frontex Programme of Work 2015 and Frontex Budget 2015, including establishment plan	07 January 2015
02/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of IE in Frontex operational activity JRO to Nigeria	03 February 2015
03/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the non-automatic carry-over of appropriations from 2014 to 2015	12 February 2015
04/2015	Decision of the Management Board on prioritising Turkey for deployment of Frontex Liaison Officer	18 February 2015
05/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting additional 20 MEUR in the preliminary draft budget 2016	19 February 2015
06/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of IE in Frontex operational activity JRO to Nigeria organised by Norway on 11 March	09 March 2015
07/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of UK in Frontex JO Flexible Operational Activities 2015 and JO Focal Points 2015 Land	10 March 2015
08/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Frontex MAP 2016	26 March 2015
09/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting the preliminary Programme of Work 2016	26 March 2015
10/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting the draft revenue and expenditures for 2016	26 March 2015
11/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Frontex General Report 2014	26 March 2015
12/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the rules relating to technical equipment (OMNTE) to be deployed in Frontex coordinated activities in 2016	26 March 2015
13/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of UK in Frontex JO Alexis I 2015	13 April 2015
14/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of UK in operational activities coordinated by Frontex in 2015	14 April 2015
15/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the Ireland's participation in JO Joint Return Flight to the Republic of Congo organised by Belgium on 28 April 2015	27 April 2015
16/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in JO Focal Points Air Intermediate Managers 2015	30 April 2015
17/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the participation of IE in operational activities coordinated by Frontex in 2015	13 May 2015
18/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in JO EPN Triton 2015	15 May 2015
19/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the Management Board's analysis and assessment of the Annual Activity Report 2014	19 May 2015
20/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the amendment of the Programme of Work 2015 (N1) and amendment of the Budget 2015 (N1)	20 May 2015
21/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of MSPP 2016-2018	20 May 2015
22/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in JO VEGA Children 2015	02 June 2015
23/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the Ireland's participation in JRO to the Republic of Congo organised by Belgium on 17 June 2015	15 June 2015
24/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in JO EPN Triton and JO EPN Poseidon Sea	26 June 2015
25/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the opinion on Frontex annual accounts for the financial year 2014	01 July 2015
26/2015	Decision of the Management Board on Ireland's participation in JRO to Nigeria organised by Italy on 16 July 2015	15 July 2015
27/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the amendment of Frontex' PoW 2015 (N2) and Frontex' Budget 2015 (N2)	28 July 2015
28/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in Frontex JO EPN Triton and JO EPN Poseidon Sea	02 September 2015
29/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the composition of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights	09 September 2015
30/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the dates planned for the MB meetings in 2016	09 September 2015
31/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the deployment of a Frontex Liaison Officer to Turkey	09 September 2015

Number	Title	Date
32/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the mandate to the Executive Director to negotiate a WA with Kosovo	10 September 2015
33/2015	Decision of the Management Board on Unit Costs for Operational Activities	10 September 2015
34/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Implementing Measures for the application of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 by Frontex	10 September 2015
35/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in Frontex JO EPN TRITON and JO EPN POSEIDON SEA	24 September 2015
36/2015	Decision of the Management Board amending the Management Board Decision No 12/2015 adopting rules relating to the technical equipment, including OMNTE, to be deployed during Frontex coordinated operational activities in 2016	09 October 2015
37/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation in Frontex Flexible Operational Activities in Return 2015 (FOA-R) and JO EPN Poseidon Sea 2015	08 October 2015
38/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the United Kingdom's participation in Frontex JO Focal Points Air 2015 and JO Pegasus 2015	21 October 2015
39/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting implementing rules on reclassification of contract staff	28 October 2015
40/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting recommendations of the Management Board following the evaluation of Frontex (Article 33)	28 October 2015
41/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the United Kingdom's participation in Frontex JO Flexible Operational Activities in Return 2015 (FOA-R), JO EPN Triton 2015 and JO EPN Poseidon Sea 2015	30 October 2015
42/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting the amendment of Frontex' Programme of Work 2015 (N3) and Frontex' Budget 2015 (N3)	06 November 2015
43/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the UK's participation with OPV deployment (cost-free) in Frontex JO EPN Poseidon Sea 2015	13 November 2015
44/2015	Decision of the Management Board on organisation by the United Kingdom (UK) of a Joint Return Operation to Albania on 19 November 2015	18 November 2015
45/2015	Decision of the Management Board on general provisions for implementing Article 87(1) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union and implementing the first paragraph of Article 44 of the Staff Regulations	20 November 2015
46/2015	Decision of the Management Board laying down general provisions for implementing Article 43 of the Staff Regulations and implementing the first paragraph of Article 44 of the Staff Regulations for temporary staff	20 November 2015
47/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the appointment of the Deputy Executive Director	25 November 2015
48/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the election of a new Chairperson	25 November 2015
49/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the election of a new Deputy Chairperson	25 November 2015
50/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the adoption of the general figures related to the titles and chapters of Frontex preliminary budget 2017	26 November 2015
51/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the future of Frontex Liaison Office in Piraeus	26 November 2015
52/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the amended organizational structure of the Agency	26 November 2015
53/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Working Arrangement with Morocco	10 December 2015
54/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the practical arrangements for the participation in and financial contribution to Frontex operational activities by Ireland	11 December 2015
55/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the practical arrangements for the participation in and financial contribution to Frontex operational activities by the United Kingdom	11 December 2015
56/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Frontex' Anti-Fraud Strategy	17 December 2015
57/2015	Decision of the Management Board extending the applicability of the Implementing Rules on Teleworking	17 December 2015
58/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting Implementing Measures for processing personal data collected during joint operations, pilot projects and rapid interventions	18 December 2015
59/2015	Decision of the Management Board adopting the Programme of Work 2016 and the Budget 2016, including the Establishment Plan	24 December 2015
60/2015	Decision of the Management Board on the United Kingdom's participation in Frontex Joint operation European Patrols Network Triton (JO EPN Triton)	24 December 2015

## List of Joint Operational Activities

Name of the Operation or Pilot Project	Operational Area	Length	Participating Member States and Third Countries
JO Focal Points 2015 Air Regular Officers (AIR)	29 EU Focal Points Air activated: Amsterdam, Stockholm Arlanda, Athens, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Düsseldorf, Rome Fiumicino, Frankfurt, Geneva, Helsinki, Larnaca, Ljubljana, Lisbon, Madrid, Marseille, Munich, Milano Malpensa, Paris Orly, Bucharest, Prague, Riga, Sofia, Varna, Vienna, Venice, Vilnius, and Warsaw airports  Four Coordination Point airports activated: Tirana, Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Podgorica airports	306 days (permanent operation)	26 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom  10 Third Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine, Georgia, Canada, and Turkey
JO Focal Points 2015 Air Intermediate Managers (AIR)	23 EU Focal Points Air activated: Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Dusseldorf, Geneva, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Madrid, Milano Malpensa, Munich, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Paris Orly, Riga, Rome Fiumicino, Sofia, Stockholm, Venice, Vienna, Vilnius, Warsaw, and Zurich airports  3 Coordination Point airports activated: Belgrade, Chisinau, and Tirana airports	288 days (permanent operational concept)	25 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom  11 Third Countries: Albania, Belarus, Cape Verde, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Nigeria, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America
JO Alexis 2015 (AIR)	30 EU International airports: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bratislava, Brussels, Budapest, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Geneva, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Marseille, Oslo, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Paris Orly, Porto, Prague, Riga, Tallinn, Timisoara, Sofia, Stockholm, Varna, Vienna, Vilnius, Warsaw, and Zurich airports	81 days	24 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom  8 Third Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Turkey, Ukraine  International Organisations: Interpol
JO VEGA Children 2015 (AIR)	12 participating airports: Amsterdam, Stockholm Arlanda, Brussels, Geneva, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Madrid, Bucharest, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Porto, Riga, Warsaw, and Zurich airports	68 days	18 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, the United Kingdom  International Organisations: the International Organization for Migration (the IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the UNHCR)  Non-Governmental Organisations: ADPARE, the Halina Centre, PICUM, Terre des Hommes, Amber Alert
JO Pegasus 2015 (AIR)	13 participating airports: Amsterdam, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Marseille, Milan Malpensa, Munich, Paris Orly, Prague, Riga, Sofia, Vienna, and Warsaw airports	209 days	16 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom
JO Focal Points 2014 extension (LAND)	Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece	34 days	25 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden  6 Third Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine
JO Focal Points 2015 (LAND)	Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece	330 days	23 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden  8 Third Countries: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine
JO Flexible Operational Activities 2015 (LAND)	Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary	309 days	26 Member States/SAC: Austria, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom  3 Third Countries: the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Serbia
JO Coordination Points (LAND)	Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina	281 days	15 Member States/SAC: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland
Rapid Intervention Exercise 2015 (LAND)	Greece	57 days	19 Member States/SAC: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland

Name of the Operation or Pilot Project	Operational Area	Length	Participating Member States and Third Countries
Staff Exchange (LAND)	Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece	70 days	10 Member States/SAC: Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece
Joint Border Check Teams (LAND)	Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia	109 days	4 Member States/SAC: Latvia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania
JO Poseidon Sea 2014 extension (SEA)	Eastern Mediterranean	31 days	Host MS: Greece 4 Member States/SAC: Belgium, Finland, Portugal, the Netherlands
JO EPN Poseidon Sea 2015 / Poseidon Rapid Intervention (as of 28 December 2015) (SEA)	Eastern Mediterranean	334 days	Host MS: Greece 26 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom 2 third countries: Albania, Ukraine
JO EPN Triton 2014 extension (SEA)	Central Mediterranean	31 days	Host MS: Italy 19 Member States/SAC: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom
JO EPN Triton 2015 (SEA)	Central Mediterranean	334 days	Host MS: Italy 28 Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom 1 third country: Egypt
JO EPN Hera 2015 (SEA)	North-West Atlantic	93 days	Host MS: Spain 2 Member States/SAC: France, Portugal
JO EPN Indalo 2015 (SEA)	Western Mediterranean	153 days	Host MS: Spain 10 Member States: Belgium, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland 1 third country: Moroccan (observer based on bi-lateral agreement with Spain)
JO EPN Minerva 2015 (SEA)	Western Mediterranean (seaports)	44 days	Host MS: Spain 13 Member States/SAC: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland
JO Focal Points Sea 2015 (SEA)	Border Crossing Points in 11 MS: Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, Finland, France, Germany and Estonia	199 days	Host MS: Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Estonia and Lithuania 19 Member States/SAC: Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
EPN General (SEA)	EPN General activities: EPN General Meetings EPN Common Patrols, Yellow Pages, Staff Exchange, Frontex Compatible Operational Image, Frontex Positioning System and tailored working group on boarding, support to BSRBCC and EUCCFF	365 days	all MS/SAC
JO Flexible Operational Activities in Return	Greece external sea borders; Bulgaria external land border and Sofia	281 days	Host MS/SAC: Greece and Bulgaria

## Joint Return Operations

Number	Destination(s)	Organising Country	Participating States (with returnees)	Total Number of Returnees
1	Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Serbia	Germany	DE, SE	84
2	Kosovo	Austria	AT, HU, DE, SE, FR	60
3	Colombia and the Dominican Republic	Spain	ES, CH	62
4	Nigeria	Italy	IT, CH, NO, GR	43
5	Albania (TC)	France	FR, DE, DK, BE	50
6	Nigeria	Austria	AT, CH, DE, IE, ES, CZ, SE	20
7	Kosovo	Hungary	HU, AT, DE, SE, FI, SK, FR	73
8	Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Serbia	Germany	DE, LU, SE	77
9	Albania and Georgia	Spain	ES, DE, EE, IT, SE	54
10	Kosovo	Austria	AT, HU, DE, FR, RO	68
11	Nigeria	Norway	NO, SE, FI, DK, ES, FR, DE, CH, MT, IE	45
12	Serbia and the FYR of Macedonia	Germany	DE, SE	89
13	Albania (TC)	France	FR, BE, FI, DE, IT, ES	49
14	Georgia (TC)	Germany	DE, CH, ES, IT, LT, PL	35
15	Kosovo	Hungary	HU, AT, HR, FR, SE	51
16	Kosovo	Austria	AT, HU, FR, SE	83
17	Nigeria	The Netherlands	NL, BE, DE, EE, ES, LU, MT	25
18	Albania	Sweden	SE, DE, FR, FI	58
19	Georgia	Germany	DE, LT, SE, IT, FR	23
20	Pakistan	Spain	ES, PT, AT, BG, PL, CH	54
21	Kosovo	Hungary	HU, AT	73
22	Kosovo	Germany	DE, AT, HU, FR	85
23	Serbia and the FYR of Macedonia	Germany	DE, SE	89
24	Nigeria	Italy	IT, DE, MT, NO, SE	44
25	Albania (TC)	France	FR, BE	50
26	Albania	Sweden	SE, DE, FR	44
27	Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Serbia	Germany	DE, LU	
28	DRC	Belgium	BE, IE, LT, CH	16
29	Kosovo	Germany	DE, HU	115
30	Russia	Switzerland	CH, PL	11
31	Nigeria & the Ivory Coast	Austria	AT, BG, GR, NO, PL, ES, IT, CH	59
32	Kosovo	Germany	DE, FI, BE	58
33	Albania	Germany	DE, NL, IS.	22
34	Nigeria	Italy	IT, NO, ES, IE, CH, LU	45
35	Kosovo	Germany	DE, FI, AT, HU	97
36	Albania and Georgia	Spain	ES, DE, IS, FR, LT	60
37	Kosovo	Germany	DE, HU	116
38	Kosovo	Austria	AT, DE, HU	97
39	Kosovo	Germany	DE, HU, FR	66
40	Nigeria	Italy	IT, CH, FR, DE, MT	49
41	Kosovo	Austria	AT, DE, SE, HU	65
42	Albania (TC)	France	FR, BE, DE	51
43	Pakistan	Bulgaria*	BG, AT, ES, NL, PL, DE	29
44	Armenia	Germany	DE, FI	6
45	Nigeria	Norway	NO, SE, ES	26
46	Albania	Sweden	SE, DE, FR	49
47	Nigeria	The Netherlands	NL, BE, LU, FI, SE, ES, HU	28
48	Kosovo	Austria	AT, DE, HU	56
49	Nigeria	Italy	IT, GR, BG	42
50	Georgia (TC)	Germany	DE, CH, BG	36
51	DRC	Belgium	BE, CH, SE.	20
52	Albania and Georgia	Spain	ES, GR, SE.	56
53	Kosovo	Germany	DE, HU, FI, SE	83
54	Nigeria	Austria	AT, NO, CH, HU	17
55	Georgia and Armenia	Austria	AT, IT, IS, SE, LT, ES, DE	47

<b>Number</b>	<b>Destination(s)</b>	<b>Organising Country</b>	<b>Participating States (with returnees)</b>	<b>Total Number of Returnees</b>
56	Kosovo	Austria	AT, IS, DE	92
57	Nigeria	Italy	IT, RO, CH, GR	50
58	Albania	The United Kingdom	UK, BE, FR	64
59	Serbia (TC)	Germany	DE, NL, BE	65
60	Albania	Sweden	SE, DE, IS	64
61	Kosovo	Germany	DE, HU, FI, FR	103
62	Pakistan	Greece	GR, AT, BG	19
63	Georgia and Armenia	Austria	AT, SE, DE, GR	25
64	Albania and the fYR of Macedonia	Germany	DE, IS, SE	145
65	Kosovo	Germany	DE, AT, HU	0
66	Nigeria	Italy	IT, BE, CH	28
<b>Total number of returnees</b>				<b>3 565</b>

# Comparative Analysis of Joint Operational Activities

## Air Borders

The intensity of operational activities at the EU's external air borders was enhanced and the number of man-days devoted to air border joint operations increased by 31%, from 6 703 man-days in 2014 to 8 779 man-days in 2015. That was mainly due to the continuous and long-term deployment of 26 SGOs in operational areas.

Five joint operations were carried out in 2015, for a total of 952 operational days, compared with six joint operations in 2014 for a total of 1 038 operational days.

The number of deployed officers was 43% higher (222 in 2014 and 317 in 2015), and the duration of deployments was extended, particularly in the case of SGO deployments.

The number of participating MS/SAC remained very high (29), and an additional 14 Third Countries took part in joint air operations by hosting operational activities and/or deploying a total of 32 Third Country observers.

In 2015, the budget of the Air Borders Sector was increased to EUR 2 580 000 (in 2014 it was EUR 2 200 000 EUR) to cover the costs of activities.

## Land Borders

In response to the challenges faced in border management at the external land borders, five joint operations and one Rabbit Exercise were launched. After the extension of Joint Operation Focal Points 2014 Land into the first months of 2015, JO Focal Points 2015 Land was carried out at border crossing points. Flexible Operational Activities 2015 Land covered green border surveillance activities. Additionally, Joint Border Checks teams provided further support at selected Border Crossing Points, while Coordination Points were established in the territory

of Third Countries. Finally, the rapid intervention mechanism was tested with the implementation of a Rapid Intervention Exercise at the external land border (Greece with Turkey).

The overall number of operational days in 2015 remained at approximately the same level as in 2014, with 1 011 days in 2015, compared to 1 177 days in 2014. In 2015, the operational activities implemented at the green border in the Western Balkans and at the South-Eastern land borders were implemented under one joint operation, which allowed a more flexible use of the available resources, as well as much more rapid reaction potential in cases of the need for relocation of resources.

The number of hosting MS/SAC (12) and the number of participating MS/SAC (27) remained the same as in 2014, while in terms of Third Countries there was one additional hosting Third Country (five in total).

Deployed experts performed 73 318 man-days, as compared to 38 335 in 2014, an increase of more than 100%. In addition, thanks to an increased application of the SGO mechanism, SGOs contributed an additional 2 554 man-days in 2015.

In 2015, the land borders budget for joint operations was increased to EUR 9 327 975 (an increase of more than EUR 1 million from the EUR 8 011 573 in 2014), resulting in a higher volume of activity.

## At the Sea Borders

Aiming to facilitate interoperability and flexible responses to the irregular migration phenomena and cross-border crime, six joint maritime operations and eight tailored activities, as well as coordination of national patrolling in predefined European Patrol Network (EPN) areas, were carried out in 2015.

The number of operational days in sea operations in 2015 decreased slightly, by 13%, to 1 584 in 2015 (compared with 1 829 in 2014), due to the fact that two joint operations hosted by Italy, EPN Aeneas and EPN Hermes, were merged into a single JO, EPN Triton, in the Central Mediterranean area.

In 2015, Frontex's budget for joint maritime activities was increased by a factor of 2.5, to EUR 70 400 129 (compared with EUR 28 383 700 in 2014), resulting in a higher volume of activity in joint maritime operations. This budget was accompanied by EUR 2 000 000 EUR from the 2014 budget, which was dedicated to extension of sea operations in 2015.

The scale of Frontex-financed technical equipment deployments nearly doubled, reaching 81 316 patrolling hours in 2015 (compared with 43 006 hours in 2014). This was a remarkable contribution to the maritime border surveillance and search and rescue efforts of the front-line MS facing the major migration flows.

Similarly, deployed experts performed more than 200% more man-days: approximately 66 000 man-days in 2015 (compared to 20 000 in 2014). In addition, during the maritime joint operations, crew members performed 72 000 man-days (more than double the 33 767 man-days in 2014). This increase was a result of more intensive patrol activities.

The number of MS/SAC participating in joint sea operations increased to 30 in 2015 (compared to 28 in 2014). There were also four Third Countries involved in sea operations in 2015 (six TCs were involved in 2014).

In total, 972 422 migrants (some 2 664 migrants per day) were intercepted during the joint maritime operations in 2015 (compared with 217 776, or about 600 per day, in 2014). The migration pressure in the Eastern Mediterranean area represented the main part of the overall flows via sea borders: approximately 811 541 migrants arrived in Greece during sea operations in 2015.

In the area covered by JO EPN Triton, the number of migrants decreased

slightly compared with the previous year (approximately 155 000 versus 170 000 in 2014).

In 2015, an increased number of 1 166 suspected facilitators were apprehended during joint maritime operations (compared with 1 086 in 2014).

Assets taking part in Frontex-coordinated operations rescued 254 693 migrants, which was almost 700 persons per day, on average. Compared with 2014, that was 47% more lives saved. However, the risk of fatalities was constantly high, due to the use of unseaworthy overloaded boats.

During the maritime joint operations some other types of cross-border crime, including drug trafficking, were also detected.

Some 106 tonnes of hashish, worth more than EUR 160 million, plus 10.3 kg of cocaine, 11.3 kg of heroin and 5.4 kg marijuana, worth EUR 1.3 million, were seized (compared with 43 tonnes of hashish, worth more than EUR 65 million, and 35 kg of cocaine, worth EUR 2 million, seized in 2014) and 239 suspected drug traffickers were arrested.

Most of these drugs were seized in the Western and Central Mediterranean area.

Moreover, 336 million contraband cigarettes, worth EUR 38 million, were also seized (compared to 24 million cigarettes, worth EUR 2.8 million, in 2014) and seven cases of possible illegal fishing and one case of possible sea pollution were detected and reported.

## Return Operations

Joint return operations are in principle carried out based on the idea of sharing existing capacities, third-country relationships and the readiness of Member States to organise flights. Effective use was made of the increased emergency budget for joint return operations: using the same number of Frontex staff the number of return operations was increased to 66 in 2015 (compared with 45 in 2014), with 3 565 irregular migrants successfully removed, which constituted a 64% overall increase in returns in 2015.

In response to the European Commission (Return Handbook) guidance to ensure a monitoring presence on joint return operations, there was an increase in the number of flights monitored, to 76% in 2015 (compared with 60% in 2014). In addition, the monitoring was extended to include all phases of the operations: pre-departure, joint connecting charters and the final destination flight.

Screening interviews establish a presumed nationality, which is the first step in an effective return process. In response to the increased activity on migration routes in Greece, screening activity was extended to cover three additional islands (Chios, Kos and Leros), and deployed human resources were reinforced twice to meet the host Member State's needs. The number of deployed screeners increased to 42 in 2015 (compared to 18 in 2014) and the number of deployed interpreters increased to 101 in 2015 (83 in 2014).

## Training Activities

Training Title or Name of the Event and a short description	Number of events	Number of Participants
<i>Profile Training for Debriefing Experts</i> A course in which participants learn how to debrief migrants by systematic extraction of information from migrants willing to cooperate. Participants learn how to prepare for an interview, how to select the interviewee and how to gain his/her trust. Understanding of cognitive interviewing techniques and psychological aspects is essential.	3 courses	45
<i>Profile Training for Screening Experts</i> A course that focuses on assumption of nationality and identity of undocumented migrants. The topics covered during the course included different ways of reaching an assumption of nationality and identity, challenges related to proving identity, work with interpreters, screening form particularities, and the ways of identification of vulnerable persons during a screening interview.	4 courses	64
<i>Profile Training for Second-Line Interview Experts</i> This training focuses on interviewing as the major fact finding method. It equips participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to interview persons crossing all types of EU borders and to conduct fair and objective interviews. Officers learn how to conduct a structured and comprehensive interview, using effective questioning and probing techniques. They also get the necessary psychological background and gain awareness of how psychological biases and filters can influence perceptions of others.	1 course	16
<i>Second-Line Airport Officer Profile training</i> This course enables participants to effectively fulfil the role of second-line airport officers, helping them to interact appropriately and respectfully with passengers. In a form of blended learning, this course provides the opportunity for officers to gain, update, and demonstrate acquired skills and knowledge, and to become competent and motivated to perform the complex tasks while deployed to joint operations, and also in their daily duties.	3 courses	48
<i>Second-Line Airport Officer Profile training</i> Evaluation and planning meeting.	1 activity	12
<i>Anti-trafficking in human beings train-the-trainers course</i> This is a course for national trainers of border guards based on the Frontex anti-trafficking in human beings manual.	2 courses	27
<i>Fundamental Rights train-the-trainers course</i> This is a course for national trainers of border guards based on the Frontex Fundamental Rights manual for trainers.	2 courses	26
<i>English for border guards</i> Development of an on-line English language course with specific professional vocabulary for first-line border guards.	5 expert working group meetings	56
<i>Fundamental rights eLearning Development</i> Developing a concept and story board for an e-learning phase on fundamental rights.	3 expert meetings	22
<i>Training on advanced skills for detection of falsified documents</i> This is a specialist course for the detection of falsified documents and consisted of a two-week course for document specialists (third-line officers) aiming to enhance their knowledge of printing techniques, common terminology and the examination and analysis of queried documents.	3 courses (including 1 course for third countries organised in cooperation with RELEX TC)	45
<i>Road show for first-line officers</i> An information session to raise the awareness amongst first-line officers of the design and abuse of identity documents, routes, trends, and document fraud to emphasise their vital role in the detection of false documents.	5 road shows carried out in addition to 8 road shows organised together with ABS prior to Operation Alexis II	625 + 615 for road shows Alexis II
<i>Training for visa section staff of MS/SAC embassies/consulates in third countries</i> This training aims to increase the knowledge and skills at embassies/consulates of MS/SAC in third countries with regard to document fraud and to raise the detection level of ID fraud during visa applications.	3 training courses	105
<i>Document Specialist board</i> Expert meeting to review/evaluate a project and discuss future plans/activities with regard to document fraud.	1 meeting	30
<i>Expert meetings for the updating of advanced level training tools</i> Workshops to review the tools for and inputting of the latest technologies and security features in identity documents.	3 meetings	20
<i>Standardised training for return officers, Escort Leaders</i> Training to enhance MS/SAC capacity to organise and run safe return operations organised by Frontex, and on the National level, and to improve professional related knowledge and skills.	3 training courses	58
<i>Training for National Multipliers</i> Training aimed at qualifying Member States' teachers and instructors (pool of experts) for the training of escort officers at the national level.	2 training courses	27
<i>Training for Escort Officers, Bulgaria</i> Training for national Bulgarian Escort officers for return operations according to Frontex standards and best practices.	1 training course	22

<b>Training Title or Name of the Event and a short description</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
<i>Training Support Network</i> A meeting of representatives from Partnership Academies for a presentation on PA survey results and the preliminary concept of the new PA network.	1 meeting	20
<i>National Training Coordinators meeting</i> A meeting for the presentation of the concept of the Training Needs Assessment instrument as a systematic approach to identify needs in the context of training.	1 meeting	33
<i>Frontex Annual Training Conference</i> The main purpose of this was to present the role of the SQF in harmonising border guard education and training curricula in line with the Bologna and Copenhagen principles.	1 conference that included: 2 panel discussions, 1 workshop, 3 parallel sessions and bilateral discussions	97 (77 external +20 Frontex staff)
<i>Meeting for NFPOC and NTC representatives</i> This focused on the finalisation of the concept of the Training Needs Assessment instruments and methodologies.	1 focus group	8
<i>Development of European Course for NCC Operators</i>	9 development meetings	100 (external) + 7 (Frontex staff)
<i>Development of Risk Analysis training</i>	1 development meetings	9 (external) + 1 (Frontex staff)
<i>Schengen Evaluator Training</i> A four-module course for Schengen evaluators in the field of external borders and return. The aim of the course is to train to a high standard professional evaluators for air, sea and land borders and returns in order to conduct Schengen evaluations in line with existing legislation.	4 course 3 preparatory meetings 3 development meetings	169
<i>Maritime Border Surveillance Officer</i> Training for officers in decision-making positions in maritime Frontex joint operations focused on taking best decisions in immigration and Search-and-Rescue related cases at sea and enhancing their cooperation skills in a multinational operative environment.	2 course 3 development meetings 1 evaluation meeting	82
<i>SQF Course design</i> This training is focused on using the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding in line with the Bologna and Copenhagen principles, and was delivered to the MS experts qualified to facilitate the national integration of Common Core Curricula and Sectoral Framework. It provided support to MS in integrating the common curricula and SQF into their national training systems.	4 courses	40
<i>Trainers workshop</i> Finalisation and review of the SQF trainer handbook that will ensure that trainers have the necessary tools to deliver sessions during the course design.	3 development meetings	10
SQF expert board, MS represented on the expert board, feedback provided on usage of the SQF, requests for integration. Developments in the SQF, review of training programmes and further steps, meeting, documents and reports.	1 evaluation meeting	30
Establishing of a certification system; Bologna / Copenhagen validation of products.	2 development meetings	7

# Fundamental Rights Progress Report 2015

## Introduction

Article 1(2) of the Frontex Regulation explicitly states that the Agency, when carrying out its mandate, must always act in full compliance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, relevant obligations and principles of international law. The Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy, adopted in March 2011, and its Action Plan refer to the Fundamental Rights Progress Report (Para. 37 and Action 18, respectively). Following the structure of the strategy, this Progress Report aims to provide an overview of the current state of play and the progress made by Frontex in 2015 as regards the implementation of the Fundamental Rights Strategy and Action Plan, in particular in the areas of Joint Operations, Risk Analysis and Capacity Building.

Furthermore, and with regard to the activities of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights (the CF), Article 1(2) of the Frontex Regulation also states that the Agency must take into consideration the CF's reports in accordance with Article 26(a) of the Regulation. The CF prepares a specific annual and public report on its activities in the first half of each year.

This Fundamental Rights Progress Report covers the period from January to December 2015.

## Operations

### General framework Joint Operations

All participants in Frontex coordinated operations receive the Operational Plans, together with the annexes thereto, prior to their deployment, in order that they can become familiar with the content thereof, and the documents are uploaded to the FOSS. The "Fundamental rights in Frontex coordinated activities" and the "Code of Conduct" are presented in detail in the General Annexes for Air, Land and Maritime Borders and form an integral

part of all of the joint operations' Operational Plans. The text related to the fundamental rights obligations to respect and promote fundamental rights, and to report allegations of violations, has been created in cooperation with the FRO.

In addition to the above, all participants take part in the operational briefings organised by Frontex and the Host Member State during the first day of their deployment. A standard agenda for a briefing meeting has been created in order to have a harmonised approach from Frontex and the Host MS' perspective towards all GOs deployed within Frontex coordinated operational activities. Among other topics, the following issues are always presented during briefing meetings:

1. respect for and promotion of the Fundamental Rights;
2. Referral Procedures for vulnerable categories of persons;
3. the code of conduct for all participants in Frontex coordinated activities.

It is mandatory that briefing meetings are organised by the Host MS, in close cooperation with Frontex. In this regard, the Frontex participants who deliver the related presentations are: the Frontex Coordinating Officers, the operational managers for particular operational activity or Frontex Operational Coordinators deployed or working at the particular operational area. Representatives of the FRA, the UNHCR and the IOM often contribute to the briefings.

During the carrying out of each joint operation, special attention is given to "Serious Incidents" reported in relation to alleged fundamental rights violation. In each such case the nominated responsible Frontex Coordinating Officers are responsible for collecting all relevant information in order to create/provide the SIR, following the provisions of the SIR SOP. The collection of relevant information from the Host MS' operational stakeholders (acting within JOs) is sometimes challenging and time-con-

suming, due the fact that such cases are mostly investigated by other national authorities (such as, for example, the police, the public prosecutor or other law enforcement services). Border-guard national authorities generally act as contact points for information supplied to Frontex.

JOU staff support Consultative Forum visits to the host MS and contribute to the meetings organised. In addition, it worth underlining that all staff have attended compulsory fundamental rights training.

### VEGA Handbook: Children at Airports

In 2015, Frontex published the VEGA Children at airports handbook: children at risk on the move, guidelines for border guards, available from the EU Bookshop.

The recommendations contained in this handbook aim to increase the awareness of border guard officers with regard to children (minors) who are crossing the external air border of the European Union, whether they are unaccompanied or not. This can improve the identification of children on the move at risk at airports, while ensuring respect for their rights and enhance action taken against criminal threats to their safety, security and wellbeing. The handbook contains tailored operational actions for entry, transit and exit controls, allowing for an initial contact and assessment in the absence of specialised child protection officers.

The guidelines also try to reflect and ensure at all times an approach based on the rights of the child and are based on the principles of the best interests of the child and child protection at the border while taking into account the concrete needs and obligations of border guards' activities.

## Joint Operation VEGA children

Frontex carried out Joint Operation VEGA Children 2015 at EU airports from June to July 2015 and August to October of that same year.

The operation sought to identify children on the move at risk and refer them to welfare and child protection agencies. The underpinning operational measures were provided by standard operational procedures based upon the VEGA Children Handbook.

With the support of the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer, along with the Frontex Consultative Forum, during the joint operation joint operational teams were deployed at the hosting airports. Such teams consisted of border guards, experts from international and non-governmental organisations, and members of the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights. VEGA Children is the first joint operation organised by Frontex that brought together border guards and civil society to operationalise a common objective: identification of children on the move and prevention of the risks they face.

While fighting trafficking of human beings, border guards at participating EU airports showed commitment and made use of the provisions of the relevant EU law, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The attention to the Fundamental Rights of children, in particular the access to international protection and the compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement*, from input provided by the Frontex Consultative Forum and other NGOs, became clear during the compilation of the VEGA Handbook: children at airports.

In 2015, the joint operational teams improved the capabilities to identify suspected cases of trafficking involving children at airports, taking many actions that, even if not ending in formal investigations, ensured the safety and central position of children in the context of migratory movements.

The most important conclusion and recommendation of the joint operation was that the current lack of a consistent approach within the EU with regard to parental travel authorisation and the issuing of 1951 documents create both vulnerabilities for child protection and opportunities for organised criminal networks. Therefore, Member States' harmonisation of practices across the EU concerning these documents would be useful in order to reduce the risks posed to children by criminal networks.

## Joint Return Operations (JROs)

At the start of each deployment period, JO Flexible Operational Activities in Return provides screening experts and interpreters with an on-the-spot briefing, during which specific reference is made to Fundamental Rights in Frontex activities; the briefing also includes information and guidance from the FRO. All participants in Frontex activities are advised on how to manage vulnerable migrants and refer requests for international protection to the adequate authorities. In addition, all participants in Frontex activities are informed of the need to report concerns or allegations regarding fundamental rights, and the reporting method used within operations, which is the Serious Incident Reporting mechanism.

During 2015, Frontex strongly encouraged Member States to ensure the presence of a forced-return monitor in all JROs coordinated by Frontex. Their presence on a JRO aims at gathering information and monitoring whether the JRO is conducted in compliance with fundamental rights, paying specific attention to the treatment of vulnerable persons, the use of force and means of restraint, among other fundamental rights matters. Through Frontex's efforts the percentage of JROs coordinated by Frontex with forced-return monitors present during the whole JRO has increased significantly, from 60% in 2014 to 76% in 2015.

The FRO and the CF also actively supported the process of a revision of the Best Practices for JROs, which has been renamed "Guide for JROs coordinated by Frontex".

## Risk Analysis

During the information-gathering phase of the updating of the 2015 Handbook on Risk Profiles in Trafficking in Human Beings, it was decided that the participation and expertise of certain organisations within the Frontex Consultative Forum would prove very useful. In addition to selected Member States, Third Countries and international organisations, two organisations from the Consultative Forum were invited to participate in the THB Handbook Guest-Analyst Workshop on 17/18 June 2015.

Following consultations within the Consultative Forum, participants were primarily asked to share information and analysis in order to update the existing profiles of Albanian, Brazilian, Chinese, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese victims of trafficking, as those are the nationalities most frequently reported by Member States as being victims of THB. The workshop proved to be a very useful method of exchanging ideas and gathering the necessary information for the subsequent drafting of the 2015 Handbook on Risk Profiles in Trafficking in Human Beings (published in mid-September 2015). In addition to Guest-Analyst Workshop participation, the IOM also provided the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit with comprehensive written responses to a THB questionnaire sent out to various organisations and Member State authorities.

During 2015, Frontex continued to use the Debriefing Guidelines to which the Consultative Forum had provided input in previous years that include several safeguards to prevent negative impacts on persons crossing borders.

The Frontex Risk Analysis Unit continued its work with the UNHCR within the framework of the MoU between the two organisations. This work has included regular exchanges and discussions on areas of common interest.

## The Frontex Situation Centre (FSC)

Over the course of 2015 fundamental rights continued to be at the core of the overall border situational monitoring activities of Frontex, and, in particular, of the Eurosur Fusion Services framework. This approach is reflected in some concrete developments outlined below.

### Media monitoring

In 2015, information collected from open sources raised awareness among Frontex staff and stakeholders in Member States and EU institutions about possible cases and allegations of violations of fundamental rights, allowing the Fundamental Rights Officer and other relevant stakeholders to support the monitoring of compliance with fundamental rights requirements in Frontex activities and the overall situation at the EU's external borders.

### Serious Incident Reporting (SIR)

In 2015, the SIR procedure remained the official reporting mechanism for informing about and reporting on serious incidents, also involving cases of alleged violations of fundamental rights, in the framework of Frontex coordinated joint operations. The mechanism includes specific reporting and follow-up measures for ensuring that all relevant managerial staff are timely informed of any relevant situation and that all appropriate measures are taken by relevant stakeholders in order to address the incident. Since 2015, all SIRs have been successfully reported via the Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA).

## The EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS)

The EFS were launched in 2014, and have since then developed into a set of diverse services, fusing a wide range of data from different sources. Over the course of 2015, Frontex delivered an even wider range of services to improve the situational awareness of Member States in order to enhance their reaction capabilities, and therefore also help to save lives at sea.

Over the course of this year Frontex further improved several EUROSUR Fusion Services in order to support in particular operational staff in the Member States during search and rescue operations at sea:

1. The EFS Meteo Service now provides advanced weather and environmental forecasts, especially with regard to sea conditions.
2. The EFS Maritime Simulation Module Service now provides simulations of possible future vessel positions based on current environmental conditions.

This is especially valuable for supporting search and rescue operations involving migrant vessels drifting at sea.

Some concrete examples of how EUROSUR Fusion Services contributed to saving lives at sea are provided in the 'Situation Monitoring' chapter of this publication.

## Capacity Building

The principles of fundamental rights and international protection are fully integrated into all Frontex training activities. 2015 saw the development and launch of several new training programmes and products in which fundamental rights aspects are incorporated. Previously developed programmes and products also continued to be implemented.

The following activities with a focus on fundamental rights have been carried out in 2015:

## Train-the-trainer courses on fundamental rights and anti-trafficking

The training of national trainers based on the methodology of the Fundamental Rights trainers' manual and the Anti-trafficking in Human Beings trainers' manual continued in 2015. Two train-the-trainers courses have been organised for MS officials on fundamental rights for border guards, as well as two train-the-trainers courses for MS on combatting trafficking in human beings. Experts from the following partnership organisations contributed to the training courses: the UNHCR, the OSCE, the IOM, the OHCHR, and the UNODC.

Anti-trafficking in human beings train-the-trainers courses have been carried out in two phases: an eLearning phase and an interactive seminar. An eLearning phase for the fundamental rights train-the-trainer course is under development and will be finalised in 2016.

The participants are trained on the content of the manuals, as well as how to design training sessions and to apply relevant methodologies and participatory approaches in training in fundamental rights and anti-trafficking in human beings. The use of creative, interactive teaching methods helps to secure the active and committed involvement of participants.

## The European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management

Part of the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management, the second module of the programme, Fundamental Rights and Ethics in Border Security, was delivered from 5 to 9 October 2015 at the premises of the Defence Academy of the Netherlands in Breda and the Royal Marechaussee Training Center in Schiphol.

The module aimed to equip the 26 students from 20 MS/SAC and partner organisations, all high-level border guard managers, with knowledge and skills

to integrate respect for and promotion and fulfilment of fundamental rights and ethics when taking strategic decisions, while considering the implications thereof on border management. The students acquired knowledge of fundamental rights and ethics as reflected in the relative legal framework, as well as that emanating from jurisprudence and case law. The module enabled the students to make strategic decisions and to review current institutional structures and policies in a manner that is respectful of fundamental rights and ethics. The CF supported the delivering of training in this strategic field of expertise at the senior managerial level of border authorities.

Fundamental rights and ethics are integral to every aspect of border guarding learning and practice. The learning strategy of the module aimed to facilitate this integration through scenario-based learning, which provides an opportunity for peer learning and sharing of national best practices in the application of fundamental rights and ethics. Another important aspect of the methodology is that it integrates theoretical learning, including jurisprudence and case law, and practical skills that can be transferred to the organisational context of border guarding. The studying consisted of three parts: an independent phase, a contact (residential) week and an experiential learning phase. It was assessed through case studies and open-book exams that all students passed with remarkable grades.

The module teaching staff brought together experienced border guard practitioners from the National Police of Spain, highly regarded academics from the University of Salamanca, UNED Spain, the Defense Academy of the Netherlands and the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, and a representative of the Consultative Forum. The students had the opportunity to exchange views with Zekarias Kebraeb, author of the book titled "Hope in my heart, freedom on my mind" which is about his experience at borders during his journey to Europe.

### **The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding**

The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding contains a guide to integrating fundamental rights into all border guard studies. The guide provides high-level learning outcomes relating to fundamental rights that apply to all border guard activities in order to assist Member States in integrating fundamental rights into all training courses.

In 2015, the SQF work focused on the development of a manual and of a course concept for training developers that include practical and theoretical lessons on how to integrate fundamental rights learning outcomes into all courses and curricula in the border guard sector. In order to teach the learners in selecting appropriate learning outcomes related to FR from the SQF for BG, and integrate the selected learning outcomes into specific course design, a full-day session is included in the contact week phase of the training and was delivered during each of the three courses carried out in 2015.

### **Profile training for EBGT members**

In the direct residential profile training courses for EBGT members (Profile Training for Debriefing Experts, Profile Training for Screening Experts, Profile Training for Second-Line Interview Experts and Second-Line Airport Officer Profile Training) the sessions related to fundamental rights and identification of persons in need of international protection are covered by experienced trainers.

The subjects reflect the major fundamental rights topics of concern to border guards: fundamental rights in the work of border guards, persons in need of international protection, identification of vulnerable persons, *non-refoulement* principles, risk factors when interviewing persons with vulnerabilities, and serious incident reporting related to allegations of violations of fundamental rights.

All these topics have been presented both from the legal and practical points of view, bearing in mind the perspective

of EBGT members and Guest Officers deployed on joint operations.

The development of EBGT Land Border Surveillance Training has been introduced in 2015 and will continue with five training activities in 2016. The content of the training has a practical and interdisciplinary approach and will focus on practical aspects, such as patrolling as a Joint Team, communication, detection of cases of irregular migration or THB, surveillance activities in compliance with the legal framework, first aid, reporting on a joint operation, use of coercive measures, etc. The training was observed in 2015 by the Consultative Forum, which supported the enhancement of its fundamental rights content.

During the development of the EBTC Profile training for maritime border surveillance officers in 2015 the fundamental rights aspect has been strongly on the agenda and the Consultative Forum delegated to the UNHCR participation on a bilateral basis in a development and evaluation meetings as well as during the actual training sessions.

### **The European Course for NCC (EUROSUR) operators**

The European course for NCC (EUROSUR) operators was developed in 2015 and it includes one day of fundamental rights training. The FRO was involved, and supported the Frontex Training Unit on the development of the content and practical cases related to matters regarding fundamental rights in connection with the EUROSUR framework, including data protection, surveillance activities, and Search and Rescue at sea (SAR).

### **Mid-level Course (Operational Training for EU Mid-management in Border Guarding)**

This course is made up of four independent modules. One module is dedicated to FR training, including relevant topics, learning and evaluation methods and corresponding selected reading. This module was developed by FR trainers with contributions from the Frontex Consultative Forum. The other three modules contain FR content and related activities to increase awareness of the implications and obligations with regard to respecting, ensuring and promoting FR at the mid-management level in EU border guarding. During the pilot course in 2015, four of the five contact weeks were observed by representatives of the CF in order to support the inclusion of FR content and approach in the training materials. The CF members presented their observations during the evaluation of the pilot course.

### **The Interoperability Assessment Project Study**

This study was finalised in 2015 and contains a special section dedicated to analysis of the implementation of FR in BG basic training in MS, corroborated by an analysis of the evaluation of basic BG students in FR training. Relevant conclusions were drawn and recommendations made for Frontex to support and for MS to enhance the implementation of FR training in their basic curricula for border guards.

### **Teacher Mobility and Student Exchange**

These emphasise the importance of FR training through common training activities, debates, exchanges of experience in CCC implementation and exchanges of teaching materials in the field of FR.

### **Joint Return Training and Escort Leader Training**

Training in fundamental rights is integrated into the Joint Return Training and Escort Leader Training with several lectures. Five such courses have been organised in 2015.

### **Schengen Evaluator training**

Fundamental rights are now an integral part of the training of Schengen Evaluators and have also been included in training curriculum. In 2015, a new module, titled “return”, was introduced in this training programme and fundamental rights were taken into account when developing and implementing the training module. Representatives from the FRA are invited on regular basis to development and evaluation meetings in order to keep fundamental rights aspects updated.

### **Contribution to an EASO training module on Fundamental Rights and International Protection**

The development of a new EASO training module on Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU (FR & IPEU) was initiated in close cooperation with Member States’ asylum authorities and academic institutions, as well as the FRA, the UNHCR, Frontex and selected civil society organisations.

### **Fundamental Rights Training for Frontex staff**

The concept of basic fundamental rights training for Frontex staff was developed as a result of the close cooperation with both the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (the FRA) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (the UNHCR), as well as with support from the FRO. This concept derives from the Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy.

Basic two-day fundamental-rights training sessions are mandatory for all Frontex staff. In 2015, four fundamental rights training sessions took place on Frontex premises: two sessions in July 2015 (on 7–8 and 9–10 July) and two sessions in October 2015 (on 20–21 October and 22–23 October 2015). 60 participants took part in those sessions.

The objectives of the training, in terms of learner outcomes, are three-fold: knowledge, skills and attitude. Specifically, staff are expected to understand the basics and principles of human rights, to be able to apply a human-rights perspective in their field of work or put them into practice using a “human-rights analysis tool” and finally to accept fundamental rights as relevant to their work. The organisation of the training is managed by the Frontex Human Resources Unit.

## Research and development activities

The use of the technologies related to border security may have implications for the fundamental rights of people crossing the border. Usually, the technologies are contemplated from the point of view of operational effectiveness and cost efficiency, their capabilities/performance are measured/tested and their achievements are contemplated, but their potential intrusiveness on the people is sometimes given not sufficient consideration.

Surveillance and tracking, the use of image processing, data fusion, storing and access, capturing of biometric features, and the use of body scanners and X-ray devices are only a few examples with potential impact or intrusiveness into the attributes of the fundamental rights of people crossing the EU's external borders.

Along these lines, the Frontex Research and Development Unit (the RDU) decided to organise a workshop on the relationship between the use of border security technologies and the implications on the privacy, ethics and data protection/fundamental rights of people crossing the borders.

Its aim was to find out what the results of the latest research on this topic are and to debate them, and also to consolidate the participants' knowledge of this subject. The speakers invited for the workshop were policy makers, researchers and scientist involved in activities and projects which address the binomial "technology at the border fundamental rights implications". Fifteen officers from 13 authorities attended (from DK, EE, FR, GE, GR, LT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SK, SP and SE), as well as Frontex representatives from the Research and Development Unit, the Land Border Sector, the Air Border Sector, the Frontex Situation Centre, and the office of the Fundamental Rights Officer, bringing the total number of participants to 30 persons.

## Other fundamental rights issues

Frontex and its FRO launched a process of a revision of the existing Fundamental Rights Strategy, which included an in-depth analysis of the already received contributions reported by the various entities within Frontex, annexed in prior General Reports of Frontex, a compilation of recommendations provided by several IOs, NGOs and other bodies to Frontex since 2012 and a subsequent draft proposal prepared by the FRO. The draft was internally consulted with all business units of Frontex and the process will continue with external partners, namely MB and CF Members, in 2016. The new updated FRS will be published in 2016 on Frontex's webpage.

## Annual Report on Access to Documents

The annual report on access to documents is drawn up in accordance with Article 17(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. It covers the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 and is based on the statistical data summarised in the tables below.

Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents is applicable to Frontex when handling applications for access to documents drawn up or received by it and in its possession, by means of Article 28 of the Frontex Regulation.

The practical arrangements in Frontex regarding public access to the documents of the Agency are laid down in Decision 3/2014 of Frontex's Management Board, a decision adopted pursuant to Article 18 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Frontex receives requests for documents via either the contact form on the Frontex website or directly to the Frontex email address or 'PAD' mailbox. All the requests are handled by the Legal Affairs Unit (the LAU), which first ensures that all applications are registered and their receipt is acknowledged. The LAU then involves the Frontex entities responsible for the preparation of the requested documents. Those entities locate the requested document(s) and decide on full access, partial access or refusal.

The LAU checks the validity of the justifications provided for possible partial access or refusal by those entities. The justifications are based on the exceptions provided under Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. While the responsible entities decide what is to be disclosed or not disclosed during an initial application, it is the LAU which carries out the review following a confirmatory application.

### Access to Frontex documents in 2015

In 2015, Frontex received 60 applications (54 initial and 6 confirmatory) for access to documents on the basis of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The most common requests related to Frontex Operational Plans and evaluation reports, as well as to serious incident reports and to data on illegal border crossing. Other requests pertained to Standard Operating Procedures, Framework Partnership agreements, email correspondence between Frontex and external stakeholders, Codes of Conduct, debriefing interviews, Working Arrangements with third countries, and the Frontex Programme of Work.

The profile of the applicants varied, with almost 50% consisting of academics (students, researchers, professors). The rest were mostly journalists, while a significant number of applicants did not state their function and reached Frontex through the AsktheEU website.

In 2015, Frontex began to review its internal rules implementing Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, and aims to have a new Management Board Decision adopted in 2016 in order to simplify its procedures in-house to increase transparency and provide access to documents in a more efficient manner.

Finally, in 2015, Frontex saw an increase in Public Access to Documents applications, receiving almost double the number of requests compared to the previous year. Additionally, most applications contained several sub-requests, amounting often to a request for a very large number of documents.

Statistics relating to the application of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 for 2015

Total applications	60
Initial requests	54
Full access granted	12
Partial access	32
Access refused	6
Ongoing	1
No answer provided	1 requestor withdrew his application.
Applications not processed	2 requestors did not prove EU citizenship /residence, a prerequisite for beneficiaries of the right of access. Frontex retains discretion on whether or not to grant access to documents to third country nationals.

Further details:

Of the six refusals, two were based on Frontex not possessing the documents requested.

Full access includes cases where the applicants were referred to the Frontex website.

Confirmatory requests	6
Full access granted	0
Partial access	3
Access refused	1
Ongoing	2

### Justifications for refusal

Article 4.1(a) Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 Protection of the public interest as regards the public security of the Community or a Member State	4
Article 4.1(a) Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 Protection of the public interest as regards the international relations of the Community or a Member State	1
No document available	2

### Partial access (with blanking out of limited parts of the text) was based on:

Article 4.1 (a) Protection of the public interest as regards the public security of the Community or a Member State
Article 4.1 (b) Protection of the integrity of the individual, in particular in accordance with Community legislation regarding the protection of personal data

## Appropriations 2015

Budget item (amounts in EUR 1 000)	Original Budget 2015	Amended Budget 2015	Transfer of appropriations		Available appropriations	Commitments		Payments		To be Carried Forward						
										(C2) <sup>1</sup>	(C5) <sup>2</sup>	(C8) <sup>3</sup>	Total	Unused		
	(A)	(B)	(C)		(D) <sup>a</sup>	(E)	(E)/(D)	(F)	(F)/(D)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J) <sup>b</sup>	(J)/(D)	(K) <sup>c</sup>	(K)/(D)
Title 1 Staff	21 476	1 292	-1 553	-7%	21 215	21 215	100%	21 069	99%	0	4	146	150	1%	0	0%
Title 2 Other Administrative	10 432	-1 128	-718	-7%	8 586	8 437	98%	5 231	61%	0	39	3 207	3 246	38%	149	2%
Title 3 Operational Activities	82 145	29 083	2 271	3%	113 499	113 465	100%	73 243	65%	0	61	40 490	40 551	36%	33	0%
<b>Grand total regular budget</b>	<b>114 053</b>	<b>29 247</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>143 300</b>	<b>143 117</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99 543</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>43 843</b>	<b>43 948</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>0%</b>

### Breakdown of appropriation in Title 3

30 Operations	52 300	39 709	3 676	7%	95 685	95 685	100%	61 048	64%	0	6	34 735	34 741	36%	0	0%
3000 Land borders	9 200	0	305	3%	9 505	9 505	100%	6 878	72%	0	6	2 676	2 682	28%	0	0%
3010 Sea borders	31 100	36 209	3 091	10%	70 400	70 400	100%	41 821	59%	0	0	28 622	28 622	41%	0	0%
3020 Air borders	2 500	0	80	3%	2 580	2 580	100%	1 979	77%	0	0	607	607	24%	0	0%
3050 Return co-operation	9 500	3 500	200	2%	13 200	13 200	100%	10 370	79%	0	0	2 830	2 830	21%	0	0%
310 Risk analysis	2 030	-200	-205	-10%	1 625	1 619	100%	1 208	74%	0	0	411	411	25%	6	0%
311 Frontex Situation Centre	480	151	-17	-4%	614	606	99%	357	58%	0	32	399	431	70%	8	1%
312 EUROSUR	9 300	-456	-99	-1%	8 745	8 736	100%	6 491	74%	0	24	2 266	2 289	26%	9	0%
320 Training	4 400	-80	-943	-21%	3 377	3 377	100%	1 892	56%	0	0	1 485	1 485	44%	0	0%
330 Research & Development	850	80	-38	-4%	892	885	99%	539	60%	0	0	345	345	39%	7	1%
340 Pooled Resources	1 400	0	-55	-4%	1 345	1 345	100%	862	64%	0	0	483	483	36%	0	0%
350 Misc. operational activities	10 000	-10 000	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
351 Operational IT projects	520	0	53	10%	573	573	100%	334	58%	0	0	238	238	42%	0	0%
352 European Day for Border Guards	350	-13	0	0%	337	334	99%	311	92%	0	0	22	22	7%	3	1%
360 External relations 3rd countries and IBPC	420	-108	-92	-22%	220	220	100%	129	59%	0	0	91	91	41%	0	0%
361 External relations Int'l Organisations and THB	55	0	0	0%	55	55	100%	48	87%	0	0	7	7	13%	0	0%
362 Fundamental Rights Officer	40	0	-10	-25%	30	30	101%	22	74%	0	0	8	8	27%	0	-1%

<sup>1</sup> Non-automatic (C2)

<sup>2</sup> Internal Assigned revenue (C5)

<sup>3</sup> Automatic (C8)

<sup>a</sup> (D)=(A)+(B)+(C)

<sup>b</sup> (J)=(G)+(H)+(I)

<sup>c</sup> (K)=(D)-(E)-(G)

## Breakdown of Staff by Unit as on 31 December 2015

Division	Unit	2011			2012			2013			2014			2015		
		CA	TA	SNE	CA	TA	SNE	CA	TA	SNE	CA	TA	SNE	CA	TA	SNE
ADM	Administration Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	3	0	
	Human Resources and Services	26	11	0	28	10	0	26	12	1	28	12	0	28	16	0
	Finance and Procurement	7	10	0	5	11	0	6	11	0	7	12	0	5	13	0
	ICT	6	17	0	6	16	0	6	17	0	6	18	0	6	18	0
	Legal Affairs	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	2
OPD	Operations Division Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	0
	Joint Operations Unit	11	23	35	11	23	34	11	25	30	11	27	30	10	28	33
	Frontex Situation Centre	9	11	4	8	11	7	8	10	6	8	12	7	7	9	8
	Risk Analysis	8	17	18	8	17	21	7	15	19	8	18	19	7	17	18
CBD	Capacity Building Division Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
	Training	3	9	7	3	8	7	3	9	7	3	8	7	3	9	7
	Pooled Resources	1	5	5	1	5	4	1	5	5	1	5	5	1	5	5
	R&D	1	12	1	1	11	2	1	11	1	1	11	2	1	11	2
	Internal Audit/Quality Management	3	2	0	3	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Directorate	3	7	2	3	6	2	2	7	1	3	8	0	3	2	3	
Executive Support	6	14	5	6	15	5	8	16	5	11	15	6	4	11	3	
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>89<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>149<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>77<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>79</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>81</b>

CA – contract agent, SNE – seconded national expert, TA – temporary agent

## Breakdown of Temporary Agents as on 31 December 2015

Function group and grade	2014				2015			
	Authorised under the EU Budget		Filled as of 31/12/2014		Authorised under the EU Budget		Filled as of 31/12/2015	
	Permanent Posts	Temporary Posts	Permanent Posts	Temporary Posts	Permanent Posts	Temporary Posts	Permanent Posts	Temporary Posts
AD 16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AD 15	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	0
AD 14	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	1
AD 13	-	4	-	4	-	4	-	4
AD 12	-	11	-	12	-	11	-	8
AD 11	-	8	-	6	-	8	-	8
AD 10	-	6	-	6	-	6	-	7
AD 9	-	8	-	17	-	8	-	2
AD 8	-	43	-	31	-	55	-	46
AD 7	-	8	-	13	-	29	-	9
AD 6	-	6	-	3	-	21	-	7
AD 5	-	2	-	1	-	13	-	3
<b>AD total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>95</b>
AST 11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 8	-	5	-	8	-	5	-	4
AST 7	-	11	-	11	-	11	-	10
AST 6	-	14	-	14	-	12	-	11
AST 5	-	17	-	14	-	20	-	20
AST 4	-	4	-	3	-	14	-	5
AST 3	-	4	-	4	-	5	-	4
AST 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
AST 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
<b>AST total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>149</b>





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