

# AGENCY AT A GLANCE

## What is Frontex

Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, supports EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries in the management of the EU's external borders and the fight against crossborder crime.

Frontex is a centre of excellence for border control activities at the EU's external borders, sharing intelligence and expertise with all Member States and with neighbouring non-EU countries affected by migratory trends and cross-border crime.

With the standing corps, the European Union's first uniformed law enforcement service, Frontex has transformed into an operational arm of the EU. Hundreds of officers are taking part in operations at the external borders of the European Union and beyond.

They perform a variety of tasks such as border surveillance, fighting cross-border crime, and assisting in return operations.

The officers stand together with national authorities to safeguard the Schengen Area, one of Europe's greatest achievements.



## Why Frontex

The agency supports Member States and Schengen-associated countries in all aspects related to border management, from support on the ground and fighting cross-border crime, aerial surveillance and collecting information, to help with return procedures, identifying new technologies and many others.



## Safeguarding external borders

When a Member State requests support, Frontex sends its standing corps officers, along with vessels, airplanes and border surveillance equipment, to the affected external border areas. In addition to border control, Frontex operations cover tasks related to security checks, search and rescue and the detection of cross-border crime. These operations take place at the EU's sea and land borders, and at international airports.



## Risk analysis

Frontex assesses risks to EU border security. It keeps a close eye on the latest migration trends and tracks crossborder criminal activities. The agency shares the information gathered at the borders with national authorities, the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and other EU agencies, and uses it to plan its operations. This includes information on persons suspected of involvement in criminal activities such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and terrorism.



## Keeping watch 24/7

Frontex continually monitors the external borders of the European Union, delivering updates and alerts to Member States and Schengen-associated countries, the European Commission and other EU agencies. Frontex regularly evaluates the capacity and readiness of each Member State and Schengen-associated country to respond to challenges at their external borders.



## Fighting cross-border crime

Frontex works closely with national authorities and EU agencies, including the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, to stop cross-border crime, from drug and firearms smuggling to document fraud, stolen cars and the trafficking of human beings.

Frontex takes part in joint action days – international operations that bring together national law enforcement authorities, international organisations and EU agencies to take on serious and organised crime. These operations are coordinated under the umbrella of the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT).



## Making the seas safer

Frontex supports the cooperation of law enforcement authorities, EU agencies (primarily the European Maritime Safety Agency and European Fisheries Control Agency) and customs at Europe's sea borders. Frontex provides technical and operational assistance to Member States and non-EU countries in support of search and rescue operations. Search and rescue is also a specific objective of the operational plan of every Frontex joint maritime operation. Boats and planes taking part in Frontex operations also collect and share information relevant to the control of fisheries, detection of pollution and compliance with maritime regulations.



## Return operations

Frontex is playing an increasingly important role in returning people not entitled to remain in the European Union to their home countries. The agency helps Member States in coordinating and financing return operations, launches them on its own initiative and organises voluntary departures. Frontex also facilitates the procurement of the necessary travel documents for returnees and provides experts to assist with the return operations. For the returnees, Frontex provides reintegration and post-arrival support.



## ETIAS

Frontex, together with other EU institutions and 30 European countries, is implementing ETIAS – a travel authorisation system for visa-free nationals – which will further strengthen the EU's internal security while ensuring smooth border crossings of travellers. The agency hosts the ETIAS Central Unit, which will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to handle ETIAS applications and assist travellers and carriers.



## Modernising border control

Millions of travellers cross the EU's external borders every year and their numbers will continue to rise. To accommodate this growth, border checks will need to undergo significant transformations in the coming years. Frontex brings border control experts together with research and industry to make sure new technology meets the needs of border control authorities.



## Outside the EU

Cooperation with countries outside the EU and the Schengen area is an integral part of the Frontex mandate and one of the strategic priorities for the agency. To ensure the implementation of European integrated border management, Frontex develops and maintains a network of partnerships with border authorities in countries outside the EU, particularly those neighbouring the EU and countries of origin and transit of migrants. The agency also deploys liaison officers outside the EU to countries affected by irregular migration.



## Training

Frontex develops common training standards for border authorities to harmonise border and coast guard education in Member States and Schengen-associated countries. This is intended to ensure that wherever travellers cross an external EU border, they will encounter uniform border-control standards. It also enables border and coast guard officers from different countries to work together efficiently while deployed in Frontex operations.



## Protecting victims of crime

Frontex standing corps officers seek to detect and identify criminals who smuggle people and put their lives at risk. They also assist national authorities in identifying and protecting victims of migrant smuggling and of trafficking in human beings.



## Fundamental rights

Respect for and the protection of fundamental rights are a crucial part of all Frontex activities. Staff and national officers participating in Frontex operations receive training on fundamental rights and access to international protection. Safeguards and obligations to report potential violations of fundamental rights are integrated into all operational plans.

An independent fundamental rights officer, supported by fundamental rights monitors, reviews Frontex's implementation of its fundamental rights obligations in accordance with EU and international law and advises on fundamental-rights-related issues. The Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights brings together key European institutions, international and civil society organisations to advise Frontex in fundamental rights matters.

## Where is Frontex

map showing key 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

