Frontex launches new land operation

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Last week, Frontex launched a new operation at EU's external land border. The activity – Joint Operation Terra 2022 – will take place across 12 EU Member States and cover 62 border crossing points. In total, more than 450 standing corps officers from 28 EU and Schengen countries will support national authorities with border management.

The European Union has thousands of kilometres of land borders. The aim of the operation is to strengthen border control at EU's land borders, assist countries in fighting cross-border crime and strengthen EU's internal security.

From Finland to Greece, operation Terra will help Member States fight against migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, drugs smuggling, identifying stolen vehicles, document fraud and terrorism. Another aim of the operation is to increase cooperation between the participating Member States.

EU's external land borders, in particular the border between Greece and Turkey, as well as the borders between Croatia, Romania, Hungary and Serbia have experienced a significant increase in irregular migratory movements in 2021. The numbers also increased on EU's Eastern frontiers. Last year, there were roughly 8 000 illegal border-crossings detected on the Eastern land borders, a more than tenfold increase in comparison to 2020.

The standing corps officers will mainly focus on border surveillance, border checks and assistance in detecting fraudulent documents. They will also support host countries in gathering information on people smuggling networks and migratory phenomena and identify vulnerable groups. The officers will work alongside their national colleagues and under the command of the host country's authorities. The agency will also deploy patrol cars and thermo-vision vehicles to support their work.

Operation Terra includes activities carried out in the previous years under two separate Frontex land operations. The new operation, coordinated from the Frontex headquarters in Warsaw, brings them together under one umbrella.