

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN AND COAST GUARD AGENCY [(EBCGA)-FRONTEX]. AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.THE CASE OF THE STANDING CORPS

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to critically examine the human resources management of the specific body in this European organization and specifically as it emerges from the legal framework of its formation-organization and operation in combination with other legal texts, directives, recommendations, etc. that have been issued in the context of its administrative function, as well as the added value this brings to the overall security of the European Union (EU).

Keywords

European Border and Coast Guard [EBCGA -Frontex]], human resources management, standing corps, rapid border intervention teams (RABITs).

Resumo

O objetivo do presente artigo é analisar criticamente a gestão de recursos humanos deste órgão específico da referida organização europeia, nomeadamente tal como decorre do quadro jurídico da sua constituição, organização e funcionamento, em conjugação com outros textos jurídicos, diretivas, recomendações, etc., que foram emitidos no contexto da sua função



administrativa, bem como o valor acrescentado que tal traz para a segurança global da União Europeia (UE).

Palavras-chave

Guarda Europeia de Fronteiras e Costeira [EBCGA - Frontex], gestão de recursos humanos, corpo permanente, equipas de intervenção rápida nas fronteiras (RABITs).

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TRYFON KORONTZIS

Introduction

The integrated management of the EU borders has long been a core focus of European policy. This approach aims to create a comprehensive system for managing external borders, ensuring effective control and surveillance of land and sea borders. These objectives are key to maintaining the area of Peace, Security, and Justice, driven by the need for free movement within the EU without internal border checks between Member States (MS). To achieve this, common rules have been established, detailing the procedures and controls to be applied at external borders.

In response to growing challenges, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), originally established as Frontex in 2004, was created to provide expertise and coordinate operational cooperation among EU MS in managing external borders, stepping in where improvements were needed.

As part of the revised institutional framework of Frontex, a permanent body called the Standing Corps was established to strengthen border management, asylum procedures, the return of illegal immigrants, and efforts to combat cross-border crime. The Standing Corps, set to reach a capacity of 10.000 officers as defined in Regulation (EU) 1896/2019, will possess executive powers and participate in external border operations. Additionally, they will aid in the return of individuals without legal residence status in the EU and address cross-border crime.

Furthermore, officers from the Standing Corps, along with members of the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITs) established to handle border emergencies, are authorized to carry weapons, make arrests, and perform other duties under the supervision of the host Member State's competent authorities.

¹ This paper presented at I.CO.D.ECON 2024, 6th International Conference of Development and Economy, Kalamata Greece, 11-13 October 2024 organized by the University of Peloponnese, University of Western Macedonia (International and European Economic Studies), University of National and World Economy (Sofia), Alexandrou Ioan Cuza (University of Iasi).



Human Resources Management in the European Border and Coast Guard Agency [(EBCGA)-Frontex]

The integrated management of the EU external borders has always been a key objective of European policy. This initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive framework for managing these borders, emphasizing uniform controls and effective surveillance of land and sea borders.

These objectives are central to the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice (AFSJ) and are part of the broader policy framework designed to facilitate free movement within the EU without internal border checks among MS. To achieve this, common rules have been created to outline the specifications and control procedures implemented at the external borders (Korontzis, a,b,c).

In response to emerging challenges, a European organization was founded in 2004 to provide essential expertise for coordinating operational cooperation among EU MS authorities in managing external borders, intervening and enhancing processes as necessary. This organization is known as Frontex².

To fulfil its assigned tasks and mission as outlined in relevant legal texts, Frontex collaborates with various entities, including Europol, Eurojust, OLAF (European Anti-Fraud Office), EFCA (European Fisheries Control Agency), EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency), the United Kingdom (UK), as well as other European and international organizations, and competent national authorities (Korontzis, 2014, a). Additionally, it works with third countries in accordance with the legal framework governing its activities³.

A central aspect of the policy implemented by this European organization, within the framework of the EU external relations policy, is its role in promoting operational cooperation between EU MSs and third countries.

Frontex now EBCGA is based in Warsaw (Poland)⁴ and its main tasks were and are operational⁵.

² Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 (L 295), p. 1.

Council Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022 on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 (L 160).

Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU (L 312), p.56.

Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006, (L 312), p.14.

³ Articles 68, 69, 72, 73,74, Reg. (EU) 2019/1896.

⁴ 2005/358/EC: Council Decision of 26 April 2005 designating the seat of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (214).

⁵ Articles 10, 36-42, 48-50, 54-59, 82, 85, Reg. (EU) 2019/1896.



It should be noted again that the staff of the RABITs^{6,7} as also the staff of the Standing Corps, established within the framework of the aforementioned organization to respond to emergency situations, are authorized to carry weapons, make arrests, and take other actions in the presence of personnel from the local national authorities of the host EU MS.

Before the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, which transformed Frontex into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), Frontex exercised the following competencies under Regulation (EU) 1052/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2016/1624:

- a) Coordinated operational cooperation among EU MS in managing the external borders.
- b) Assisted MS in training national border guards by establishing common training standards.
- c) Conducted and utilized risk analyses.
- d) Monitored developments in investigations related to the control and surveillance procedures at the external borders, keeping MS informed.
- e) Provided assistance to MS when increased technical and operational support was needed at the EU's external borders.
- f) Supported MS in organizing joint border operations,
- g) Maintained RABIT intervention teams in MS as provided in Regulation (EC) 863/2007 and Regulation (EU) 1168/2011 (Korontzis, 2022, c).

From its establishment until the issuance of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, Frontex undertook significant actions and initiatives, including:

- A. Implementing joint European operations at sea and land borders (Korontzis, 2024, b).
- B. Creating a European network of patrols⁸.
- C. Creation and monitoring of a central equipment register that was made available.
- D. Deployment of RABITs at the external borders when necessary.
- E. Provision of subsidies for the training and development of border guards by establishing common training specifications (Deleixhe, M., & Duez, D., 2019).

To successfully and significantly manage migration flows, it is essential to be created, finalized, and implemented a coherent policy for the integrated management of external borders at both national and European levels. The development, execution, and monitoring of this policy will play a crucial role in tackling illegal immigration and different

⁶ European Commission, FRONTEX and RABITS: the European Union is stepping up its operational efforts combating illegal immigration, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_07_142, Frontex and the Rabbit Operation at the Greek -Turkish border, available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_130, Frontex, Frontex launches rapid border intervention on Greek land border available at <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-launches-rapid-border-intervention-on-greek-land-border-J7k21h>.

⁷ Article 82 of Reg (EU) 2019/1896.

⁸ Since its launch on 1 May 2005, it has successfully assisted Member States in implementing the operational aspects of external border management with joint operations and rapid border interventions, risk analyses, information exchange, liaison with third countries and returns.



types of cross-border crime, thus improving security across EU MS. Ultimately, all policies and actions should be developed and carried out with full respect for individuals' fundamental rights and the freedom of movement for everyone within the EU⁹.

It is important to note that free movement within the EU, achieved through the abolition of border controls, relies on the implementation of high-quality external border controls to combat all forms of crime. This ensures a balance in the removal of border controls between EU MS.

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, originally known as Frontex, was renamed the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) in response to the migration crisis of 2015 and the subsequent increase in migration flows. This change led to the establishment of a new institutional framework, expanding the agency's mission and tasks to enhance the effectiveness of external border management.

The EBCGA is composed of the competent authorities of the MS involved in managing external borders, specifically focusing on border control, as well as national authorities responsible for returns and the EBCGA itself.

The organization's primary actions include:

- Developing an operational and technical strategy to achieve integrated management of the EU external borders within the context of the multi-annual strategic political cycle.
- Conducting risk analyses and assessments to effectively manage external borders (Regime, 2017; Satoko, 2016).
- Providing increased operational and technical assistance to MS and third countries, in accordance with the organization's legal framework, by conducting joint operations and interventions at external borders when necessary.
- Offering technical and operational support to MS in addressing emergencies at external borders.
- Assisting in maritime search and rescue (SAR) operations by providing technical and operational assistance [See Template 1 regarding the structure of the EBCGA and Template 2 regarding illegal migration routes to EU Member States].
- Organizing, coordinating and conducting return operations (Baër, S., & Beeres, R. & Bollen, M., 2020).

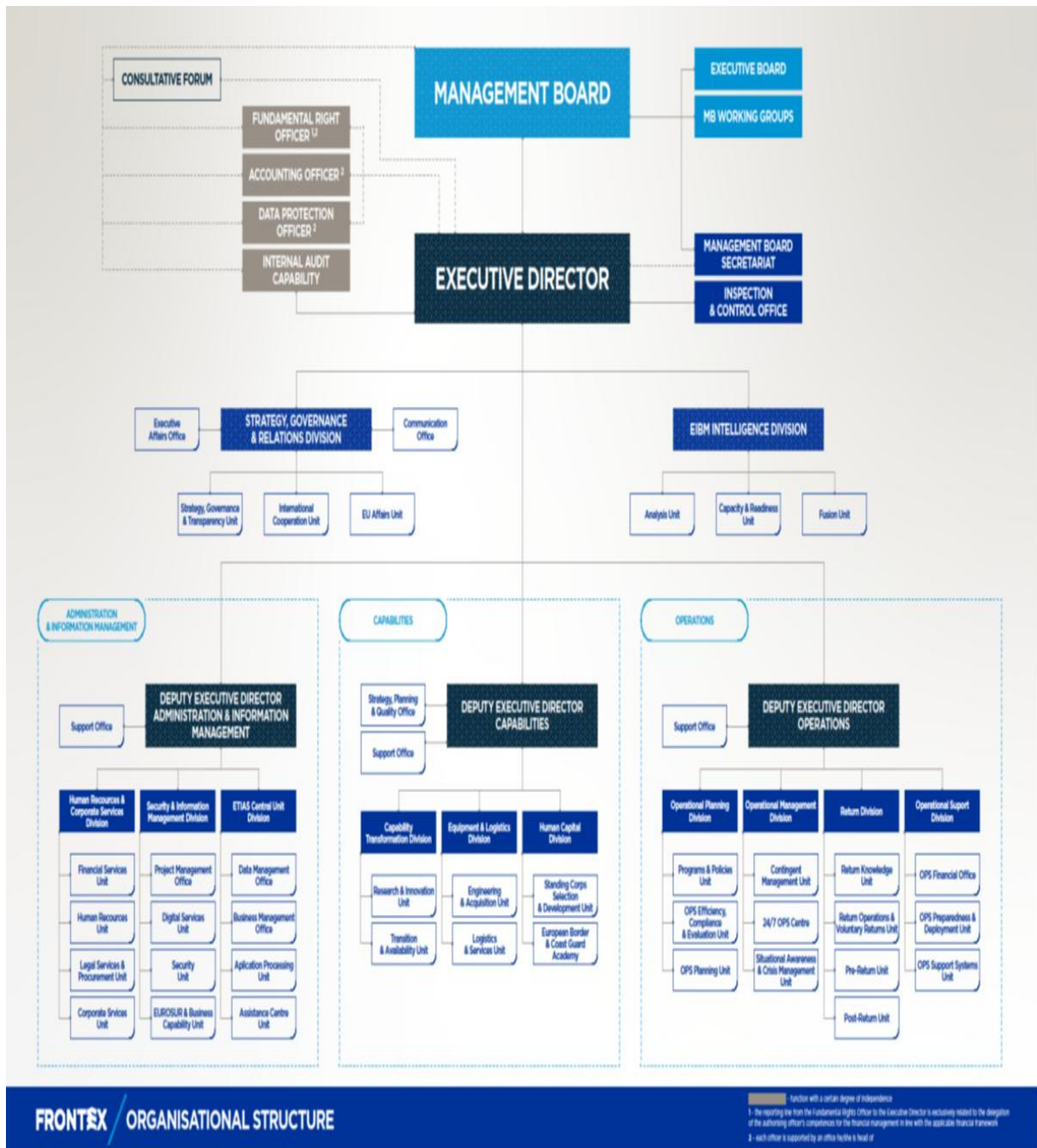
⁹ «The Visa Information System (VIS) allows [Schengen States](#) to exchange visa data. It consists of a central IT system and of a communication infrastructure that links this central system to national systems. VIS connects consulates in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of Schengen States. It processes data and decisions relating to applications for short-stay visas to visit, or to transit through, the Schengen Area. The system can perform biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints, for identification and verification purposes», available on https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/visa-information-system_en.

SIS II [Schengen Information System] became operational on 09/04/2013 and replaced SIS1. SIS II is the largest public safety information application in Europe, available on the website available at https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/dataset/ds00009_en.

Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU (L 312), p.56.



Template 1. FRONTEX - Organizational Structure



Source:

https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/About_Frontex/Frontex_Organisational_Structure_Apr_2024.pdf

The Management Board of the EBCGA is composed of representatives from EU MS, along with Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland, which are associated with the Schengen Agreement but are not EU members. Additionally, two members from the European Commission participate. The Board's responsibilities include appointing the



Executive Director and Deputy Directors, approving the annual budget, work program, organizational structure, and overseeing other related matters.

Template 2. Routes of Illegal Immigration to EU



Source: Hellenic Coast Guard Headquarter, 07/2024

In its conclusions of 28 June 2018, the European Council committed to strengthening cooperation between the Agency and third countries by allocating additional resources, improving border control measures, and facilitating the return of illegal immigrants [refer to Template 3 for details on joint operations conducted by the EBCGA].



The European Integrated Border Management Policy is organized as follows:¹⁰:

1. cooperation with third countries and taking measures in them as well as common visa policy,
2. external border control measures,
3. risk analyses,
4. the measures within the Schengen area and
5. returns.

It is necessary to carry out:

1. general and specific risk analyses based on a common integrated risk analysis model monitored by both EBCGA and the MS,
2. providing information to the MS based on the information provided by the competent authorities of the MS but also based on its activity, regarding border control, returns, movements of third country nationals within the EU, trafficking of human beings (THB), terrorism, dealing with cross-border crime, the situation in third countries, with the ultimate aim of taking measures to deal with threats and risks and improving the integrated management of the external borders and in cooperation with other European organizations such as Europol when there are serious forms of crime affecting two or more MS.

¹⁰ According to article 3 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019, European integrated border management is:

«1. European integrated border management shall consist of the following components:

(a) border control, including measures to facilitate legitimate border crossings and, where appropriate: measures related to the prevention and detection of cross-border crime at the external borders, in particular migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and terrorism; and mechanisms and procedures for the identification of vulnerable persons and unaccompanied minors, and for the identification of persons who are in need of international protection or wish to apply for such protection, the provision of information to such persons, and the referral of such persons;

(b) search and rescue operations for persons in distress at sea launched and carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 and with international law, taking place in situations which may arise during border surveillance operations at sea;

(c) analysis of the risks for internal security and analysis of the threats that may affect the functioning or security of the external borders;

(d) information exchange and cooperation between Member States in the areas covered by this Regulation, as well as information exchange and cooperation between Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, including the support coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency;

(e) inter-agency cooperation among the national authorities in each Member State which are responsible for border control or for other tasks carried out at the border, as well as between authorities responsible for return in each Member State, including the regular exchange of information through existing information exchange tools, including, where appropriate, cooperation with national bodies in charge of protecting fundamental rights;

(f) cooperation among the relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies in the areas covered by this Regulation, including through regular exchange of information;

(g) cooperation with third countries in the areas covered by this Regulation, focusing in particular on neighbouring third countries and on those third countries which have been identified through risk analysis as being countries of origin or transit for illegal immigration;

(h) technical and operational measures within the Schengen area which are related to border control and designed to address illegal immigration and to counter cross-border crime better;

(i) the return of third-country nationals who are the subject of return decisions issued by a Member State;

(j) the use of state-of-the-art technology including large-scale information systems;

(k) a quality control mechanism, in particular the Schengen evaluation mechanism, the vulnerability assessment and possible national mechanisms, to ensure the implementation of Union law in the area of border management;

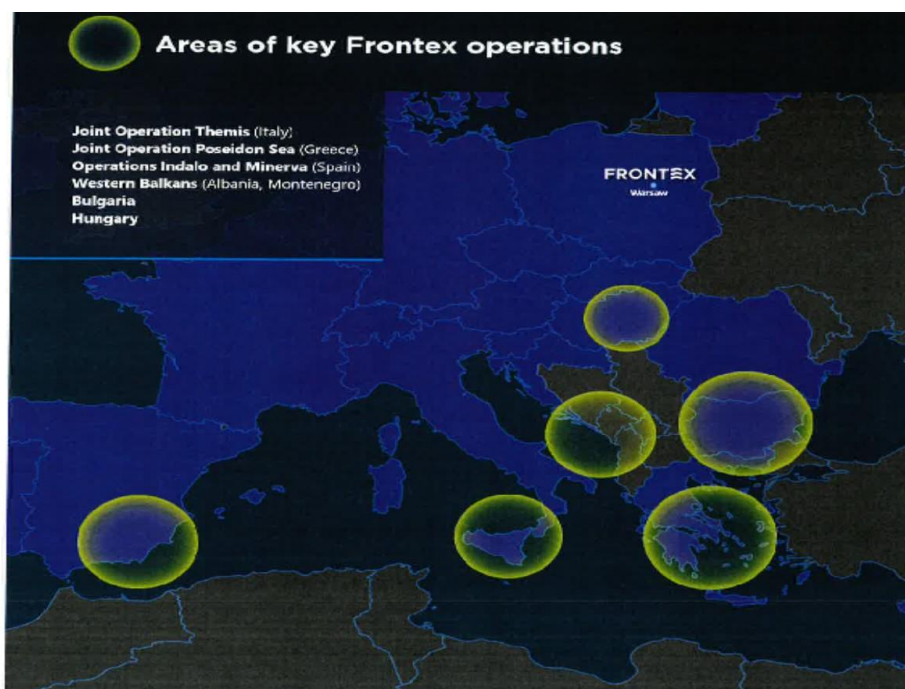
(l) solidarity mechanisms, in particular Union funding instruments.

2. Fundamental rights, education and training, as well as research and innovation shall be overarching components in the implementation of European integrated border management».



Regarding the finding of the satisfactory operation of the Schengen area or not, a vulnerability assessment is carrying out and also with the Schengen assessment mechanism¹¹ established by Reg. (EU) 1053/2013¹².

Template 3. Joint Operations Developed by FRONTEX



Source: Frontex/Agency at a glance/European Border and Coast Guard Agency

The tasks of the organization are defined in article 10 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019¹³.

It must be mentioned that in article 82 of the above mentioned Regulation the duties and responsibilities of the members of the groups (RABITs and Standing Corps) are defined¹⁴

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (L 189).

¹² Council Regulation (EU) 2022/922 of 9 June 2022 on the establishment and operation of an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 (L 160).

¹³ Briefly, among its main tasks are «the monitoring of migratory flows and carrying out risk analyses regarding all aspects related to integrated border management, monitoring the operational needs of Member States linked to the execution of return, including through the collection of operational data, conducting vulnerability assessment, including assessments of the capacity and preparedness of Member States to deal with threats and problems at the external borders, monitoring the management of the external borders through the Agency's liaison officers in the Member States, monitoring the compliance of fundamental rights in all its activities at the external borders and return operations, supporting the development and operation of EUROSUR, providing assistance to Member States in cases where increased technical and operational assistance is required at their external borders through coordination and organization of joint operations, etc».

¹⁴ According to the article 85 of the Reg. (EU) 1896/2019 «Without prejudice to Article 95, during a joint operation, pilot project, migration management support team deployment, rapid border intervention, return operation or return intervention, members of the teams in the territory of the host Member State, including statutory staff, shall be treated in the same way as officials of the host Member State with regard to any criminal offences that might be committed against them or by them».

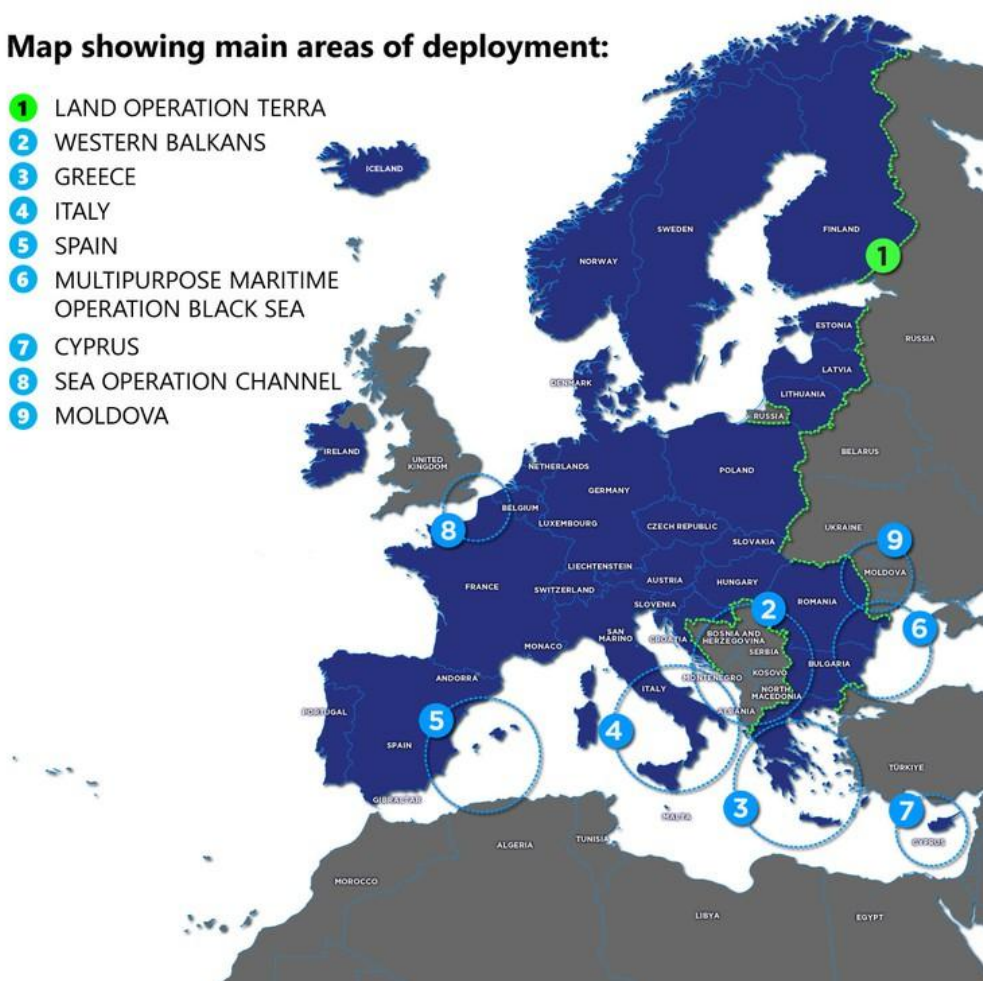


and in particular for the members of the teams sent by EBCGA to carry out tasks and responsibilities in order to achieve the objectives of Reg. (EU) 656/2014¹⁵, (EU) 2016/399¹⁶ and Directive 2008/115/EK¹⁷, while the implementation of executive powers is governed by the permission of the host MS in conjunction with the provisions of Reg. (EU) 656/2014 (Korontzis, 2015)¹⁸.

Template 4

Map showing main areas of deployment:

- 1 LAND OPERATION TERRA
- 2 WESTERN BALKANS
- 3 GREECE
- 4 ITALY
- 5 SPAIN
- 6 MULTIPURPOSE MARITIME OPERATION BLACK SEA
- 7 CYPRUS
- 8 SEA OPERATION CHANNEL
- 9 MOLDOVA



Source: <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/operations/operations/>

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (L 189).

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (L 77).

¹⁷ Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (L 348).

¹⁸ Article 38 of the Regulation.



The tasks of the specific organization focus on the following key areas:

- **Coordination:** Facilitating cooperation between Member States (MS) to improve border security.
- **Risk analysis:** Assessing risks at the EU external borders, considering geopolitical developments and analysing data from MS, other EU bodies, and open sources (e.g., internet, press) to understand border challenges.
- **Predictive analysis:** Forecasting future illegal immigration flows and the strategies of organized crime (modus operandi) to prepare for effective responses.
- **Support to MS:** Providing resources, training, and assistance for sea and land border protection, including operational support.
- **Technology monitoring:** Tracking investigations and developments at entry points (ports, airports) and maritime borders, collecting and forwarding information for expert evaluation, and keeping MS authorities informed of security sector research.

Regarding joint operations¹⁹ these activities are conducted based on risk analysis performed by the EBCGA or in response to actual risks present at EU borders (Coppens, 2012). Each operation outlines its objective, the operational area, and the human and technical resources required. Many of these operations are funded by the EBCGA.

The allocation of resources and forces is carried out either through the RABITs or Standing Corps consisting of the available personnel by the MS and EBCGA and of the available equipment provided also by the MS and the EBCGA.

The EBCGA also works with third countries to support European Integrated Border Management and immigration policy by offering technical and operational assistance within the framework of the Union's external action policy. This cooperation is detailed in Articles 71 to 75 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019. As part of these efforts, the organization can deploy liaison officers and experts from its permanent and other staff to third countries.

- Provides assistance to MS when increased technical and operational support is required at external borders (Korontzis, 2022), particularly in response to incidents necessitating rapid intervention, such as the support provided to Greece during the migration pressure along the Greece-Turkey land border on the Evros in 2020 (Tzimas, 2021). The EBCGA also assists MS in organizing joint repatriation operations.
- Real-time information exchange occurs through the Eurosur system.

To enhance operational effectiveness, the new institutional framework includes provisions for collaboration with third countries (non-EU countries). The organization works with these countries to advance European Integrated Border Management and immigration policy by providing technical and operational support within the Union's external action policy. The framework permits the deployment of liaison officers from the EBCGA staff to third countries, where they are integrated into local or regional

¹⁹ More information available on the <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/operations/operations/>



cooperation networks, alongside immigration liaison officers and EU and Member State security experts, as outlined in article 66 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019 and Regulation (EU) 2019/1240.

European organizations engage with both internal and external EU policies through collaboration with third countries, shaped by the EU determined policy. Additionally, various initiatives, such as Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) (Korontzis, 2012, d) and the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) (Korontzis, 2013), contribute to strengthening cooperation and fostering a common European culture. This gradual integration facilitates the sharing of knowledge, policies, and collaborative efforts.

One significant provision that embodies these supranational elements is found in article 42 of Regulation (EU) 1896/2019, titled "Situation at the external borders requiring urgent action". In particular «when external border control becomes ineffective to such an extent that it threatens to jeopardize the functioning of the Schengen area, either because a Member State does not take the necessary measures in accordance with the vulnerability assessment or because a MS facing specific and disproportionately large problems at the external borders has not requested sufficient support from the Agency or does not implement such support, then a unified, rapid and effective response at Union level should be provided. To mitigate these risks and to ensure better coordination at Union level, the Commission should propose to the Council a decision specifying the measures to be implemented by the Agency and to require the MS concerned to cooperate with the Agency for the implementation of these measures.

The executive power to issue such a decision should be vested in the Council, due to the potentially politically sensitive nature of the measures to be decided, possibly involving national executive and law enforcement powers. The Agency should then determine the actions to be taken for the practical implementation of the measures referred to in the Council decision.

The Agency should draw up a business plan together with the MS concerned. The MS concerned should facilitate the implementation of the Council Decision and the business plan by respecting, inter alia, its obligations under this Regulation. If a Member State does not comply within 30 days with that Council decision and does not cooperate with the Agency in implementing the measures provided for in that decision, the Commission should be able to initiate the special procedure of Article 29 of Reg. (EU) 2016/399²⁰ to deal with emergencies that endanger its entire operation without controls at the internal borders of the area».

This provision is a ground-breaking development within the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice, one that would have been difficult to implement just a few years ago. Its creation was made possible by the institutional framework established by the Lisbon Treaty (LT) and the consensus of key EU institutions, including the European Parliament, European Commission, and European Council.

It reflects the collective will of EU citizens, as expressed through the European Parliament, as well as the determination of political leaders and the European

²⁰ Specific procedure where exceptional circumstances put the overall functioning of the area without internal border control at risk.

More specifically «1. In exceptional circumstances where the overall functioning of the area without internal border control is put at risk as a result of persistent serious deficiencies relating to external border control as referred to in Article 21, and insofar as L 77/22 Official Journal of the European Union 23.3.2016 EN those circumstances constitute a serious threat to public policy or internal security within the area without internal border control or within parts thereof, border control at internal borders may be reintroduced in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article for a period of up to six months. That period may be prolonged, no more than three times, for a further period of up to six months if the exceptional circumstances persist.....».



Commission to tackle shared challenges, particularly in response to the sharp rise in illegal immigration since 2015.

Specifically, the provision for unified and collective action by the EU in instances where a Member State is unable to manage specific situations at its borders—shared by the EU—demonstrates a policy with supranational characteristics. It acknowledges that effective governance requires consensus on critical issues, thereby incorporating supranational elements. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that participating in a cooperative framework such as the EU necessitates an understanding that what benefits the EU as a whole is also in the interest of individual MS.

Standing Corps

To improve the efficiency of border security, asylum processes, the return of illegal immigrants and the fight against cross-border crime, the new institutional framework for Frontex includes the creation of a Standing Corps for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) [(Standing Corps)]²¹.

The Standing Corps will eventually comprise 10.000 officers, as specified in Regulation (EU) 1896/2019 [Annex I]. These officers will have executive powers and will participate in operations aimed at effectively guarding the external borders, alongside the presence of staff from the competent authorities of the host Member State. This arrangement will not only help combat cross-border crime but also facilitate the return of illegal immigrants.

It is important to note that, according to paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of Article 82:

«2. The performance of tasks and the exercise of powers by members of the teams, in particular those requiring executive powers, shall be subject to the authorisation of the host Member State on its territory as well as to applicable Union, national or international law, in particular Regulation (EU) No 656/2014, as described in the operational plans referred to in Article 38.

3. While performing their tasks and exercising their powers, members of the teams shall fully ensure respect for fundamental rights and shall comply with Union and international law and the national law of the host Member State.

4. Without prejudice to Article 95(1) as regards statutory staff, members of the teams shall only perform tasks and exercise powers under instructions from and, as a general rule, in the presence of border guards or staff involved in return-related tasks of the host Member State. The host Member State may authorise members of the teams to act on its behalf».

Paragraph 7 defines that: « For staff who are seconded to the Agency or deployed from a Member State for a short term, the ability to carry and use service weapons, ammunition and equipment shall be subject to the home Member State's national law. The ability to carry and use service weapons, ammunition and equipment by the statutory staff who are deployed as members of the teams shall be subject to the framework and detailed rules laid down in this Article and Annex V. For the purpose of implementing this paragraph, the executive director may authorise statutory staff to carry and use weapons in accordance with the rules adopted by the management board, in line with point (b) of Article 55(5)» and in the paragraph 9 «Service weapons, ammunition and equipment may be used in legitimate self-defence and in legitimate defence of members of the

²¹ Frontex carrers, European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps, available at <https://frontex.europa.eu/careers/standing-corps/about/> and additionally articles of the Reg. (EU) 54,55,56,57,58,61,82.



teams or of other persons in accordance with the national law of the host Member State in line with relevant principles of international human rights law and the Charter».

The Standing Corps consists of four categories of officers, including EBCGA personnel and officers sent from MS for long- or short-term missions, as well as a reserve that can be activated during crises. By 2027, the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps is expected to include a total of 10.000 staff members, with 3,000 being Category 1 officers—EBCGA staff. The remaining 7,000 officers will be seconded from EU Member States.

- **Category 1:** Border guards directly employed by Frontex as staff members, regularly deployed to border guarding missions based on their profiles.
- **Category 2:** Long-term staff seconded from MS.
- **Category 3:** Short-term staff seconded from MS.
- **Category 4:** A reserve of EU Member State border guards available to the EBCGA for rapid response during border management crises²².

The Profiles -Specializations of the Standing Corps can be seen in the Template 5.

Template 5. Profiles - Specialisation of Standing Corps

<h1>PROFILES</h1>			
<h2>European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps Specialisation Training Programmes - PROFILES</h2>			
Border Guard Officer	Information Officer	Debriefing Officer	Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer
Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer	Return Specialist	Frontex Tactical Support Officer	Frontex Return Escort and Support Officer
Dog Handler	European Coast Guard Functions Officer	Advanced Level Document Officer	Crew Member
26/8/2024			22

Source: <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/standing-corps/profiles/>

²²More information available on <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/standing-corps/standing-corps/> and in the article 54 European Border and Coast Guard standing corps of the REGULATION (EU) 2019/1896 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624.



Conclusions

Illegal immigration, which is one of the most important dimensions of organized crime, constitutes one of the most modern threats to the security of international society that are called upon to deal with at local, EU and international level. International police cooperation between international, EU and local national authorities plays an important role in dealing with it.

In order to implement the latter, bilateral and multilateral agreements have been drawn up, new research methods and European organizations have been developed that contribute to the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies related to the management of external borders.

The management of the external borders is one of the most important dimensions for the safe and smooth functioning of the EU internal area, where the free movement of citizens takes place and controls between EU MS have been abolished.

The security architecture built by the EU consists of five key elements:

- increased operations by EBCGA at sea and land borders,
- technological shielding of borders,
- conclusion of Readmission Agreements with three states,
- setting up reception centres at the EU external borders;
- the transformation of Frontex since 2019 into a European Border and Coast Guard Agency,
- multi-layered surveillance of the external borders consisting of EBCGA Standing Corps, RABITs under the auspices of Frontex, the European External Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) (Rijpma, J. & Vermeulen, M., 2015), the ETIAS system²³, VIS system²⁴, the Schengen Information System (SIS I and SIS II) and Eurodac.

The measures applied are considered effective as a reduction of illegal arrivals in the EU by 90% has been achieved²⁵. However, the violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of immigrants, as shown in reports by international organizations and EU services, should not be overlooked²⁶.

It is an undeniable fact that population movements driven by economic, social, and political factors are unlikely to cease. The EU, known for its relatively high standard of

²³ Available at https://travel-europa.europa.eu/etias/what-etias_en

²⁴ REGULATION (EC) No 767/2008 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 9 July 2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas (VIS Regulation)

²⁵ Available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/el/policies/eu-migration-policy/> and at https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_el#illegalbordercrossings.

²⁶ « A report reveals how 6 countries violate the rights of refugees», available at https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiomata/293637_ekthesi-apokalyptei-pos-6-hores-katapatoy-n-ta-dikaiomata-ton-prosfygon, Regional Thematic Study: Management of the External Border of the EU and its impact on Human Rights of Migrants available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/RegionalThematicStudy.aspx> και SUNDERLAND J., Hidden Emergency, Migrant Deaths in the Mediterranean, Human Rights Watch, August 2012, UNHCR, available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/2012_EU_Hidden%20Emergency.pdf.



living, attracts many individuals seeking better opportunities. Consequently, the phenomenon of illegal immigration has intensified around Europe, whether by sea or land.

In response, the EU established Frontex, now known as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), as a central operational agency. EBCGA provides resources, expertise, training, and conducts joint sea and land operations, as well as preparing studies and risk analyses, to assist the MS involved in its administration. Its contribution has been significant in addressing illegal immigration, leading to the decision to establish a specialized body, the Standing Corps, which falls under the organization's responsibility.

This specialized body, composed of well-trained officers from the competent national authorities of all EU MS, plays a crucial role in effectively managing the EU external borders. The creation of the EBCGA and the Standing Corps reflects the political will of MS to collaboratively address the challenges posed by illegal immigration, demonstrating their solidarity and commitment to a response. This initiative also represents a significant step toward deeper integration within the EU.

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