

# “FRONTEX- THE ONLY ORGANISATION THAT FIGHTS FOR EUROPE AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS”

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## **Abstract**

*In the world we live in there are lots of conflicts and a large majority of people don't even know how serious they are. Wars that are ongoing in African and Asian territories are causing refugees to migrate to Europe illegally. To fight this issue, the European Union has formed Frontex. The aim of this article is to explore the organisation and review how they handle operations that keep us, Europeans safe. This article intends to examine the problems of immigration and the effect it then carries.*

**Key words:** Frontex, migration, migration paths, terrorism, border control.

## **Migration**

Migration is the movement of various social groups among the various population centres, for example between countries or cities, between different geographical regions and states. We divide them into forced labour (when someone has to escape) or voluntary (if someone wants but does not have to leave), legal (when

someone moves lawfully and has documents for legal residence) and illegal and on a permanent basis (i.e. irreversible) and temporal (Return)<sup>1</sup>.

The statistics of illegal immigrants are rising every day. At the beginning of 2014, three times more immigrants had entered Europe compared to 2013. Statistics says that spring and summer bring the largest waves of immigrants from North Africa and Asia. The most popular way and also the most dangerous way to enter Europe is across the Mediterranean Sea. The number of immigrants is still on the rise in spite of border controls being strengthened. Moreover, since 2013, Europe has been working on a system called EUROSUR, which helps with information exchange<sup>2</sup>.

According to the Frontex report, over 230 thousand illegal immigrants entered Europe (about 190 thousand by the sea route) between October 2013 and September 2014. The biggest group of immigrants (37.5 thousand) comes from Syria. The second biggest group of immigrants comes from Eritrea (13.6 thousand people). Map number 1. shows detections of illegal border-crossings in 2014 with the percentage change from 2013, by route.

Migration routes or paths are ways by which immigrants arrive at destinations. Migrants use various means to reach their goal. They can use, for example, freight containers for transport ships, fishing boats, cars, trains, airlines or can get to another country on foot. These methods can be divided into legal and illegal. In the first case, the foreigner passes an inspection of documents carried out by border guards and has a permit to stay / work in another country and, in the second, the foreigner ignores border control or does not have proper documents authorising residence (exceeds the limit points in prohibited places, often in wooded areas or by sea)<sup>3</sup>.

1 [http://www.ceo.org.pl/sites/default/files/news-files/m3\\_migracje\\_na\\_swiecie.pdf/27.04.2015/](http://www.ceo.org.pl/sites/default/files/news-files/m3_migracje_na_swiecie.pdf/27.04.2015/).

2 <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/frontex-wzrost-liczby-nielegalnych-imigrantow-ue-newsweek-pl,artykuly,286039,1.html/27.04.2015/>.

3 [http://www.ceo.org.pl/sites/default/files/news-files/m3\\_migracje\\_na\\_swiecie.pdf/23.04.2015/](http://www.ceo.org.pl/sites/default/files/news-files/m3_migracje_na_swiecie.pdf/23.04.2015/).

There are some common routes which immigrants use to get into Europe:

- **Central Mediterranean route** - this route was the most trafficked area (60% of all detections in 2014) for illegal border crossing into the EU. “Among the migrants who declared their nationalities, Syrians (nearly 40 000) and Eritreans (more than 33 500) were by far the largest groups, together accounting for more than 43% of all arrivals from the Central Mediterranean”<sup>4</sup>;
- **Eastern Mediterranean route** - in 2014, 50 800 detections were reported from this area, representing 18% of the EU total. This was twice the amount compared to 2013, mostly due to an increase in detections from the Aegean Sea (from 11 829 in 2013 to 43 377 in 2014). Detections remain comparatively lower at the Bulgarian and Greek land borders with Turkey<sup>5</sup>;
- **Western Balkan route** – “this route remained largely a function of the transiting flow of migrants that enter the EU at the Greek-Turkish borders and later continue towards other Member States through the former Yugoslav Republics of Macedonia and Serbia”<sup>6</sup>.
- **Circular route between Albania and Greece** – “in 2014, Greece reported 8 841 detections of illegal border-crossing at its land border with Albania and with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of which 8 757 were associated with Albanians”<sup>7</sup>
- **Western Mediterranean route** – “in 2014, there were 7 842 detections of illegal border-crossing in the Western Mediterranean region, which consists of several areas of the southern Spanish coast and the land borders of Ceuta and Melilla. This total is an increase of 15% compared to the total of 6 838 reported in 2013”<sup>8</sup>.

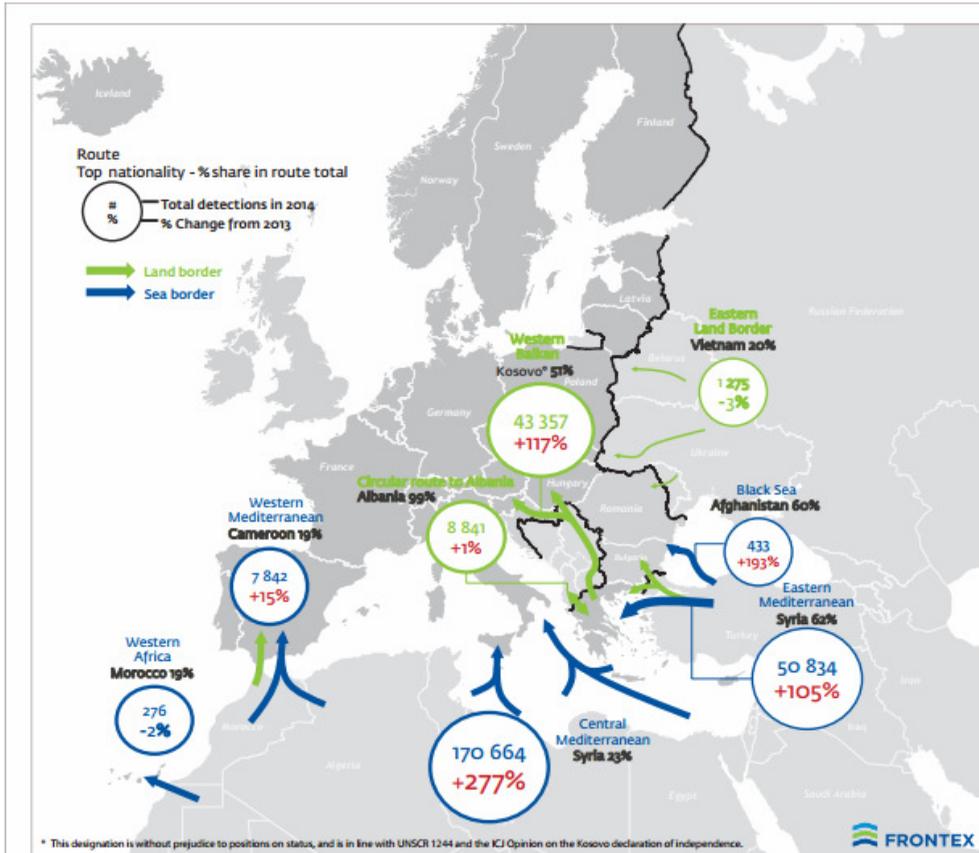
4 [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

5 [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

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7 [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

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**Map number 1. illegal border-crossing**

- **Black Sea route** – “Detections of illegal border-crossing on the Black Sea were extremely rare. However, since 2013, Bulgaria and Romania have reported a slight increasing number of detections, in total 433 migrants in 2014”<sup>9</sup>.
- **Eastern land border route** – “The eastern land border route is, in effect, an amalgam of detections of illegal border crossing reported by Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. According to several reports shared during 2014, visa fraud and counterfeit border-crossing

<sup>9</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

stamps tend to predominate on this route, as opposed to detections of illegal border-crossing<sup>10</sup>.

The largest numbers of non-nationals living in Europe were found to be in Germany with 7.7 million people. 5.1 million of non nationals live in Spain, 4.9 million live in the United Kingdom, 4.4 million in Italy and 4.1 million live in France<sup>11</sup>.

What's the reason behind the decision of migration? What are the causes of this phenomenon? These questions will most certainly be quite common. There are many reasons which lead people to leave their country. Everyone has needs, some are demanding and some are simple. Many immigrants leave guided by one reason, which is not feeling safe in their own country. This is war; fighting and bombings are one of the main causes of population decrease. Every human being is also committed to economic issues related to the improvement of their existence. Therefore, many people decide to leave as part of a search for a stable and better paid future. For some, tempting social packages are guaranteed by another state which, as it turns out, makes people more profitable than any job. Another reason may be connected to matters related to education. It often happens that leaving for a different country is the only possibility to get an education, even a basic one. An important issue that certainly makes part of the population change their place of residence is natural disasters (floods, fires, earthquakes). What's important is that none of us are probably able to imagine life these days without water or even electricity. It is therefore not surprising that a proportion of the population turn to other countries, seeking both a better and more equitable future. Diagram no. 2. shows the mains reasons for migrations. There are many reasons for leaving a country and lots of people take the opportunity if they have one. However, one should think about why the number of migrations to Europe is growing so quickly from year to year and what the consequences might be. Is our European economy ready to handle millions of people?

These are some examples of effects which can increase because of immigration:

- overcrowding in the more developed countries;

<sup>10</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

<sup>11</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf/24.04.2015/).

- prospect of distribution of diseases (e.g. exotic diseases);
- an increase in crime;
- development of human trafficking;
- development of criminal groups;
- drug trafficking;
- abusing the state social welfare system,
- increased hazard.

For these reasons, the European Union created Frontex. It is the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Members States of the European Union. The main task of this organisation is border management with the EU fundamental rights charter<sup>12</sup>.

## Beginning of frontex

The European integration of supporting free movement has been very important since the 1950s. The main Fundament of the Community is identified as free movement of people, goods, services and capital. Five Members (France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg) decided to open an area without internal borders during the 1980s. They signed an agreement in Schengen (a small town in Luxembourg). The original contract was completed in 1990 during a convention. This convention abolished the control of internal borders in 1995. The convention has created an external border between the European Union and the rest of the World. The rules of visa, rights to asylum, and procedures on the external border are common for all countries that form the Schengen area. Countries from Schengen decided to introduce “compensatory measures” to keep a balance between security and freedom. They are focused on the police and judicial authorities which are controlled and connected to common cooperation. Because of the crime network, they don’t respect that rights of common cooperation and control are the only way to protect internal security. During 1999, Member States signed the Treaty of Amsterdam, which brought incorporated cooperation into the EU framework. In 1999, the European Council on Justice and Home Affairs

<sup>12</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/origin/25.04.2015/>.

took steps to strengthen cooperation in migration area security and asylum. To attempt to manage the border, they created the External Border Practitioner Common Unit. It's a group that includes Members of the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA) and also heads of national border control services.

This group coordinated national projects on Ad-Hoc Centres on Border control. The main task of the Common Unit was to manage the border, common operations, some pilot projects and oversee all of the EU. There are 7 centres:

- “Eastern Sea Borders Centre (Piraeus, Greece);
- Western Sea Borders Centre (Madrid, Spain);
- Risk Analysis Centre (Helsinki, Finland);
- Air Borders Centre (Rome, Italy);
- Centre for Land Borders (Berlin, Germany);
- Ad-hoc Training Centre for Training (Traiskirchen, Austria);
- Centre of Excellence (Dover, United Kingdom)”<sup>13</sup>.

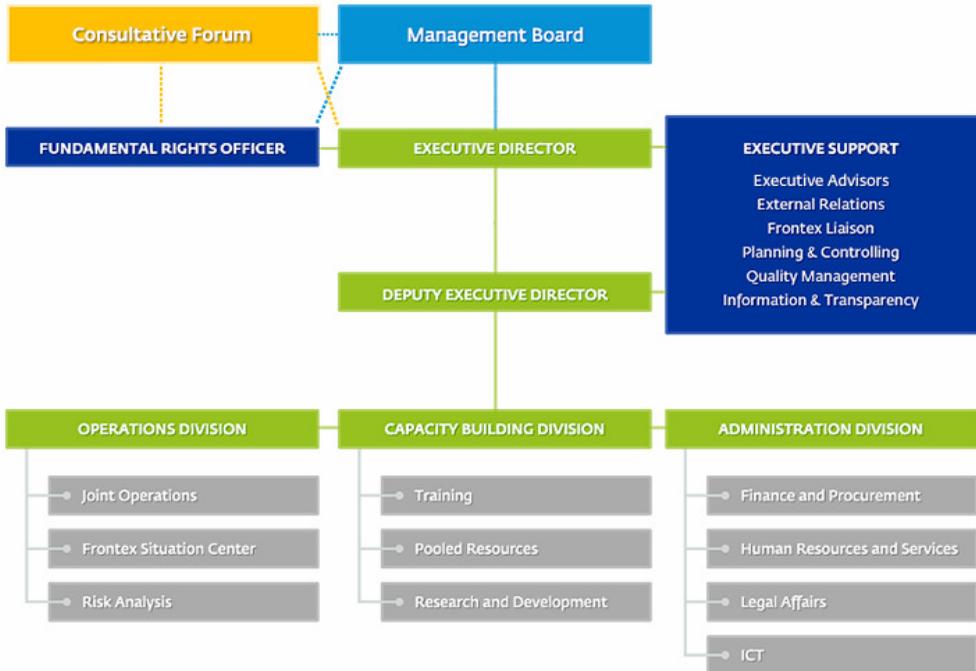
Two years later, on 26 October 2004, the European Council decided to create Frontex and was established by Council Regulation (EC) 2007/2004 with regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community. The organisation has its headquarters in Warsaw in Poland, as decided by 2005/358/EC: Council Decision 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<sup>14</sup>. Diagram number 2. shows the structure of Frontex.

Frontex's Management Board has several tasks. The main task is to control the basic function of the agency. Further responsibilities include ensuring decision making procedures and appointing the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. The Board establishes the budget and also verifies it.

The Executive Directors since 16 January 2015 is Fabrice Leggeri, and Gil Arias-Fernández, has been Frontex's Deputy Executive Director since 1 January 2006.

<sup>13</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/origin/25.04.2015/>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/origin/25.04.2015/>.



Source: <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/organisation/structure/25.04.2015/>.

**Diagram number 2. Structure**

## Frontex and main task

Frontex as a Union organisation coordinates lots of projects. Every year, Frontex organises an appointment to meet with every country from the EU and to discuss problems. Moreover, at this meeting, a country can offer to provide some equipment such as robots, car patrol, airplanes and helicopters, and a vision vehicle which Frontex uses to patrol borders or supporting a country when it has a problem.

The main task of this organisation is border management and it also coordinates and promotes. Moreover, it helps authorities from different countries in the EU work together. Frontex has some operational areas which helps it achieve its main

aim. These areas are defined in the founding Frontex regulation and a subsequent amendment<sup>15</sup>.

Frontex conducts activities in areas such as:

- **Research**- this organisation brings together personnel from Europe's border to fill the gap between the needs of border control authorities and technological advancement;
- **Providing a rapid response capability**- this organisation has created EBGT- European Border Guard Teams – a pooled resource and also created a database which is very helpful in connecting some sources such as: technical sources, human resources, specialist resources from the whole of Europe. Because of this, these teams can quickly react to a crisis situation at the external border;
- **Information systems and information sharing environment**- this organisation informs on actual and sometimes critical situations at the external border. It helps risk analysis of border control personnel at the border and also it is seen as “situational awareness”. Frontex develops systems all the time for better exchange of information between countries in the EU; **Joint Operation**- this organisation plans, implements and also coordinates and evaluates common operations conducted using Members equipment and personnel at land, air and sea borders;
- **Risk analysis**- this organisation acquires analyses and evaluates information to know everything about a current situation. Data comes from the border crossing points, from EU countries, international organisations and from media and research;
- **Training** - this organisation is in charge of preparing standards for the personnel at the border and some senior officers. Frontex also trains them and prepares specialist tools.
- **Assisting Member States in joint return operations** - this organisation helps EU countries when they decided to return foreign people who are staying illegally in their country. Frontex coordinates this procedure and assists it to make it maximise efficiency, minimal cost and also ensures human rights are respected<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/25.04.2015/>.

<sup>16</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/25.04.2015/>.

Frontex also works with other organisations involved in security, justice and freedom such as: FRA, EASO Europol, Euro just, or CEPOL, as well as with customs authorities in order to promote overall cohesion.

## From planning to practice

When a country has a problem with foreign people who stay illegally, Frontex coordinates support for this country from other EU states. To do this, Frontex uses connected common resources to organise joint operations. Operations can be conducted on sea, land or air - depending on the type of border. All such operations are followed in the same cycle, all of them are unique and adapted to the circumstances. The most important thing is risk analyses - they happen all the time. The cycle starts from planning, then implementation and, at the end of the cycle, there is an evaluation. Risk analysis at the first point is very useful for the rest of the tasks. The organisation collects information from different sources such as: information from border crossing points, international organisations, countries' authorities, media and academic research. This information is very useful for reporting the current situation at the external border. When they find a weak point, they prepare a procedure to do something, for example with human trade or smuggling drugs. Using this information, Frontex can create action plans. In this organisation, there are some experts who know how to identify the nationality of immigrants; some experts collect information about the crime groups and their network; some know a lot about smuggling drugs and stolen vehicles. Normally, they work in their country but if another country needs them, they can help them easily. When a joint operation has begun, countries from the EU have to prepare a common operation plan. This plan concerns:

- the main aim, time and date of action;
- providing current risk analysis, introducing a rule which shows how a decision can be made;
- describing the main to do task; such as control;
- describing the official rights of personnel - a code of conduct;
- setting the circumstances and rules when personnel can use force.

The next step is implementation. The Frontex assigned officers represent a small group of total numbers of people in any operations. Participation in a Frontex operation is voluntary. The officers have to follow the rules of the country where the operations take place. Some people control the border, some identify immigrants, and some talk with immigrants about departure. All the time, people conduct analysis. Because of this, external officers know about the current situation. When everything is completed, evaluation begins. Frontex discusses what went well and what went wrong to improve future actions. Common operations help officers in their work, because they support and learn from each other<sup>17</sup>. The table below shows examples of operations in 2014.

Name of operation	Type	Host country
Focal Point Sea	Sea	Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain
Poseidon	sea	Greece
EPN Aeneas	Sea	Italy
EPN Hermes	Sea	Italy
EPN Minerva	Sea	Spain
EPN Indalo	Sea	Spain
EPN Hera	Sea	Spain
EPN Triton	Sea	Italy
Kosovo	Return	Hungary

Source: <http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/archive-of-operations/?year=2014&type=&host=/25.04.2015/>.

**Table number 1. Example of operation in 2014**

Moreover, in the last two years, Frontex has supported some project. These are:

- “Joint Efforts of Police and Health Authorities in the EU-Member States and Third Countries to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings and Protect and Assist Victims of Trafficking”;
- “Towards a Pan-European Monitoring System of Trafficking in Human Beings”;
- “Capacity Building for Migration Management (CBMM) in China Project”;

<sup>17</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/archive-of-operations/?year=2014&type=&host=/25.04.2015/>.

- Eastern Partnership - Integrated Border Management - Flagship Initiative Training Project (EaP IBM FIT project):
- The Euromed Police III Project
- RACE in Europe Project<sup>18</sup>.

## Summary

Every year, a lot of people leave their country and come to the EU. Every year, Frontex meets with national border agencies to discuss the level of support in terms of personnel and equipment which every country can provide. Migration has two sides. One side is positive, but the other side is negative. It is important to control the external border to keep a balance between the comings and goings of foreigners, and more importantly a lot of people decide to leave a country because of wars. In these times, everyone should have an opportunity to live in a normal country without pain and suffering. People should solve their problems without using guns and violence. This will help solve our common problem with immigration.

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