

Frontex: Beyond EU borders

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FRONT**EX**



EUROPEAN BORDER AND
COAST GUARD AGENCY

WHO WE ARE



Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is one of the specialised agencies of the European Union. Its main task is to support EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries, jointly referred to as "Member States", in managing the EU's external borders, supporting returns and fighting cross-border crime.

The Agency regularly reports to national authorities through its Management Board. The Management Board is composed of over 30 representatives from the border and coast guard authorities of EU Member States that are bound by the Schengen *acquis*, Ireland, Schengen Associated Countries, and the European Commission.

For the first time in history, the European Union has its own uniformed service vested with executive powers – the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. The standing corps is composed of officers employed by Frontex and delegated from Member States. They can be deployed at the EU's external borders to support national authorities in performing border and coast guard or return-related tasks. With its own officers, Frontex has become a fully-fledged member of the global border and coast guard community.

Together with the Member States, the Agency strives to further strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and to jointly address migration and border security challenges. By the same token, the Agency facilitates travel to the Schengen Area – the largest free-movement zone in the world.

Fostering partnerships with non-EU countries is thus an integral part of Frontex's mandate and one of its strategic priorities. Frontex is committed to developing a tight knit border management community based on dialogue, exchange of best practices and trust.

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WHAT WE DO



Our work with countries outside the EU is embedded in European Integrated Border Management and based on mutual learning. Technical workshops, expert platforms and training are among the many ways we exchange knowledge and experience in areas relevant to border management.

We also support and contribute to the development of sustainable border management solutions working with partners through EU-funded projects and our own technical assistance activities. Our priority is to support the development of sustainable and resilient capabilities across borders.

Respect and protection of fundamental rights lie at the heart of all Frontex operations. To ensure compliance with fundamental rights and international law, the Agency has a Fundamental Rights Officer – an independent function equipped with 40 monitors, who closely cooperates with Frontex's Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights and relevant EU and international partners.

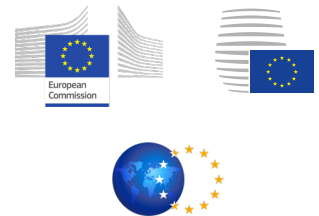
In this context, Frontex also supports the organisation of training activities on countering trafficking in human beings and fundamental rights trainings by providing experts and guidance to national trainers in non-EU countries.

The latest pressing issue of health and safety at the borders required timely prevention, early detection and response mechanisms from all. In this regard, Frontex is open to share and identify with other countries good practices, guidelines and experiences in health-related safeguards in border management.

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Frontex in the EU

Cooperation within the EU family – its institutions, bodies, offices and agencies – is crucial for Frontex within as well as outside the EU. From Brussels, the seat of many EU institutions, the European Commission defines the core parameters for Frontex international cooperation, while the European External Action Service (EEAS) helps in setting priorities in EU external relations. Frontex activities are fully aligned with EU external policies and closely coordinated with the Commission, EEAS and relevant EU Delegations.



Frontex is also part of the EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies network that includes agencies working together for the safety of European citizens.



In activities related to coast guard functions Frontex is closely cooperating with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).



MAIN TASKS



Situational awareness and monitoring

Frontex monitors, collects, analyses and fuses information from a variety of sources to understand what is happening at the EU's external borders. The European Border Surveillance system (EUROSUR) framework enables close to real-time exchange of information and operational cooperation. The Agency and the Member States may exchange information with non-EU countries via Specific Situational Pictures, including access to selected EUROSUR Fusion Services products based on dedicated arrangements concluded bi- or multilaterally.

Vulnerability assessment

In the area of vulnerability assessment, Frontex exchanges good practices and expertise with non-EU countries that have well-developed national quality control mechanisms of their border management activities. The Agency is also involved in capacity building efforts to support non-EU countries that are seeking to establish such quality control systems or develop contingency planning and crisis response at national level.



Risk analysis

Frontex has rolled out the concept for joint analytical work to many of its non-EU partner countries. Regional risk analysis networks offer an opportunity for mutually beneficial sharing of information and knowledge, as well as joint analyses between the EU and the participating countries on a continuous and structured basis. Cooperation through these networks is also instrumental to establishing new partnerships and testing new areas of cooperation.



Joint operations and multipurpose operations

Frontex can carry out operational activities with executive powers on the territory of the EU and those non-EU countries which have concluded Status Agreements with the EU. By deploying the European standing corps, as well as technical equipment, the Agency supports EU and non-EU countries in various border and migration management tasks, including border control (border surveillance and border checks), identification and registration of migrants, screening and debriefing and support in carrying out coast guard functions. Joint operations are a useful tool to assist partner countries managing disproportionate migration flows, detect and prevent cross-border crime, contribute to the development of European cooperation on coast guard functions as well as to learn common EU standards and practices as part of their daily work.

Frontex can carry out operational activities with executive powers on the territory of those non-EU countries, which have concluded Status Agreements with the EU.

Exchange of observers

Frontex can temporarily deploy EU experts, acting as observers without executive powers, at the Coordination Points established at land, sea and air border crossing points between the selected non-EU countries. Coordination Points are a platform to exchange information for early detection of illegal immigration and cross-border crime, facilitate cooperation on border control and coast guard functions and encourage mutual learning.

In agreement with the host Member State or the participating non-EU country, Frontex invites non-EU countries' partners to take part as observers in its operations. This often leads to better results, as the observers are an important link with their national authorities. They assist with their language skills and professional expertise or exchange information on migration routes and modus operandi of organised crime groups.

Frontex invites non-EU countries' partners to take part as observers in our operations.

Working together on returns

Frontex is a key partner not only in assisting Member States in returning non-EU nationals, but also in delivering technical and operational assistance to non-EU countries. Effective and efficient implementation of returns requires cooperation with the authorities beyond the EU in each phase of the return process. That is why we offer our support in the identification procedure, dedicated training courses focusing on return operations and return monitors, who play a key role in ensuring full compliance of return operations with EU fundamental rights standards.

The Agency can also organise workshops, study visits, seminars and courses for its non-EU partners to enrich their knowledge and understanding of EU procedures on return, readmission and reintegration, as well as on developing an integrated return management system in line with the best EU standards and in full respect of fundamental rights along the different procedures.

On top of that, Frontex is also establishing its Reintegration Programme, as a continuation of the main activities under the EU-funded European Return and Reintegration Programme (ERRIN). This programme will include reintegration services for voluntary and non-voluntary returnees returning from all Member States as well as capacity-building projects and return counselling. These activities will be implemented in close cooperation with the Member States, international organisations and reintegration partners around the globe.

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Combating document fraud

Frontex seeks partnerships with non-EU countries in the detection of fraudulent documents. Frontex will take over False and Authentic Documents Online (FADO) which will ensure the improvement of the Agency's training capabilities in the detection of fraudulent documents for the benefit of the non-EU countries. Cooperation with non-EU countries in this area will also be possible through other systems, including FIELDS (Frontex-Interpol Electronic Library Document System).

Fighting cross-border crime

Growing engagement with non-EU countries opens new areas for operational cooperation in the framework of the European multi-disciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT). EMPACT is a permanent and leading EU instrument for the fight against serious and organised crime that brings together law enforcement authorities of Member States, European agencies and international organisations to jointly strengthen Europe's borders and internal security. Under EMPACT, Frontex also invites non-EU countries to participate in Joint Action Days (JADs). JADs seek to ensure an inter-agency approach and to establish links between information collection, detection, apprehension and further investigations, both inland and at the borders. Each JAD focuses on specific areas of crime, modus operandi, selected areas and routes, border crossing points and border sections.





Research and innovation

Frontex assesses the latest technological developments, performs market research, seeks to harmonise standards at a global level, jointly develops and tests new products, promotes interoperability and fosters innovation to improve the efficiency of border control. In the external dimension, Frontex promotes EU-wide knowledge and experience, and also learns from the expertise and know-how of non-EU partners.

ETIAS

The European Commission, the Member States and three EU agencies (eu-LISA, Europol and Frontex) are preparing to launch the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) by the end of 2022. To ensure its successful implementation, we will work with visa-exempt non-EU countries to ensure that their citizens are properly informed and can benefit from ETIAS to expedite their journeys.

HOW WE ENGAGE



Status Agreements

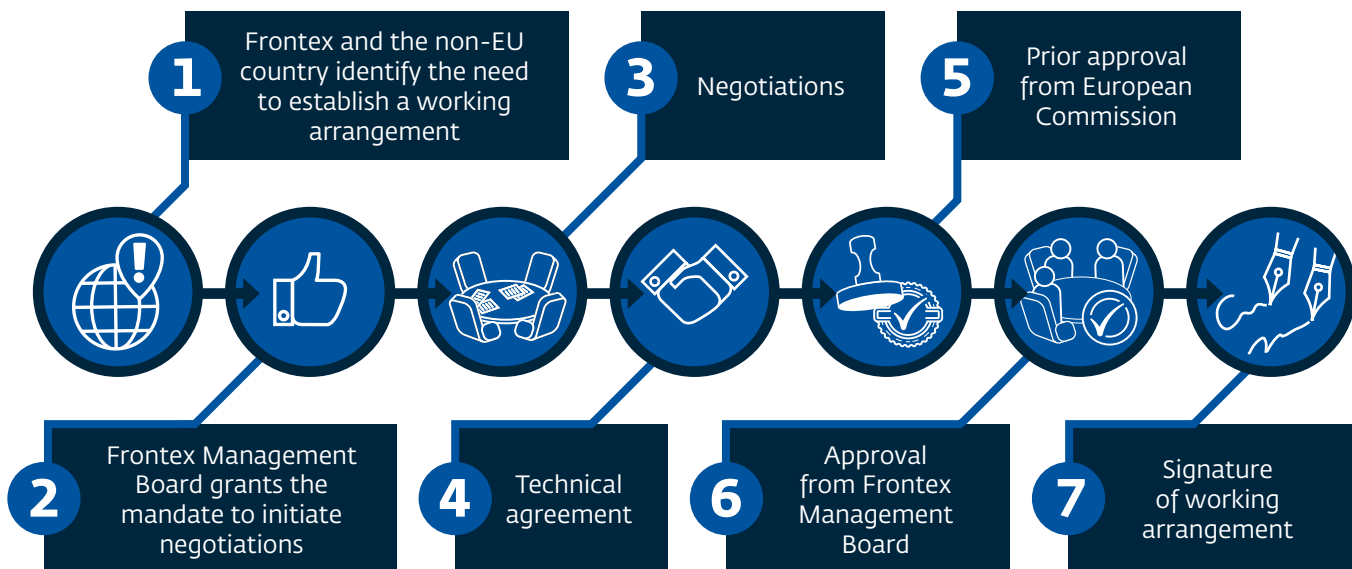
Status Agreements are the legal framework through which the Agency can assist non-EU countries in border management and deploy European Border and Coast Guard teams on their territory. The Status Agreements are initiated and negotiated by the European Commission, with authorisation of the Council of the EU and consent of the European Parliament.

Standing corps officers deployed by Frontex through a Status Agreement can exercise executive powers, meaning the necessary powers to perform the tasks required for border control conducted on the territory of the partner non-EU country in the presence of national officers. Their duties are outlined and agreed with the host non-EU country in a dedicated operational plan. The document sets out the scope and timeframe of the operation, the tasks and powers of the members of the teams and practical measures related to the respect of fundamental rights and data protection.

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Working arrangements

Working arrangements are Frontex's highest level of commitment to non-EU countries for long-term technical and operational cooperation within the Agency's remit. Such arrangements specify the scope, nature and purpose of the cooperation, provisions on respect for fundamental rights and the protection of data as set forth by Union and international law. Working arrangements do not have the status of international agreements and are concluded by the Agency to define technical and operational cooperation. All concluded working arrangements are available on Frontex's website: www.frontex.europa.eu



Familiarisation visits

Frontex regularly welcomes international delegations in the Agency's headquarters in Warsaw, Poland, and to its key operational areas. Through on-site visits and exchanges with experts, participants can learn about the Agency's mandate, its working methods and activities, and the core principles of the European integrated border management. Such familiarisation visits are an opportunity to get to know Frontex and to explore potential areas for fostering dialogue and cooperation.

Frontex regularly welcomes international delegations in the Agency's headquarters in Warsaw, Poland, and to its key operational areas.

Training networks

Frontex exchanges its knowledge and expertise in the border guard education and training domain with national authorities of non-EU countries. To better understand the needs of authorities and ensure the sustainability of the training, the Agency is also developing structured cooperation with the national training institutions which form the network of Frontex Partnership Academies. It already includes training institutions from a number of non-EU countries and Frontex aims to welcome new members in the near future.

Capacity building

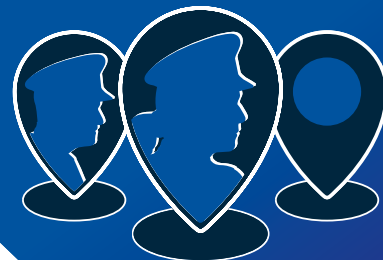
Technical assistance and capacity building projects in non-EU countries are an important part of Frontex's international cooperation. Through a tailored set of activities, the Agency aims to support the development of sustainable border and migration management solutions in priority non-EU countries. Frontex develops its technical assistance work through EU-funded projects, its own funded technical assistance activities and by providing external support to the EU-funded programmes.

The projects contribute to building trust, understanding structured partnerships, and exchange of practices in the domain of integrated border management.



For years Frontex has been implementing projects with regional coverage. The projects contribute to building trust, understanding structured partnerships, and exchange of experiences and practices in the domain of integrated border management. As an example, in Africa and the Levant the Agency aims at fostering bilateral and regional cooperation. On the other hand, in the Western Balkans the Agency promotes EU standards and best practices on integrated border management, assists the region on their path to the EU accession, and supports capacities of authorities to deal with border and migration challenges

WHERE WE ARE



Frontex is present on the territory of countries neighbouring the EU. By 2021, Albania, Montenegro and Serbia allowed the Agency to conduct operations under status agreements. In full respect for national sovereignty, Frontex deployed its standing corps officers and staff taking part in operations, along with patrol cars, helicopters and other equipment to help detect criminal activities such as people smuggling, trafficking in human beings, document fraud and smuggling of stolen vehicles, illegal drugs, weapons and excise goods.

Regardless of the operational presence, Frontex also works with Member States and non-EU countries through the different liaison officers networks.

- **Frontex Liaison Officers to non-EU countries**

Frontex Liaison Officers to non-EU countries facilitate cooperation between the border management authorities of the host country and Frontex across various areas of the Agency's mandate. FLOs are co-located in the EU Delegation at the host country, and where appropriate may also have a regional mandate. By 2021 Frontex has deployed six Liaison Officers beyond the EU.

- **Liaison Officers from non-EU countries to Frontex**

Through reciprocal arrangements, non-EU country authorities may also deploy liaison officers to Frontex and base them in their bilateral embassies in Warsaw, Poland. Once deployed, Frontex associates them in relevant activities.

- **European Return Liaison Officers**

Where Frontex does not deploy a FLO with a specific return profile, it supports Member States with the deployment of European Return Liaison Officers (EURLOs) in non-EU countries. EURLOs are immigration liaison officers from Member States deployed by their national return authorities and their role is to facilitate cooperation between all Member States and the host non-EU country on return-related matters, as well as to support the Agency's activities in this field.

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