

# **Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022**

**European Border and Coast Guard Agency**

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## Glossary

- ABAC Accrual Based Accounting
- ABN Annual Bilateral Negotiations
- ABNet Electronic resource management tool supporting Frontex-coordinated operational activities
- AC Air conditioner
- AD Administrative Grades
- AFIC Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community
- AIMC Arab Interior Ministers' Council
- ALDO Advanced Level Document Officer
- AO Authorising Officer
- AOF Alternate Office Facility
- API Advance Passenger Information
- APP Annual Procurement Plan
- ARES Advanced Records Management System
- AST Assistant (staff grade)
- ATO Authorisation to Operate
- AWP Annual Work Programme
- BA Baseline Assessment
- BCP Border Crossing Point
- BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
- BRU Frontex Liaisons Office in Brussels
- BSRBCC Baltic Sea region Border control Cooperation
- BTP Basic Training Programme
- CA Contract Agent
- CAAR Consolidated Annual Activity Report
- CAP Capability Programming Office
- CAT Category
- CBC Cross-Border Crime
- CBCDO Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer
- CBD Capacity Building Division
- CCC Common Core Curriculum
- CED Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud
- CELBET Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team
- CEPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
- CF Consultative Forum
- CGF Coast Guard Functions
- CGGS Coast Guard Global Summit
- CIRAM Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model
- CISE Common Information Sharing Environment
- COM European Commission
- COMM External communication & information
- CONT European Parliament Committee on Budgetary Control
- COSI Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
- COVID-19 SARS-Cov-2 Coronavirus
- CPCC
- CRO Collecting Return Operation
- CS Corporate Services
- CSAM Coordination in Situational Awareness and Monitoring (Divisio)
- CSDP Common Security and Defence Policy
- CT Counter Terrorism
- CT-MENA Counter Terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa
- CU Central Unit
- CVAM Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology
- DA Discharge Authority
- DED Deputy Executive Director
- DG Directorate-General
- DG BUDG Directorate-General for Budget
- DG GROW Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- DG HOME Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
- DG INTPA Directorate-General for International Partnerships (replaced DG DEVCO)
- DG NEAR Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
- DOC Sysper Document Management Module
- DPIA Data Protection Impact Assessment
- DG JRC Directorate-General Joint Research Centre
- DG TAXUD Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union
- DIS Document Inspection Systems
- DMD Deployment Management Division
- DPO Data Protection Officer
- EAD Empact Action Days
- EASA European Aviation Safety Agency EAU Executive Affairs Unit
- EBCG European Border and Coast Guard
- (E)BTP (Extended) Basic Training Programme
- EC European Commission
- ECA European Court of Auditors
- ECGFF European Coast Guard Functions Forum
- ECGFO European Coast Guard Functions Officer
- ECN EUROSUR Communication Network
- ECRET European Centre for Return
- ED Executive Director
- EDD Executive Director's Decision
- EDPS European Data Protection Supervisor
- EEAS European External Action Service
- EES Entry Exit System
- EFCA European Fisheries Control Agency
- EG Expert Groups
- EIBM European Integrated Border Management
- EMB Executive Management Bureau
- EMCDDA European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
- EMPACT European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats
- EMSA European Maritime Safety Agency
- EMWP Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration
- EP European Parliament
- ERRIN European Return and Reintegration Network
- ETIAS European Travel Information and Authorisation System
- ETIAS CU ETIAS Central Unit
- EU European Union
- EUAA European Union Agency for Asylum
- EUAM European Union Advisory Mission
- EUBAM European Union Border Assistance Mission
- EUCAP European Union Capacity-Building - Civilian Mission
- eu-LISA European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice
- EURLO European Return Liaison Officers
- EUROFRONT European Frontiers
- Europol European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- EUROSUR European Surveillance System
- EUSA European University Sports Association
- EXP-DOC Expert Group on Document Control (EXP-DOC Group)
- FADO False and Authentic Documents Online
- FAR Frontex Application for Returns
- FDS Financial, Digital and Security Division
- FDU Field Deployment Unit
- FFR Frontex Financial Regulation
- FIELDS Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Document System
- FIN Financial Services Unit
- FISRoP Frontex Internal Structure and Rules of Procedure
- FLO Frontex Liaison Officer
- FOCC Frontex Operational Coordination Centre
- FP Focal Point
- FPA Framework Partnership Agreement
- FR Fundamental Rights
- FRA Fundamental Rights Agency
- FRESO Forced Return Escort and Support Officers
- FRO Fundamental Rights Officer
- FROM Fundamental Rights Monitor
- FSA Frontex Surveillance Aircraft

- FSC Frontex Situation Centre
- FSWG Frontex Scrutiny Working Group
- FTE full-time equivalent
- FTSO Frontex Tactical Support Officer
- FWC Framework contracts
- GA Grant Agreement
- GDP Gross Domestic Product
- GEN COORD General coordination
- GSC Governance Support Centre
- HLRT High-Level Roundtable
- HQ Headquarters
- HR Human Resource
- HRU Human Resources Unit
- IA Internal auditing and control
- IAC Internal Audit Capability
- IAS Internal Audit Service
- IBC Illegal border crossing
- IBM Integrated Border Management
- ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
- ICF Internal Control Framework
- ICO Inspection and Control Office
- ICS Internal Control System
- ICT Information and Communication Technology
- IEC International and European Cooperation Division
- IFC Information Fusion Centre
- ILO Immigration Liaison Officer
- IM Identification missions
- INTERPOL International Criminal Police Organization
- IOM International Organization for Migration
- IPA Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
- IRMA Integrated Return Management Application
- IXIM Working Party on JHA Information Exchange
- ISA Investigation Support Activities
- ISO International Organization for Standardization
- IT Information technologies
- ITIL Information Technology Infrastructure Library
- JAD Joint-Action Day
- JHA Justice and Home Affairs
- JHAA Justice and Home Affairs Agencies
- JHAAN Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network
- JO Joint Operation
- JORA Joint Operation Reporting Application
- JRC Joint Research Centre
- JRS Joint Reintegration Services
- KA Key Activity
- KPI Key Performance Indicators
- LEG legal services sector
- LES Law Enforcement Sector
- LEWP Leaders to Working Party
- LIBE Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- LPU Legal and Procurement Unit
- MAOC-N Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics
- MAS Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance
- MB Management Board
- MED Mediterranean
- MID Multiple Identity Detection
- MIC-RAN Maritime Intelligence Community – Risk Analysis Network
- MMO Multipurpose Maritime Operations
- MNITE Minimum Number of Items of Technical Equipment
- MOA Multipurpose Operational Activities
- MOCADM Meeting of the Operational Coordination Mechanism for the External Dimension of Migration
- MOST Mobile Operational Support Teams
- MOST-CBC Mobile Operational Support Teams for counteracting Cross-Border Crime
- MPR media and public relations
- MS Member State
- MS Mobile Surveillance Systems
- NACGF North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum
- NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NCC National Coordination Centre
- N(CDP) (National) Capability Development Plan
- NFPOC National Frontex Point of Contact
- NP Negotiated procedure
- OA Operational Action
- OAP Operational Action Plan
- OLAF European Anti-Fraud Office
- OSH Occupational Safety and Health
- OSINT Open-Source Intelligence
- PAD Public Access to Documents
- PM Project Manager
- PMO The Paymaster Office
- PPMT Public Procurement Management Tool
- PRAN Pre-Return Activities Network
- PROC Procurement sector
- PRRN Post-Return and Reintegration Network
- RAC Risk Analysis Cells
- QCC Quick Check Cards
- RECAMAS Return Case Management System
- RIAT Reintegration Assistance Tool
- RILO Regional Intelligence Liaison Officer
- RIU Research and Innovation Unit
- RPAS Remotely Piloted Aircraft System
- SAC Schengen Associated Countries
- SAM Situational Awareness and Monitoring (Division)
- SAR Search and Rescue
- SAS Statistical analysis software
- SBC Schengen Borders Code
- SC standing corps
- SEACOP Seaport Cooperation Project
- SEE Southeast Europe
- SELEC Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
- SEM Schengen Evaluation Mechanism
- SG Support Group
- SIR Serious Incident Report
- SIS Schengen Information System
- SLA Service level agreement
- SLS Standard Level Service
- SNE Seconded National Experts
- SO Specific Objective
- SOP Standard Operating Procedure
- SPD Single Programming Document
- SRA Strategic Risk Analysis
- SRAN Strategic Risk Analysis Network
- SSP Specific Situational Picture
- SQF Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding
- SYSPER Human Resource Management information system of the European Commission
- SWOT Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
- TA Temporary Agent
- TAP4RRR Technical Assistance Projects for Third Countries on Return, Readmission and Reintegration
- TC third country
- TC-CORE Third Country Core Group
- TCN Third Country National
- TE Technical Equipment
- TF Task Force
- TO EIBM Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management
- TSC Technical Subcommittee
- TWA Tripartite working arrangement (Frontex, EMSA and EFCA)
- UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees
- UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- WCO World Customs Organization
- VA Vulnerability Assessment
- VAP Vulnerability Assessment Platform
- VRN Voluntary Return Network
- VTOL Vertical Take-off and Landing
- WA Working Arrangement
- WG Working Group
- WG FRaLO (Working group on) Fundamental Rights and Legal and Operational Aspects of Operations in the Aegean Sea

## Introduction

Article 106(4)(d) of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation <sup>(1)</sup> (hereinafter: ‘Regulation (EU) 2019/1896’ or ‘the Regulation’) stipulates that each year the Executive Director shall prepare the consolidated annual activity report on the Agency’s activities and submit it to the Management Board. Article 100(2)(j) of the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 states that the Management Board shall adopt an annual activity report of Frontex for the previous year and forward it, by 1 July at the latest, to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

This annual report follows the instructions received from the European Commission in the form of guidelines <sup>(2)</sup> and contains those elements required. To guide the readers and recipients of the information, the report has been divided into five main parts which form the consolidated annual activity report 2022, supplemented by 11 annexes.

The document begins with a reflection on the conditions and challenges at the political and policy level, followed by an executive summary complemented with the key achievements of the Agency during 2022. At the end the key conclusions are presented in the form of a synthetised list of attainments.

**Part one** of the report provides comprehensive information on the specific achievements measured against the activities set in the annual programme of work 2022 following the logical framework of the strategic and horizontal objectives set.

**Part two** of the document presents further details on the Agency’s performance based on a series of aspects related to the governance and use of resources:

- work of the Management Board;
- major developments of the Agency;
- management of human and financial resources;
- efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control systems, including an overall assessment of the costs and benefits of controls;
- assessment by management.

**Parts three to five** are devoted to presenting conclusions on the internal control system of the Agency, the elements upon which the Authorising Officer bases his Declaration of Assurance.

The core document is supplemented by 11 annexes enhancing the information provided as to the use of resources as well as detailed information on specific aspects of the Agency’s work during the year such as an evaluation of the results of return activities and with regard to the annual implementation of the tripartite working arrangement.

As stated in Article 47 and Article 50(7) of the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, the main activities in each of the strategic action areas also provide a comparative analysis of the results of evaluations of core operational activities with a view to enhancing the quality, coherence and effectiveness of future activities.

As stated in Article 48 of the Frontex Financial Regulation <sup>(3)</sup>, the Authorising Officer shall report to the Management Board on the performance of his duties in the form of a consolidated annual activity report and submit it for the assessment of the Management Board. No later than 1 July each year the report shall be sent by the Management Board, together with its assessment, to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

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(1) Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard (OJ L 295, 14.11.2019, p. 1).

(2) C (2020) 2297 final, Communication from The Commission on the strengthening of the governance of Union Bodies under Article 70 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and on the guidelines for the Single Programming Document and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

(3) Management Board Decision No 19/2019 of 23 July 2019 adopting the Frontex Financial Regulation.

## Mission, vision, values and objectives

Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 entered into force on 4 December 2019. When adopting the programming document 2022-2024 the Management Board also adopted the mission, vision and values of the Agency.<sup>4</sup>

### Mission <sup>(5)</sup>

Together with the Member States, we ensure safe and well-functioning external borders providing security.

### Vision

The European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

### Values

- **we are professional,**  
we have the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to fulfil our mission efficiently with high ethical standards and we continuously strive for excellence to improve our performance;
- **we are respectful,**  
we recognise people, institutions and their roles and demonstrate respect by treating these as valuable and important;
- **we seek cooperation,**  
together with the Member States' relevant national authorities and with participation of other stakeholders we manage the EU external borders together and seek cooperation with non-EU countries;
- together, **we cooperate** and collaborate across the organisation as well as with external stakeholders in order to accomplish common goals and objectives;
- **we are accountable,**  
we are trusted with a shared responsibility to implement European integrated border management;  
we are trustworthy in fulfilling our responsibilities in our work, its timeliness and quality;
- **we care,**  
as European public agents we serve the interests of citizens because we care about people and believe in European values.

## Mandate

The Agency shall carry out its tasks without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Member States with regard to the maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security in accordance with EU and international law.

The specific tasks of the Agency received in the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 are set forth in its Article 10.

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<sup>(4)</sup> European Border Integrated Border Management Working Group (subgroup) is currently working on the new mission, vision and values formulation based on the European Commission's new multiannual strategic policy document.

<sup>(5)</sup> As adopted by the Management Board 66th meeting 26-29 September 2017.

## Conditions and challenges, political and policy context

The year 2022 was primarily marked by the war in Ukraine which started with the Russian aggression on 24 February. This development had profound consequences in the political and policy context, leading to nine rounds of sanctions targeting Russia and the EU 10-point plan for Ukraine, including, the activation – for the first time since the conflicts in in former Yugoslavia – of the Temporary Protection Directive (March 2022). In the past year, we have also seen complementing coordination and consultation processes at different levels, such as through the integrated political crisis response (IPCR), a Solidarity Platform, and through the Blueprint Network.

Furthermore, during 2022 several important decisions were taken in the EU enlargement domain, among them granting the status of candidate country to Ukraine and Moldova, and recognising the European perspective of Georgia as well as opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania (July 2022).

Finally, a status agreement between the European Union and Moldova on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in Moldova was concluded in a record time (March 2022) which was then followed by the deployment of the standing corps in Moldova. A second Status Agreement was signed in October 2022, this time between the European Union and North Macedonia, with its entry into force set for 1 April 2023.

Important decisions were taken on the Schengen enlargement, allowing for Croatia to join (as of 1/01/2023). However, the European leaders were unable to reach an agreement on the entry of Bulgaria and Romania. Furthermore, in May 2022, the Commission presented the first State of Schengen Report 2022, as well as the policy document on the future multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management, and a report on the implementation of the obligation of the Member States to carry out systematic checks at the external borders of the EU.

Considering the rise in irregular migration to the EU, several initiatives were undertaken, including the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with Cyprus (Europol, EUAA, Frontex) and an Operational Action Plan between Cyprus and Frontex (March 2022). The Council granted the authorisation for the Commission to renew Status Agreement negotiations with Albania, Montenegro and Serbia and to conclude a new Status Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina (November 2022), with negotiations starting already with both Albania and Montenegro.

In a broader perspective, the Commission presented the EU Action Plan on the Central Mediterranean and the Action Plan on the Western Balkans. These identified measures to address the immediate and ongoing challenges along these routes (November/December). During the French Presidency of the Council, the external dimension of migration was in focus with the establishment of the Operational Coordination Mechanism for the External Dimension of Migration (MOCADDEM) and an active Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP).

### Adopted legislation in 2022:

- 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.
- Amended Europol Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/794) - entry into force in June 2022.
- New Regulation on European Union Agency for Asylum (Regulation 2021/2303) - entered into force on 19 January 2022. The new Regulation of the EUAA is a part of the 2016 package reforming the Common European Asylum System and providing the agency with broader operational and technical support to increase efficiency in asylum systems.
- Regulation (EU) 2022/838 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 as regards the preservation, analysis and storage at Eurojust of evidence relating to genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and related criminal offences - the amendment of the Eurojust Regulation entered into force on 1 June 2022 and solidified the agency's existing legal basis to deal with evidence of core international crimes (creation of a dedicated database at Eurojust to store evidence of core international crimes, analysis of evidence stored in the dedicated database).

## Other legislative and policy developments in 2022:

- **Proposal for amendment of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.** The main amendments proposed by the Commission address the online dimension of trafficking in human beings and formalise the establishment of National Referral Mechanisms and appoint national focal points for referral of victims, establish a yearly data collection conducted by the Commission (Eurostat), with MS reporting on fixed indicators and continue to hold the biannual meetings of the Network of National Rapporteurs and of the EU Civil Society Platform against trafficking in human beings, as well as meetings with EU Agencies.
- **Proposals for Regulations on the collection and transfer of advance passenger information (API) for (1) enhancing and facilitating external border controls, and (2) for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime** – proposed API regulation would complement passenger name record data and ETIAS by providing additional information on travellers, such as their identity and flight details, which could be used to enhance the screening process and improve the effectiveness of ETIAS. It should also complement the EES by providing additional information on travellers that could be used to track their movements within the EU (for example if needed by a criminal investigation).
- **2023 Annual EU Budget** – The EU institutions adopted the EU Budget 2023 at the end of November 2022. For Frontex, the final outcome was a EUR 50 m reduction from the European Commission's original draft proposal.
- **Discharge 2020** – EP Plenary adopted the final second discharge report, refusing Frontex budget discharge for 2020 (October).
- **Schengen Borders Code (SBC)** – Council adopted its General Approach on 10 June 2022. From the European Parliament side, the draft report on the SBC was published on 8 November 2022 and amendments were published in December 2022. Discussions will now take place amongst the EP Groups to find compromise and once sufficiently advanced, a vote will take place in LIBE Committee. Once adopted, trilogue negotiations can take place between the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission.
- **Pact on Migration and Asylum**, in September 2022, the EP and current and incoming Council Presidencies signed an agreement committing to adopt the Pact files by February 2024 (before the end of the EP legislature).
- **Eurodac** – Council adopted its General Approach in June 2022. The LIBE Committee adopted its Report on 12 December 2022 and trilogue negotiations began shortly after that.
- **Regulation introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders (Screening Regulation)** – Council adopted its General Approach in June 2022. The EP Rapporteur Birgit Sippel's draft report was published at the end of November 2021 and amendments were published in early 2022.
- In December 2022, the EP and Council reached political agreement to unblock and adopt **the reception conditions directive**. Once published in the Official Journal of the EU, MS will have two years to transpose the directive into their national laws.
- **Proposal for a Regulation on situations of instrumentalisation in the field of migration and asylum** – Council adopted its General Approach in December 2022.
- The European Commission issued **5th report on the monitoring of the EU visa-free regime** with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Overall, the report assesses that all countries concerned continue to meet the visa liberalisation requirements. Recommended actions include, among others, references to cooperation with Frontex, and – particularly relevant in the current context – the alignment with EU visa policy (December 2022).
- To step up the fight against cross-border crime, the Council adopted its negotiating mandates on a proposal regarding **digital information exchange in terrorism cases** and a **proposal to establish a collaboration platform for joint investigation teams** (June 2022).
- The European Commission adopted (November 2022) its **Drone Strategy 2.0 for a Smart and Sustainable Unmanned Aircraft Eco-System** in Europe. The Strategy sets out the Commission's vision that by 2030 drones and their required eco-system will have become an accepted part of the life of EU citizens.

## Executive summary

Year 2022 allowed the Agency to make a step forward in the discharge of its extended mandate. Frontex elaborated its annual report on the progress during 2022, which is hereby presented.

Shortly after the Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Agency stepped up its focused support with additional officers and technical equipment deployed to Romania, Slovakia and Estonia in March 2022 and the operationalisation of the EU Status Agreement with Moldova, which led to the launch of a new joint operation Moldova 2022. Further to that, Western Balkans pressure was addressed by doubling the Agency's presence in JO Serbia Land 2022 and opening a new operational area at the Serbian – Hungarian border.

All in all, together with MSs and SACs, Frontex deployed in 2022 over 617 thousand work-days of standing corps categories 1, 2 and 3 and over 111 thousand asset-days of maritime, aerial and terrestrial assets in 20 major operations including new 102 operational locations related to war in Ukraine and in line with Moldova Status Agreement. Aside the specific results per operation as displayed in detail throughout the document, other operational achievements include the initiation of the development of a new chain of command for standing corps with a single operational coordination structure and delegation of more decision-making responsibilities to the field as well as the progress attained in the setup of ETIAS Central Unit with a 116 staff recruited by the end of 2022, i.e., 55% of all posts envisaged.

In the area of return, the Agency supported the effective return of 24 868 third-country nationals (+36% vs. 2021), enhancing – in parallel – its portfolio of pre-return activities, deployment of return liaison officers and specialists as well as post-return assistance by launching in 2022 the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS).

Operational response was supported by the Agency's analytical activities including 24/7 situation and crisis monitoring, vulnerability assessment process as well as the delivery of the biennial Strategic Risk Analysis.

Another pivotal element enabling Frontex response relates to the capability planning framework which continued to facilitate the process of establishing national Capability Development Plans and the overview of the capability roadmap. In this context, annual planning process was carried out generating the pursued operational effect, making available for deployment the necessary human and technical resources. The human and technical resources include subsequent batches of standing corps category 1 – statutory staff – where 325 officers completed in the reporting period its extended basic training programme with nine weeks of on-the-job learning phase. This new learning phase was implemented by the Agency for the first time allowing officers without border management background to develop *in situ* its professional competences under close supervision and mentoring.

The Agency implemented land border pilot projects related to the Entry/Exit System (EES), in coordination with host Member States Spain and Bulgaria, as well as eu-LISA. Work included mapping comprehensively the main EES processes, enabling the development of a proof of concept for a universal and scalable technology-assisted solution.

At managerial level, the reporting period was marked by several milestones. In early 2022, the onboarding of two new Deputy Executive Directors (one for Returns and Operations and the second for EBCG Information Management and Processes) was conducted.

On 28 April 2022, the Agency's former Executive Director submitted his resignation to the Management Board and the Deputy Executive Director for Standing Corps Management assumed the Executive Director's *ad interim* role. The recruitment of the new Executive Director was completed on 20 December and Mr Hans Leijtens was appointed by the Management Board as a new Executive Director of Frontex, taking up duties as of 1 March 2023.

During the transition period, the transition Executive Management team introduced preventive and corrective measures to improve the management culture, enhancing oversight and accountability aimed at regaining stakeholders' trust. With the Management Board regularly examining the progress made by the Agency in the implementation of recommendations from control and scrutiny bodies such as the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group, Working Group Fundamental Rights and Legal Operational Aspects of Operations, European Ombudsman, European Court of Auditors and Internal Audit Service. Further to that, the Management Board held extraordinary meetings dedicated to discussing the findings of OLAF report regarding potential misconduct and/or irregularities related to Frontex possible involvement in and/or cover up of illegal pushbacks and to take decisions towards the individuals concerned.

In the area of cooperation several milestones were achieved including the commencement of collaboration with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the continued engagement with the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) i.e. CSDP mission – EUCAP Sahel Niger and the organisation of the 25th International Border Police Conference hosted in Warsaw. Further to that the pilot for deploying liaison officers from the Member States to the Agency was completed.

At the organisation level, the overall effort made in recruitment needs to be highlighted with 2063 positions filled by the end of 2022 (82% occupancy rate) representing a net increase of 509 staff in the period and the progress made in managing the appropriations authorised with EUR 904 million committed and EUR 559 paid in the year (both over 30% increase vs. 2021) including all funding sources.

Other developments to note include the adoption of Frontex Information Management Framework and the ICT multiannual strategy and of the security rules of the Agency on protecting EU classified and sensitive non-classified information, as well as the creation of Frontex Internal Audit Capability.

In the area of compliance and transparency, one area to underline is the public access to documents (PAD): the Agency received 469 applications in the reporting period (+34 vs. 2021), many of them of a wide scope, requesting multitude of documents comprising of up to several thousand pages. In the meantime, Frontex public register of documents website was established with around 1 900 key documents uploaded by the end of 2022.

In addition, the Agency developed its fundamental rights domain. Management Board adopted rules for the Agency to inform the Consultative Forum on the follow-up to its recommendations and to ensure that actions are taken on recommendations issued by the Fundamental Rights Officer. Fundamental Rights Officer regularly reported to the Management Board on the implementation of the Fundamental Rights Strategy Action Plan. With the support of more than 40 Fundamental Rights Monitors, fundamental rights were also further embedded in Agency's activities and daily work.

## Key achievements

### SO 1: Reduced vulnerability of the external borders based on comprehensive situational awareness

#### Frontex delivered the Strategic Risk Analysis 2022 (SRA)

In 2022, Frontex, in close cooperation with the EU Member States and other stakeholders, published the Strategic Risk Analysis 2022, a biennial report which provides foresight on possible future developments and how they will affect EU border and migration management over a ten-year timeframe, presents the impact of megatrends and their interplay and looks into thematic areas namely migration and returns, terrorism, cross-border crime and hybrid threats, to identify the core threats and challenges for EIBM. The report provides four future scenarios identifying more and less challenging developments for Frontex and the EU in general.

#### Frontex continued supporting the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) and strengthens its support for the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network

Frontex continued contributing its analysis to the Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis reports with information the Agency gathered mainly through its operational activities. The activity of the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network expanded considerably in 2022 when Frontex contributed to 19 reports and attended 57 meetings.

Furthermore, in addition to the existing monitoring activities and products on the EU (Belarusian borders, Afghanistan and the Central Mediterranean route), three additional areas of interest were added: Ukraine, Türkiye and the Western Balkans. In this context, a daily, weekly data collection mechanism was set up with the frontline Member States to provide a comprehensive situational picture of the EU's borders with Ukraine and the flow of Russian nationals into the EU, as well as **analytical support and assessments on various aspects of the war in Ukraine. These assessments enhanced situational awareness and provided support to analysis/evidence-based operational actions.**

#### Frontex develops risk analysis capability for the future

Frontex conducted a range of activities in 2022 to develop capabilities for the future requirements of risk analysis. These involved internal planning processes for the ETIAS risk-screening mechanism and processes to develop a forecasting mechanism. These two analysis-led projects seek to integrate risk analysis in ETIAS working methodology and assist decision-making with respect to operational, capability and deployment forecasting requirements. In parallel and following the adoption of the Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM 2.1) Frontex proceeded with the development of the CIRAM guidelines securing this model as a critical component in the risk analysis response.

#### Enhanced support to MS for implementing necessary measures within vulnerability assessment process

In 2022, Frontex increased its efforts to provide support to MS resulting in 66 recommended measures closed during the twelve-month period. This was primarily achieved through more direct interactions with all MS, by means of field visits (10) to six MS and provision of technical expertise offered by the Agency. Seven MS received training in EUROSUR National Coordination Centre (NCC) on conducting screening and debriefing activities, document fraud detection and CIRAM and one MS also received standing corps support for the implementation of one measure within vulnerability assessment process. In 2022, Frontex established a common approach to handle EUROSUR impact level assessments for border sections and consolidated the production and delivery of two complementary products geared to inform the operational planning of the Agency, the Assessment of Operational Initiation (2024) and the corresponding 29 country fiches.

#### 24/7 Situation and crisis monitoring

Situation and crisis monitoring ensured near real-time reporting on outstanding events at the external borders of the EU and beyond it in various geographical areas as an example reporting related to the war in Ukraine and the war's impact on refugee flows towards the European Union. In 2022, 12 national coordination centres, under EU framework, were visited in 2022 leading to the increased operational cooperation with the Member States resulting in near-real time information exchange especially with Portugal, Cyprus, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Romania, Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

Frontex delivered 29 early alerts about vessels presenting abnormal behaviour in the proximity of EU borders and in the pre-frontier area. As many as 233 vessels of interest were tracked, and daily reporting was in place. In this context, 1 779 reports were delivered to Frontex partners. Frontex surveillance aircrafts (FSA) composed of six fixed-wing aircrafts and two remotely piloted aerial system (RPAS) performed multipurpose aerial surveillance (MAS) in 1 422 surveillance missions along pre-frontier area of the external EU borders as well as in support of joint operations and flew a total of 9 447 flight hours. During the MAS missions a total of 1 177 events and 51 362 migrants were detected. Flying over the seas, FSA very often detected boats in the state of

emergency and directly contributed to the rescue of migrants' lives by immediately informing the competent authorities and providing situational awareness.

### EUROSUR

In 2022, preparatory activities started within the Agency to establish a multiannual programme for further developing the EUROSUR ecosystem and ensuring complete alignment with the vision set by the legislator in the Regulation and EUROSUR Implementing Regulations. Once formally established, the programme will be running for a five-year period. In 2022, the EUROSUR Gap Analysis project was finalised, as well as the launching of the EUROSUR business analysis and process mapping activities, to update existing processes and define the business requirements for the future EUROSUR 2.0 ecosystem.

In 2022 the work has also commenced on the collection of requirements to define the business architecture for the future EUROSUR 2.0 including data architecture, to identify the major types and sources of data necessary to support the business and for business common data standards and data quality assurance in close cooperation with Member States' experts.

The Agency established the **EUROSUR Framework Network (EFN)**, composed of the representatives from MS, SAC and the European Commission. The EFN is a forum to support, regularly exchange feedback from the operations and implementation of the EUROSUR integrated framework, ensuring timely, standardised and efficient cooperation between the involved actors. As of 1 October 2022, EFN replaces the EUROSUR expert user group community.

Upon the recruitment of the Secretary to the Security Accreditation Board, enhanced operation in this regard was achieved, supporting the Commission in the revision of the EUROSUR Handbook, ensuring full alignment with latest legislative developments and related changes to the scope of EUROSUR as well as the activation of the specific situational picture (SSP) for the first time in a third country (Moldova), in support of operational activities in the framework of a status agreement.

### Copernicus

In 2022, the implementation of the Copernicus activities entrusted to Frontex registered an increase of demand in relation to four out of eleven services offered under the programme when compared to 2021, while no considerable decrease was registered for the remaining services whose provision remained stable. Frontex received in total 628 services requests from the MS representing a 30% increase when compared to 2021.

2022 has shown tangible operational results contributing to the fight against cross-border criminality and saving lives at sea. Copernicus services proved to have a crucial role in monitoring of areas at the external land border with Ukraine in the context of the armed conflict.

### ETIAS

In 2022, the ETIAS Central Unit (ECU) Division continued the implementation of the project activities for the setting up of the ETIAS Central Unit and managed *inter alia* to finalise the recruitment procedure of the second wave of Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators.

It carried on with the progressive transit from project to operation mode by strengthening its organisational structure and through the development of internal rules and procedures as well as by developing a mid-term strategy and an engagement framework.

ETIAS CU Division successfully launched ETIAS website which includes information about the new travel requirements for the public. It also started regular weekly media monitoring and analysis reports aiming to detect and address cases of ETIAS-related misinformation.

Throughout the year ETIAS CU continued the development of standard operating procedures, support services for carriers and travellers, simulation models, as well as the improvement of many of the core capabilities. The Agency continued also to actively collaborate with European Commission, eu-LISA, and Europol on the logic, analysis, and design of the business requirements to be implemented in the ETIAS Central System in compliance with ETIAS regulation.

The work included the preparation of the testing strategy for the ETIAS Central System and Carrier Supporting solutions to cover all ECU business and operational aspects related to the testing approach and actively participated in the ETIAS Test Expert Group.

It further supported eu-LISA in its development of the data protection impact assessment and continued to cooperate with the European Commission, eu-LISA and MS on data protection aspects and on the clarification of issues related to the establishment and operation of repositories for data subject requests reporting to the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS). The ETIAS CU Division continued to regularly support high-level

meetings between the DG HOME, eu-LISA and Frontex to coordinate the implementation activities on the development of EES, ETIAS and Interoperability.

In 2022, ETIAS CU developed a business impact analysis, conducted a risk assessment and drafted security, business continuity and disaster recovery plans as stipulated in Article 59 of ETIAS Regulation. It also provided specialised training to the newly onboarded staff and regularly monitored the status and progress of the projects within the Interoperability Programme and of ETIAS internal workstreams.

The Agency maintained and further strengthened its cooperation with the external stakeholders to ensure the alignment of the legal, business and technical streams for the development of ETIAS. In this regard, Frontex supported the European Commission, eu-LISA, Europol, and the Member States/Schengen Associated Countries in their activities for the implementation of ETIAS and organised several meetings with the ETIAS national units.

Further to this, the Agency continued to progress on the build-up of the ETIAS Central Unit while managing the ETIAS and Interoperability Programme, overseeing the project for the access of the EBCG Team Members to Schengen Information System (A2SISII) as well as the activities related to the support of the MS for the entry into operation of Entry/Exit System (EES) and for the implementation of the Multiple Identity Detection (MID) project.

## SO 2: Safe, secure, and well-functioning EU external borders

### Land joint operations in 2022

Year 2022 was marked by the war in Ukraine and the crisis at the neighbouring land borders where Frontex and the host Member States/Third Countries undertook the necessary proactive measures to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the operational activities. Despite the unpredictable environment, Frontex managed not only to maintain its complete operational footprint in its joint operations, but also to sustain an exponential increase with the high engagement of all stakeholders.

In 2022, Frontex increased its strategic and tactical response. The former Joint Operation Flexible Operational Activities-Land 2021 and Joint Operation Focal Point-Land 2021 were merged into one operation, JO Terra 2022, to ensure a more efficient and flexible use of resources. Based on risk assessment and requests from the Member States, Frontex operational area was significantly enlarged covering the operationalisation of the EU Status Agreement with Moldova through JO Moldova 2022. While JO Serbia Land 2022 was intensified by adding a new operational area at the Serbian - Hungarian border due to the increased migratory pressure in the Western Balkans.

The contribution of joint operations at the external land border and in the territory of third countries in the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats – EMPACT, especially Joint Action Days (JADs) has been the highest among all types of JOs and was broadly recognised by the EMPACT community responsible for the counteraction of the cross-border crime together with Frontex.

VEGA activities and awareness sessions continued to be implemented in 2022 in the EU Member States and in third countries, e.g. in Moldova, with field presence and participation of the Consultative Forum members. Under the sensitive set of circumstances at the borders with Ukraine, the activity had a particular importance and brought additional expertise when dealing with children on the move. The reactivation of deployments of third country observers in Member States and in third countries was suspended at the beginning of 2022 due to the complex security setting related to the crisis in Ukraine and relaunched by the end of the year with deployments of Ukrainian observers.

### New joint operation in Moldova

The JO in Moldova – first joint operation to be implemented under the Regulation, following the Model of the Status Agreement <sup>(6)</sup> – was swiftly launched at the request of the Moldovan state border police to assist the Moldovan authorities in processing the massive number of people fleeing the war in Ukraine and crossing the border with Moldova, as well as to control the cross-border crime at its borders with Ukraine and the European Union. It started on 18 of March 2022 only after 1 day since the Status Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova was signed and allowed the implementation of a joint operation with executive powers.

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(6) COM(2021) 829 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Model status agreement as referred to in 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.

## Overview on results operations

Operations	JO Terra 2022	JO Moldova 2022	JO Serbia-land 2022	JO Albania-Land 2022	JO in Montenegro
Reported incidents	37,312	8,860	983	2,076	85
Irregular migrants apprehended	17,649	963	2,201	7,759	36
People smuggler apprehended	650	1	37	12	0
Refusal of entry	46,437	2,326	180	1,563	9
Incidents involving persons hiding in transportation means	185	1	3	57	-
Incidents involving false documents	1,348	352	112	7	45
Smugglers of goods	1,740	124	419	21	7

Table 1. Overview on results operations.

## Overview on results operations

Seizures	
JO Terra 2022	261 stolen vehicles, 99 vehicle parts, 2 461 pieces of ammunition, 50 weapons and variable quantities of drugs, cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol
JO Moldova 2022	22 stolen vehicles, 56 weapons, 405 pieces of ammunition and variable quantities of drugs, cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol
JO Serbia-land 2022	8 stolen vehicles, 14 weapons, 222 pieces of ammunition and variable quantities of drugs, cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol
JO Albania-Land 2022	50 weapons and variable quantities of drugs, cigarettes, tobacco and alcohol
JO in Montenegro	10 stolen vehicles.

Table 2. Overview on operations' seizures.

The most significant incidents, which occurred during the land joint operations in 2022 are described below, representing an overview of the variety of tasks and achievements in this area.

### Illegal border crossings (with any type of Frontex involvement – top incidents involving the highest number of migrants)

#### JO Terra 2022

- April 2022: 64 illegal migrants were detected in the area of Greek – Turkish border;
- September 2022: 64 irregular migrants were detected in the area of Bulgarian – Turkish border;
- August 2022: 54 irregular migrants were detected in the area of Bulgarian – Turkish border;
- October 2022: 92 irregular migrants were detected in the area of Greek – Turkish border;
- October 2022: 58 irregular migrants were detected in the area of Bulgarian – Serbian border.

### Seizure of smuggled drugs (with any type of Frontex involvement – top incidents involving the largest quantity of smuggled goods)

- Seizure of 53 kg of hashish (April 2022: JO Terra 2022 - Greek – Albanian border);
- Seizure of 24 kg of marijuana (June 2022: JO Terra 2022 - Croatian - Bosnia and Herzegovina border);
- Seizure of 52 kg of marijuana (September 2022: JO Terra 2022 - Greek – Albanian border);
- Seizure of 40 kg of hashish (December 2022: JO Terra 2022 - Estonian – Russian border);
- Seizure of 5.6 kg of cocaine and 5 369 grams of heroin (December 2022: JO Terra 2022 – Croatian – Montenegrin border).

## Sea joint operations in 2022

2022 was characterised by the gradual lifting of COVID-19 sanitary restrictions, the resuming of close to pre-pandemic level of passengers going through sea border crossing points, an increase in the arrivals of irregular migrants to Italy – and thus the reinforcement of the support to JO Themis and the redeployment of standing corps from sea operations towards land operations to reinforce the external borders of Europe due to the war in Ukraine.

Likewise, JO Opal-Coast, launched in December 2021, as a quick response to the life losses in the English Channel during 2022, was consolidated as a year-long operational activity, to ensure the operational assistance to Belgium and France to tackle cross-border crime, including migrants smuggling and trafficking in human beings from the Belgian and French coast and from the territorial sea of Belgium towards the United Kingdom.

During 2022, Frontex enhanced the support to the Cypriot authorities as well, by increasing the level of deployed resources under JO Ledra to respond to the sharp augmenting of the migratory flows towards the areas which are under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The collaboration between Frontex and the International Coordination Centre operational staff of JO Poseidon was intensified throughout 2022 where steps to better integrate Frontex operational staff in the International Coordination Centre coordination structure were taken as well as support in the form of 26 portable video recording devices co-financed by the Agency for the Hellenic Coast Guard improving and automatising the equipment for mission reporting. On the other hand, due to a legal constraint related to the exchange of classified information between Frontex and NATO, the deployment of Operational Liaison Officer to the NATO flagship was suspended since October 2022.

Another novelty for 2022 in the maritime domain was the launch of two new operations at seaports: JO Netherlands-Sea at Rotterdam port and JO Genoa. The latter was launched for first time as an independent Frontex JO, being previously part of operation Neptune, due to the request for its expansion received from Italian authorities.

Following the request of several countries, the Agency developed in 2022 the new JO Seaports under the sea operations portfolio clustering all operational activities at seaports under one operational plan. Once the negotiations with the potential host Member States were completed, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Romania agreed to host this new JO as of 25 January 2023.

Understanding the strategic importance of the Western Balkan countries and their role in countering the migratory route that crosses the area towards EU, Frontex continued supporting Western Balkan partners in their efforts to gradually align their border management standards and operational practices with those of the EU. In this regard, the sea JOs launched by virtue of the respective Status Agreements signed with Albania and Montenegro, on actions carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in respective countries, (namely JO Albania – sea and JO Montenegro – sea) continued in 2022 with the focus on cross-border crime from the Western Balkans region towards the EU, as well as aiming to control illegal immigration flows and to enhance European cooperation on coast guard functions and law enforcement activities.

#### **Relevant operational results achieved under all maritime joint operations during 2022**

Overall, the operational activities involving both Frontex co-financed assets and host Member States assets not co-financed by Frontex resulted in the detection of 1,105 facilitators, 11 traffickers of human beings and a wide variety of other types of cross-border crimes, illegal goods and substances such as: 1,734 pieces of ammunition, approximately 49,942 kg of cocaine, more than 44 tons of hashish, 4,789 kg of marijuana, 2,646 kg of heroin and 506 kg of other types of drugs. Furthermore, 56 stolen vehicles were detected.

The most significant examples of incidents occurred during the maritime joint operations of 2022 are described below, representing an overview of variety of activities and tasks in this area.

#### **Seizure of smuggled drugs (top 5 incidents involving the highest number of drugs confiscated):**

1. Seizure of 44,498 kg of hashish in - JO Indalo 2022;
2. Seizure of 43,962 kg of cocaine in - JO Netherlands - Sea 2022;
3. Seizure of 5,569 kg of cocaine in - JO Indalo 2022;
4. Seizure of 3,149 kg of marijuana in - JO Netherlands - Sea 2022;
5. Seizure of 2,624 kg of heroin in - JO Netherlands - Sea 2022.

#### **Search and rescue (top 5 incidents involving the highest number of migrants rescued):**

1. 622 migrants rescued in SAR - July 2022 JO Themis;
2. 637 migrants rescued in SAR - September 2022 JO Themis;
3. 618 migrants rescued in SAR - October 2022 JO Themis;
4. 608 migrants rescued in SAR - November 2022 JO Themis;
5. 573 migrants rescued in SAR - November 2022 JO Themis.

#### **Air joint operations in 2022**

The JO Focal Points Air 2022 was hosted by 26 Member States, during the year five new permanent locations were opened and seven new airports were seasonally activated. Additionally, three Member States (France, Cyprus, the Netherlands) requested seasonal reinforcement therefore redeployments of standing corps officers were taking place. The implementation of JO Focal Points Air was as well impacted by the outbreak of the war

in Ukraine. It faced the redeployments of HR resources (19 standing corps officers) towards land operations to reinforce the other operational activities implemented external borders of Europe mainly JO Moldova.

A very important and key achievement for JO Focal Points Air 2022 is **the use of the national IT system (with the access to national and international databases) by the standing corps officers performing first line checks** at Prague airport. It is for the very first time when a Member State is granting the access to the national and international databases via the national interface to Frontex officers following respective training and receipt of personal credentials. The same approach was introduced by Iceland.

Similarly to the previous year and based on the host Member State's need, third country observers were invited into the operational area by six Member States to share knowledge with the host country officers.

To enhance border guards' document expertise and their capabilities to examine travel documents, Frontex organised dedicated document workshops, so-called 'Roadshows', held at six European airports and involving specialist trainers and experts from Frontex and volunteering Member States. In total, 281 persons participated in the roadshows including 11 standing corps officers.

The experts from INTERPOL Integrated Border Management Task Force (IBMTF) were providing the support at five different JO FP – Air, ensuring the access to the INTERPOL data search application. During their field presence in total 33 hits were detected.

#### **Operational results of JO Focal Points – Air**

Within JO Focal Points – Air 2022, 13,307 incidents were reported with the involvement of 18,221 persons. Most reported cases were refusal of entry (10,381 cases), followed by asylum seekers (2,486 cases) and arrested persons (1,653 cases). There were as well 578 referrals to the child protection authorities reported

#### **Cross domains joint operation in third countries based on working arrangements in 2022**

The JO Coordination Points – Air, Land and Sea 2022 were implemented covering all three domains. These JO's, being based on working arrangements between Frontex and the host country, took place without executive powers, where the powers of the deployed officers are limited to monitoring and advising. A total of 14 coordination points at airports, 16 coordination points at land border crossing points and one coordination point at seaport with the deployment of standing corps officers without executive powers were activated.

At the beginning of the operational activities Ukraine was part of the operational area of JO coordination points, with plans for deployment of standing corps officers at six land border crossing points, five airports and one seaport. Finally, 19 standing corps officers were deployed at one land border crossing point and four airports. However, due to the tense situation all 19 standing corps officers were relocated to different border crossing points outside of the Ukraine, before the outbreak of the war.

As a result of the entry into force of the status agreement with Moldova, all land border crossing points were withdrawn from JO Coordination Points 2022 operational area by 19 of March 2022 (in total 18 standing corps).

Two new locations were added to the operational area within 2022, one in Albania and one in Serbia. Despite the lack of executive powers, the joint operation was important in many ways. The awareness sessions on detection of stolen vehicles were delivered in two third countries (Montenegro, Kosovo\*) at land border crossing points. In addition, the roadshows on document fraud were delivered by Frontex at four third countries' airports. and VEGA Children activities with the involvement of the experts from the Frontex Consultative Forum were implemented as well at four airports.

#### **Operational results of JO Coordination Points – Air, Land and Sea**

Within the air domain 5,529 incidents were reported with the involvement of 15,181 persons, with the main reason of refusal of entry (10,642 cases), followed by exit refusal (2,309 cases) and denied boarding (1,453 cases).

At the land border crossing points 5,270 incidents involving 7,388 were reported including seizure of 80 stolen vehicles, 149 forged documents. Among reported incidents there were 2,761 incidents reporting the refuse of entry and 390 reports on goods smuggling.

#### **Coast guard functions related activities in 2022**

The European cooperation on coast guard functions and related activities continued strengthening based on two main pillars: the inter-agency level cooperation and joint efforts with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) further expanded under the framework of the Tripartite Working Arrangement (TWA) and its Annual Strategic Plan adopted by the three agencies.

Sharing capacities and cooperating in the field under the multipurpose maritime operation (MMO) concept was further developed with the implementation of MMO Black Sea from August to November 2022, despite the difficulties encountered in the Black Sea as a repercussion of the war in Ukraine. The MMO demonstrated how such multipurpose approach can enhance cross-sectorial and cross-border cooperation. Consequently, the three agencies agreed to expand the implementation of the MMO concept to Adriatic and Baltic seas in 2023.

As far as fostering cooperation and the exchange of best practices among the coast guard communities and the agencies' stakeholders at international level is concerned, Frontex together with EMSA and EFCA was actively involved in the different fora, in particular the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF), the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum (NACGF), the Mediterranean Coast Guard Functions Forum (MCGFF) and the Coast Guard Global Summit (CGGS).

Three (3) search and rescue (SAR) workshops were implemented in cooperation with respective Member States authorities in the Mediterranean Sea (Greece and Italy) and in the Black Sea (Romania).

#### **Law enforcement functions related activities in 2022**

Law enforcement elements were integrated in all joint operations in land, sea and air domains with specific objectives and profiles reinforcing the Agency's support to prevention, detection and combating of cross-border crime. Two Pilot Projects were continued i.e. Investigation Support Activities on Cross-Border Crime - ISA-CBC and Mobile Operational Support Teams for combating Cross-Border Crime (MOST-CBC). Both addressing specific phenomena at the EU external borders with a set of tools, tactics, guidelines, technical equipment and training in relation to both participating parties and standing corps specific profiles.

Frontex joined and actively supported the implementation of the new EMPACT 2022-2025 cycle with new operational action plans, activities and Joint Action Days (addressing several criminal threats, as well as European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Action Days covering limited range of challenges).

#### **Activities related to combatting document fraud in 2022**

False and Authentic Document Online system <sup>(7)</sup> (FADO), is currently hosted and operated by the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU. Regulation (EU) 2020/493 (FADO Regulation) entrusts Frontex with the administration and management of the FADO, i.e., Article 79 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 provides for the Agency to take over and operate it. The future EBCG FADO will integrate with other systems, such as the Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS) and access will be extended to third parties.

The system takeover is followed by the FADO Subgroup of the Article 6 Committee of the Commission and the Working Party on JHA Information Exchange (IXIM) of the Council of the EU. In 2022, Frontex, on behalf of the Commission, organised and led five FADO Subgroup meetings.

Despite the limited resources available, the business analysis phase of the FADO Takeover Project <sup>(8)</sup> was completed in summer 2022, when Frontex produced the Business Requirement and the High-Level Architecture Documents in addition to:

- 1) A detailed security framework defining threat or risk-levels for the future EBCG FADO and its users;
- 2) A Personal Data Processing framework to ensure legal compliance;
- 3) A four-levels user access management concept to be further developed into a user management policy upon which the future FADO delegated acts will be drafted (ref. FADO Regulation, Art. 4(5)); and
- 4) The documentation for the launch of the tender for the design and development of the software solution for the EBCG FADO.

At the end of 2022, the Agency provided inputs to the Commission for drafting the first implementing act provided for by Art.6(1)(a)(b)(c)) of FADO Regulation. The implementing act is expected to enter into force in the Q1 2023.

#### **Frontex-INTERPOL Electronic Library Documents System (FIELDS)**

On 01 April 2022, Frontex and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), in cooperation with the French border control authorities, launched at the Lyon Saint Exupéry airport the first integrated version of

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(7) Established by Council Joint Action 98/700/JHA.

(8) Established by Frontex Executive Director R-ED-2021-24 of 2 February 2021.

the Frontex-INTERPOL Electronic Library Documents System (FIELDS). The information system, developed and managed by the two agencies to support border guards and other law enforcement officers in authenticating travel and identity documents, is now available in the border management system of the French authorities.

Frontex has undertaken the FIELDS project in partnership with INTERPOL according to its respective mandates. The priority is to integrate FIELDS into EU Member States, but the system is global and will be gradually extended via INTERPOL to its 195 member countries, in line, *inter alia* with the international cooperation strategy of the Agency.

To advocate FIELDS through its installation and operationalisation within the IT systems of the border police agencies of the Western Balkans and Moldova, Frontex prompted the establishment of a FIELDS Western Balkans Regional Working Group. To that end, 21 nominated document experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as from Moldova, gathered in the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop to familiarise with the production of the main content of FIELDS, the Quick Check Cards (QCC). A QCC displays key images of documents to support front-line verification of authenticity.

After the FIELDS became operational in France, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) manifested the intention to include the system in a future amended version of Annex 9-Facilitation (FAL) of the 1944 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. This would recognise FIELDS as a recommended practice – part of the standards and recommended practices for international civil aviation – to facilitate the processing of passengers crossing air borders.

In this line, in December 2022, during the meeting of the ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) held in Bangkok at the IOM's 6<sup>th</sup> Border Management and Identity Conference, Frontex was appointed chair of the sub working group on border control. With the support of the Commission, the chair of the subgroup refers to both, the ICAO Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) and the ICAO New Technology Working Group. This gave Frontex, for the first time, the chairmanship of a working subgroup of ICAO. Dealing mainly with the ICAO border engagement strategy, it will address the transformation of the FIELDS into an ICAO recommended practice according to the process amending the Annex 9-Facilitation (FAL) and ease the process of gathering key information on documents from issuing agencies.

#### **Reference Manual**

In the course of 2022, Frontex continued the development of Frontex Reference Manual - online document library. The Agency organised four workshops to produce content with the participation of 83 members from the Expert Group on Document Control (EXP-DOC Group). By the end of 2022, the Reference Manual content was enriched with 20% additional content. While the content of the Reference Manual is prepared for the transition into FADO, the Quick Check Cards produced are then moved into the Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS).

#### **Operational Reference-Capability Framework in Document Check**

Frontex worked on the Operational Reference-Capability Framework in Document Check. This initiative aims at conceptualising document check and facial comparison capabilities in the context of border control to ensure the compatibility and complementarity of human resources and assets allocated border control. Whilst a first draft of the conceptual document was finalised in early 2022, over the 2022, a working group established by the High-Level Roundtable on Document and identity Control (HLRT) developed specific practical recommendations for the harmonisation of document and identity check training and equipment.

#### **Operational Support**

Between January and December 2022, the Agency received and processed 236 **Frontex Document Alerts**. To ensure that the standing corps members deployed, in particular the Advanced Level Document Officers (ALDOs), are regularly updated on document and identity fraud phenomena, Frontex implemented ten Roadshows, delivered eight operational briefings on document fraud to four JO and contributed to the content of an e-learning tool in support to a fifth JO.

Since 2021, Frontex is internally building the **ALDO community**, an informal group of standing corps officers – category 1, 2 and 3 members, who are specialised in the detection of document and identity fraud cases at the external border, facilitating the exchange of information, knowledge, expertise, and experience in response to the needs arising from the daily document checking activities in the operational field.

In 2022, document experts belonging to the standing corps category 1 benefitted from two webinars delivered by Frontex to exchange information on: the travel documents' security features; the most relevant document

or identity fraud phenomena encountered at the EU external borders; and the latest trends in counterfeiting and forging documents. One more webinar was delivered to Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers (MVCDOs) deployed in Frontex joint operations to keep them abreast with the latest trends related to their specialisation.

#### **Capacity building in the field of document fraud**

In 2022, Frontex made available 371 staff-days to actively contribute to the advanced basic training of the staff who joined the standing corps in 2022, as well to the advanced level training for standing corps ALDO profile. Another 33 staff-days were dedicated to the delivery of various awareness sessions on document and identity fraud.

#### **RETURN-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

In 2022, the European Centre for Returns Division launched new initiatives aimed at strengthening the cooperation with the Member States and at better addressing their needs. With a view to better support MS in managing their operational planning processes, ECRET Division established dedicated yearly bilateral consultations between April and August; the Agency held 30 bilateral meetings both with national authorities working on returns and one meeting with representatives of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) to jointly discuss trends, needs, standing corps deployment i.e. planning for 2022 and forecast for 2023, return profiles, etc.

In March 2022, the Voluntary Return Network (VRN) was set up: in this new forum experts from different national institutions discuss on how to harmonise the approach to return on a voluntary basis at the EU level, and where national perspectives can be shared. Furthermore, in March the Agency hosted the first meeting with MS on Collecting Return Operations (CRO), followed by a second one in May with the relevant third countries of return. As an outcome of those meetings, operational procedures for third countries implementing CROs were laid out paving the way for 2023 operational activities in this domain.

To ensure necessary synergies, in May 2022 the Management Board adopted a formal decision to establish the High-Level Roundtable (HLRT) and to formalise its relationship with the Management Board. The agreed solution allows for regular consultations on strategic topics in the field of return where practical and operational matters are brought forward for decision making.

#### **Pre-return assistance**

In 2022, the Agency continued to increase its support in the pre-return stage of the return process. In the area of third country cooperation various activities were implemented supporting identification and documentation, exchange of information and good practices. A new project was initiated to frame capacity building activities: the 'Technical Assistance Projects for Third Countries on Return, Readmission and Reintegration (TAP4RRR)' allowing Member States and Frontex to jointly undertake capacity building projects in a structured way.

In total, 11 European Return Liaison Officers (EURLO) were deployed by the Agency. At the end of 2022, 8 EURLOs were in place covering 10 key third countries of return (Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, and Vietnam), one discontinued (Afghanistan) while two positions in Bangladesh and Ivory Coast/Guinea remained vacant.

Support provided to MS through the deployment of return specialists (RS) increased in 2022, with 46 officers carrying out 63 deployments in 13 Member States. Their tasks ranged from counselling activities to support in the area of third country cooperation, booking flights and submitting return cases in various IT systems.

Following the success of the pilot exchange programme in 2021, the activity was continued as the 'Frontex Return Mobility Programme' allowing Member States' experts to exchange expertise and experiences in the field of return. In 2022 18 return experts took part in this programme. Additionally, with the input from Member States and other stakeholders training materials on good practices on returning children with families were developed.

#### **Return operations and voluntary returns**

In 2022, the Agency continued to provide comprehensive support to Member States to allow the maximum flexibility and implement returns in an efficient way. Beside the standard technical, operational and financial support, Frontex also implemented new operational solutions, such as Frontex organised return operations, humanitarian voluntary returns (of non-Ukrainian TCNs fleeing the war), and launched new deployments of FRESOs in MS.

Return type	No. flights	%	Countries of destination	No. returnees	No. monitors
Chartered flights	291	39%	32	9,919	281
Scheduled flights	8,789	60%	116	14,937	319
Bus	-	1%	3	12	3
TOTAL				24,868	

Table 3. Return activities in figures 2022.

- In 2022, 39% of all Frontex-supported returns were implemented on a voluntary basis (26% in 2021).
- At least one monitor was present on board of 73% of all Frontex-coordinated return operations by charter flights (compared to 58% in 2021).
- The Agency implemented its first fully-fledged Frontex organised return operations to Albania and Nigeria. In total, 80 third-country nationals were returned.
- Frontex exceptionally implemented 'humanitarian voluntary returns' to support MS in returning 849 non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war in Ukraine and willing to reach their home countries.

### Post-return assistance

The transfer of the European Return and Reintegration Programme (ERRIN) was successfully completed, and all deliverables in the ERRIN Transfer Plan were reached. The major steps were taken in 2022 in relation to the Joint Reintegration Services, which was one of the main deliverables of the ERRIN Transfer Plan and is considered as the flagship activity under the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration. The Joint Reintegration Services pilot project, which started in 2021 and was concluded in April 2022, aimed to pave the way to the larger roll-out. Under this pilot, in total, 68 persons in Armenia, Brazil, Ethiopia and Ukraine were provided with reintegration assistance.

As of 1 April 2022, the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS) were officially launched. Five partners <sup>(9)</sup> from the non-profit sector were selected to provide reintegration assistance to 24 third countries <sup>(10)</sup>. By the end of 2022, 17 Member States <sup>(11)</sup> are actively using the JRS and submitting cases in the Reintegration Assistance Tool (RIAT). In total, 784 cases, covering 1 015 persons were provided with reintegration assistance.

As regards Return and Reintegration Counselling activities, in 2022 the Agency defined its scope of activities in this area as part of a comprehensive work plan that will focus on activities implemented in the period between 2022 and 2024. One of its most important activities is the adoption of a harmonised EU-wide training curriculum for return and reintegration counselling, whose basis was developed in 2022 to be piloted and further expanded in 2023.

### Return-specific standing corps deployment

**Return Specialists (RS)** provided support to pre- and post-return activities as well as the management of relevant return IT systems. In 2022, In total 46 RS were deployed to 13 host Member States <sup>(12)</sup>, covering 63 deployments throughout the course of 2022. Their main activities focused on supporting cooperation with third countries of return (in particular in the area of identification and issuance of travel documents), return counselling and flight booking in the Frontex Application for Returns (FAR) module of the Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA).

The RS carried out 6,865 counselling sessions, booked 3,227 tickets and supported a large number of return operations with transit requests and other activities. Over 500 return cases were inserted in various IT systems

(9) Caritas International Belgium, International Return and Reintegration Assistance (IRARA), the Women Empowerment, Literacy and Development Organisation (WELDO), the European Technology and Training Centre (ETTC) and Life Makers Foundation Egypt (LMF).

(10) Initially 26 countries of origin were opened, however, due to the war in Ukraine, no reintegration assistance to Ukraine and the Russian Federation could be provided.

(11) Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland.

(12) Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia.

for identification and reintegration support. In the area of third country cooperation various activities were conducted to support the MS in identification, applications for travel documents and consular visits.

**Frontex Return Escort and Support Officers (FRESO)** carried out escorting tasks in 81 return operations (54 on board of charter flights and 27 on board of scheduled flights) and provided assistance in 14 return operations as the back-up team on board of charter flights. Additionally, based on Member States' requests, category 3 FRESOs have provided support on board of 5 return operations. The Agency concluded 7 implementation plans with host Member States for FRESO deployments in 2022:

	Rome	Frankfurt	Amsterdam	Vienna	BBU Austria <sup>(13)</sup>	Paris	AIU Larnaca <sup>(14)</sup>
FRESO	11	13	3	5	4	5	4

Table 4. (FRESO) carried out escorting tasks in return operations 2022.

### Return-related digitalisation

During 2022, on the basis of the RECAMAS reference model, three gap analyses were carried out (in Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia). Based on the previous gap analyses and implementation proposals agreed, Frontex supported the implementation of the follow-up recommendations in Lithuania (1 grant) and Slovenia (1 grant). The gap-analysis started in 2021 in Switzerland was not yet completed due to unavailability of the MS. No RECAMAS workshop was organised in 2022 while a reviewed version of model-RECAMAS is planned for 2023.

IRMA 1.0. has been slightly improved throughout 2022, as the application is approaching its end of life with the upcoming launch of IRMA 2.0. Improvements implemented throughout the year varied from content or access management and usability. New content was added to the platform to include up-to-date state of play in terms of returns to third countries and dedicated workspaces for the 'Technical Assistance Projects for Third Countries on Return, Readmission and Reintegration' (TAP4RRR) and 'Best Practices for Children in Return'.

IRMA 2.0. project development phase was ongoing during 2022, when two modules (access management and content management) were deployed for testing and qualified for deployment into production environment. The identification missions module has been installed in production and the pilot phase is ongoing. Development of additional 3 modules was contracted at the end of 2022, following delays encountered in the initial planning.

IRMA return data collection continued in 2022 with monthly statistical data reporting and yearly qualitative assessment for 2021. The data necessary for the European Commission evaluation under the obligations of Visa Code Article 25a was submitted on time. Throughout the year, the monthly IRMA statistical data was regularly reviewed in terms of data quality, completeness, and timeliness. Lastly, following the Agency's takeover of EUAA's asylum indicators related to return (i.e. return decisions issued linked with a negative/withdrawn asylum decision and effective returns linked with a negative/withdrawn asylum decision), the separate data collection on the EUAA side will be stopped as of January 2023 and Frontex will provide this data to EUAA accordingly.

The Agency introduced new releases of FAR scheduled and charter flights modules introducing new features i.a.:

Scheduled flights	Charter flights
Creation of new Member States' groups and new user groups;	Adaptation of the voluntary returns' module of TCNs fleeing the war in Ukraine;
Dedicated financial tool;	Updated FAR disclaimers in relation to critical operational plan provisions;
Launch of dedicated transit and new visualisation tools;	Alignment of the new FAR workstream with the existing functionalities for regular return operations;
Launch of statistical reports;	New Frontex staff roles supporting the deployment of FRESOs (all categories), as well as of Fundamental Rights Monitors;
Improvement of booking procedures.	Numerous developments and bug fixes on booking procedures coordinated or organised by Frontex;

Table 5. FAR application developments in 2022.

## SO3: Sustained European Border and Coast Guard capabilities

(13) The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU) in Austria.

(14) Larnaca Aliens and Immigration Unit (AIU) in Cyprus.

In 2022, the Agency moved forward in generating operational effect, through successfully planning its capabilities and making them available for deployment. Frontex has been developing human resources, technical equipment, and services to further strengthen the European Border and Coast Guard community. Moreover, the Agency has contributed to the creation of national capability plans through regular communication with the Member States.

The extended basic training programme – (E)BTP – with the experiential learning phase has been implemented for the first time. Simultaneously, the updated basic training has been delivered. As a result, 325 standing corps officers, both with and without law-enforcement background, were successfully trained and became fully operational in 2022.

To sustain the operational effort, more technical equipment was made available for operational purposes. The aerial surveillance was particularly diversified and the standing corps officers were equipped with their own weapons and protective equipment. The Agency also became the main overall provider of interpretation and cultural mediation service.

Frontex successfully carried out research activities that brought new innovative solutions in the Entry-Exit System domain, supporting the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in seamless travel solutions. Furthermore, common minimum standards were prepared to enhance operational capabilities for land and maritime border surveillance with the aim of being adopted in 2023.

### **Planning Capabilities**

The Capability planning framework continued to facilitate the process of establishing national CDPs and the overview and capability roadmap. In 2022, an expert group with representatives from MS/SAC and the Agency was created to prepare the capability overview. The focus was to collect all MS/SAC capability development plans and submit the overview to the European Commission by the end of 2022. Due to delays in the delivery of the National CDPs from the MS and SAC, the submission was postponed to the end of March 2023. All four Capability Development Network meetings were conducted in a hybrid mode or on-line.

#### **Annual planning process**

The Annual Implementation Report for 2021 was adopted by the Management Board through MB Decision 57/2022 and published in accordance with Article 65 of the Regulation on Frontex website. The following milestones were reached with regards to the planning for 2023:

- The Management Board decisions on Minimum Number of Items of Technical Equipment and Standing Corps (numbers and profiles per Member State and indicative multiannual planning) were adopted, and
- The Annual Bilateral Negotiations process for 2023 was also carried out successfully.

Over 2022, the Pooled Resources Network continued to be the forum of reference to prepare informed decision-making in the Management Board as regards the annual planning of capabilities and the establishment of pools. All four meetings were conducted either on-line or in a hybrid mode.

The Annual Process for Capability Planning and Establishing the Pools supported the ongoing operational activities in 2022 while preparing for the operational activities in 2022–2023. The capability pools were maintained and regular reporting was presented to the Management Board meetings.

#### **Sustainability and resilience**

With a view to contributing to EU strategic priorities, Frontex is addressing sustainability and resilience in the framework of capability development activities on the strategic and operational level. In 2022, the Agency commissioned an external consultancy to provide advice on how to establish a baseline for measuring the energy and environmental footprint of the human resources and technical equipment deployed to operational theatre.

In the first quarter of 2022, the Agency conducted a pilot training in eco-driving to a selected group of standing corps members and further included the on-line awareness raising training on eco-driving practices in the basic training of the newly employed standing corps members. More details on activities related to addressing sustainability in relation to capabilities can be found in Annex VI: Environmental Management.

### **Training of the standing corps**

The existing 6-month basic training programme (BTP) for the EBCG SC category 1 was updated to ensure its alignment with the latest operational developments. The newly developed one-year extended basic training programme (E)BTP for the EBCG SC category 1, was tailored to the recruits without law-enforcement background and it includes 9 weeks of on-the-job learning at the EU external borders encompassing sea, air, and land borders. This enabled the learners to apply theoretical cognitions in practice and replenish their skills, preparing themselves for the deployment at the external EU border. The EBTP was successfully implemented throughout 2022 in cooperation with multiple Member States.

Over the course of the year, 352 officers of the EBCG SC cat 1 have successfully completed their (E)BTP and received certificate of completion. In addition, 655 EBCG SC of all categories have received specialised training over 2022. Furthermore, the Agency has been implementing the annual training on the use of force for EBCG SC cat 1, this programme elaborates on the best practices identified together with experts from MS/SAC and fully meets the requirements set in the Annex V of the Regulation, similarly the training programme on enhancing the management and leadership skills of the middle management EBCG SC officers was launched.

Training courses were referenced with the sectoral qualification framework (SQF) competency framework and aligned to quality assurance standards. Subject matter experts were involved in the delivery of Frontex training and certified further on as Frontex trainers. Besides the existing internal quality assurance system, an external evaluation was launched to assess the quality of the programme. Another element contributing to ensure the pursued impact on training activities is the centralised system to manage and monitor the learners' records, which was consolidated by adopting the newest technologies available for learning design, development, and management. The centralised system is connecting all training platforms in order to design and analyse the learners' paths and support implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures in course design, development and delivery.

### Other specialised training

#### **Strengthening the capabilities and capacities of MS/SAC border and coast guards**

The Agency assisted MS and SAC in the implementation of the recommendations from vulnerability assessments. Consequently, in 2022, three MS/SAC received technical assistance in the form of specialised training in CIRAM-based risk analysis and six MS received training sessions on countering document fraud. MS/SAC were also assisted with bridging gaps identified in the context of Schengen evaluations and with developing capacities and capabilities in relation to the deployment of the newest large-scale IT systems, namely the Entry-Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS).

Furthermore, the Agency provided specialised courses in the field of border management to approximately 4,000 participants from Member States as well as in the areas of document fraud, firearms detection, screening/debriefing and fundamental rights for border guards where more than 300 participants from non-EU countries were trained.

#### **Training of the Fundamental Rights Monitors and ETIAS CU staff**

The Agency provided fundamental rights monitors and ETIAS CU staff with tailored specialised training. This 228 hours training programme for the fundamental rights monitors was developed under the direct guidance of the Fundamental Rights Office. For the senior fundamental rights monitors an additional 2-days training focusing on improving their managerial skills was delivered while 48 fundamental rights monitors received the basic training on forced-return monitoring.

The training programme of the ETIAS CU staff benefited not only from direct steering of the newly established ETIAS Division but also from the cooperation with eu-LISA and Frontex Data Protection Officer. A total of 65 staff members were trained in a two-month programme.

#### **Support to Member States capabilities in view of Entry Exit System entry into force**

In 2022, Frontex Entry/Exit System (EES) land border pilot projects were implemented, in coordination with the host Member States Spain and Bulgaria, as well as EU-LISA. The pilot projects mapped and successfully presented a comprehensive implementation of the main EES processes, enabling the development of a proof of concept for a universal and scalable technology-assisted solution supporting border workflows.

Other capability development activities supporting MS preparations for the EES included the publication on Frontex website of the Technical Guide for Border Checks on Entry Exit System (EES) related equipment <sup>(15)</sup>. The Agency also contributed to the development of the EES Handbook prepared by the Commission.

### Career and personal development management

In 2022, the Agency established a working group to work on a regulatory framework related to career development and awards systems for the standing corps. These included learning and development for standing

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(15) <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/technical-guide-for-border-checks-on-entry-exit-system-related-equipment/>

corps, advancement within standing corps (ranks), recognition of achievements in operational activities and recognition upon leaving the service, competence management, etc.

The Agency also issued a call for additional profiles. As a result, 142 standing corps category 1 officers have applied for being assigned with an additional profile (different than the one assigned as primary at the end of their basic training) as part of career development. The assignment committee allocated additional profiles for all applicants. The profile assignments match the training plan designed for each standing corps officer so that they can broaden their competences and also takes into consideration personal aspirations towards specific operational activities.

In addition, the Agency issued a call for ALDO and Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers (MVCDO) profiles to join Document and Identity Control Helpdesk. Five standing corps category 1 officers were chosen. The selected officers will be involved in CED operational activities and contribute to activities such as FDA validation, implementation of awareness session, delivery of training sessions, use of technical equipment, etc.

Additionally, the Agency launched two calls for monitors to support the (E)BTP. As a result, 13 standing corps category 1 officers were selected and deployed to perform the following roles and activities:

- be the educational/conduct supervisor and reporter of one or two cadets' groups;
- provide input to the learners probationary and annual appraisal reports;
- be the first point of contact and act as a mentor for standing corps category 1 learners;
- support training activities (e.g., material, uniforms, leaves, schedules, etc) as requested;
- contribute as trainers to the (E)BTP.

Trainers and instructors supporting the (E)BTP and specialised training, with different professional backgrounds, unique skills and expertise provided timely ad-hoc support as trainers and instructors, as mentors and coaches.

#### Deployment of the standing corps

The number of standing corps category 1 officers increased from 595 to 963 in 2022, the increase in number triggered in turn additional workload in terms of planning and management of their deployments. During 2022, the Agency's owned weapons were purchased, and the first EBCG SC category 1 were deployed as border guard officers with weapons to perform border surveillance tasks. In 2022, the Agency managed approximately 422 standing corps category 2.

#### Occupational safety and health

Occupational safety and health (OSH) measures are an obligation as well as an instrument to prevent negative consequences on the staff which may impact the overall operational effectiveness of the Agency. Frontex has the duty to establish, implement, monitor and continuously improve the OSH policies and procedures, covering the headquarters, antenna offices and operational areas.

In 2022, the new Policy on Operational Occupational Safety and Health for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (OSH Policy 2.0) was approved, together with the second edition of the Recommended Vaccination Scheme for personnel assigned to coordinated operational activities of the Agency. The OSH component has been included in all operational plans. The Agency started incorporating OSH requirements in the procurement of new equipment. Other measures in this area include a Confidential Counsellors network for standing corps as well as pre-deployment and deployment field missions to assess the risks to health and safety.

#### Logistics support

In 2022, the Agency registered over 1,782 pieces of light technical equipment and 623 pieces were deployed in the operational areas. All standing corps category 1 officers received full-service uniforms, and 250 of them were equipped with protective glasses, flashlights, tactical belts, gloves and multitool kits. In addition, the officers deployed with weapons received bullet proof vests and helmets. A 6-year plan for acquisition of new technical equipment and a comprehensive list of ICT equipment was drafted for future purchase purposes to provide logistical support in the operational areas. Moreover, the Agency organised maintenance and disposal of equipment and set up new storage locations in Warsaw for Frontex owned assets.

#### Antenna offices

In 2022, the Agency presented the concept note on the establishment of the antenna offices <sup>(16)</sup>. The Agency launched a pilot phase to be conducted in a volunteering Member State with the duration of one year. The aim

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(16) In the course of the 88th Management Board meeting held on 26 January 2022.

of the pilot project is to test if the newly created antenna office is able to fulfil the logistics-related tasks set by the Regulation.

In July 2022, the Agency launched the call for expression of interest for Member States to participate in the pilot phase for antenna office either as a host or observer. Three Member States responded with the offer to host the antenna office and four other Member States applied for the status of an observer. In September 2022, the Agency had a kick-off meeting with the Member States applying to be observers in this project. In October and November 2022, Frontex conducted field visits to the volunteering Member States to host pilot phase with the purpose of assessing the facilities offered by national authorities.

The Agency drafted a Service Catalogue of Antenna Office and informed the volunteering host Member States about the indicative level of services. The evaluation of the three offers and selection of the host Member State is ongoing and foreseen to be concluded in 2023.

### **Weapons management**

Throughout 2022, Frontex received and registered 1,000 pieces of weapons in Opera Evolution. Additionally, Agency received non-lethal weapons (batons, handcuffs, and lachrymatory agents) as well as personal protective equipment, bulletproof vests and helmets. The Agency set up the central weapons storage with the Polish authorities nearby Warsaw for weapons and ammunition. The Agency established the rules and procedures for weapons management (transport, storage, registration, and handover). In 2022, a total of 94 standing corps category 1 officers received weapons, non-lethal weapons, and other equipment (1 pistol, 30 pieces of ammunition, 2 batons, 1 handcuffs) for deployment after successfully passing their security checks and the use of force training.

### **Fleet management**

Throughout 2022, the Agency deployed 85 patrol vehicles, 99 transportation vehicles and 11 vehicles for migration management. The yearly maintenance of the leased fleet of 148 vehicles was performed together with the mandatory technical check-up in Poland and it was completed for 17 Land Rovers deployed in four countries. Currently, there are 630 valid UTA fuel cards, the Agency started to use fuel cards for long-term rented cars – in Lithuania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Spain and Greece. To adapt to different weather conditions, the Agency has established a special contract for the purchase of winter and studded tyres used in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

### **Research for emerging capabilities**

In line with the Regulation requirements, Frontex proactively monitors and contributes to research and innovation activities relevant for the European integrated border management (EIBM). Based on the Terms of Reference for cooperation in the EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme signed between Frontex and European Commission in 2020, Frontex provided feedback to the definition of Horizon Europe Framework Programme (Horizon) in relation to border management grants. The Agency supported the implementation of thirteen (13) border security projects within Horizon, as well as proactively disseminated their results to the EBCG community in network meetings and during thematic discussions on technologies for border checks and surveillance.

During the reporting period, Frontex delivered the Research Study on the Green Deal and the EBCG as well as provided input to JRC Technical Report on Weak Signals in Border Management and Surveillance Technologies. In addition, Frontex published the research study completed in 2022 on Technology Foresight on Biometrics for the Future of Travel.

In 2022, Frontex offered to conduct selected research activities under the auspices of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security. For the first time the scope of the new research studies was consulted with Hub members from the very start, and the research teams were formed by volunteering Hub members. Furthermore, the Agency launched its first call for proposals under the Frontex Research Grants for border security research grants. The aim is to promote and steer the work of research institutions and academia towards the areas of science and technology fields most relevant to the operational needs of the EBCG.

### **Technology Innovation and support to MS capabilities in view of Entry Exit System entry into force**

Frontex provides a technology-based capability development to the EBCG, by conducting testing of novel solutions before regular products and services are procured. In 2022, the focus of technology innovation activities was on solutions supporting Member States preparations for the EES.

At the beginning of 2022, the Agency designed and launched a support package to the Member States for the implementation of EES covering several actions under the remit of various entities in Frontex. The support actions included piloting solutions, technical advice and study visits, support to BCP process analysis, simulations of BCP flows, study visits and a conference on EES in the maritime domain, held in October 2022. In 2022, in consultation with MS, as well as with the European Commission the Agency launched a pilot project testing the use of an application on the conditions of entry questionnaire for the EES and its impact on border flows and processing times. This pilot project implemented at the Saint Malo seaport is scheduled to finalise in 2023. Based on findings of different actions, and results of discussions with MS, the Agency developed a toolkit on best practices on EES for BCPs, which was made available in the dedicated online platform at the end of 2022.

Frontex continued thematic dialogues with Member States on operational needs. In the area of surveillance these discussions supported the preparations and launch of the pilot project for Vertical Take-off and Landing Remotely Piloted Aircraft System for multi-purpose aerial surveillance as well as a Prize Contest on the Detection of Low Flying Objects. The Prize Contest was designed as a novel activity in a format that will require increased interaction with Member States and extensive internal coordination.

In 2022, Frontex continued to hold Industry Days designed to meet the information needs on the state of the art of technologies and solutions relevant to the EBCG. During 2022, the Agency received 277 applications on solutions. As many as 88 companies were invited to showcase their technologies to the EBCG in the Industry Days. For all companies who submitted a proposal to participate in the Industry Days and were not selected, these were invited to the Online Showcase Platform, where information on 175 solutions was shared.

#### **Towards standardisation and interoperability**

The consultations with Member States on the methodology for the development of Technical Standards were concluded and led to the adoption of methodology by the Management Board. From thereon, the maintenance and update of the technical standards followed and will conclude as part of the annual capabilities cycle at the end of the first quarter 2023 with the adoption of updated standards by the Management Board.

Throughout 2022 the Agency continued its support to the development of Common Minimum Standards for Land Border Surveillance. At the same time, the Agency launched the work on the development of Common Minimum Standards for Maritime Surveillance.

**HO2: Reinforce the external dimension aimed at multiplying Frontex operational impact through cooperation with the European Commission and EEAS, as well as through partnership with the Member States, EU entities, third countries and international organisations**

#### **Cooperation with third countries**

##### **International border and coast guard community gathered in Warsaw for bi-annual exchange**

On 26-28 October, Frontex hosted the **25th International Border Police Conference** in Warsaw. A flagship event of the Agency, the conference brought together over 260 border and coast guard executives from around the world, along with representatives of different EU bodies and international organisations.

The overarching theme of the 2022 conference was *Contingency planning for emergencies at the borders*, reflecting the challenges the global border and coast guard community has faced during the past three years, among them the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the war in Ukraine.

##### **Strengthened support to Ukraine and Moldova**

In response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine, Frontex joined the EU efforts to provide technical and operational support to Moldova and Ukraine. Joint Operation Moldova (detailed on SO2 above) was complemented with additional capacity building measures, including on tackling cross-border crime and supporting Moldova to work together with Frontex in the framework of EUROSUR.

As soon as the situation allowed, the Agency also reactivated contacts with the key counterparts in Ukraine, reengaging them in the dialogue on strengthening technical and operational cooperation. In response to the dire needs for technical support at the country's borders, Frontex developed a technical assistance project, geared to support the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine with the most needed technical equipment. A grant of EUR 12 million was awarded in 2022 and the project will be implemented throughout 2023, enabling Ukrainian partners to purchase various types of essential equipment, such as warm winter uniforms for border guards, electric generators, portable power stations, field kitchens, patrol vehicles and pumps.

##### **Enhanced cooperation in the Western Balkans amid growing migratory pressure**

Amid growing migratory pressure in the Western Balkans, Frontex worked to enhance the Agency's operational capacities, particularly in Serbia, and to prepare for the implementation of the Status Agreement with North Macedonia, envisaged for the II quarter of 2023, once the agreement enters into force. Complementing these efforts, the Agency continued and further strengthened its capacity building and technical assistance work in the region. The project 'EU Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Systems in the Western Balkans' entered into its third phase of implementation and a new grant agreement was signed with DG NEAR for a multiannual project 'EU Regional Support to strengthen border security capacities in the Western Balkans'. Frontex also initiated negotiations to update cooperation frameworks with all six Western Balkan partners and supported the Commission in its efforts to negotiate new Status Agreements.

#### **A new forum on border security operations and capacity building**

Under the auspices of the Czech Presidency of the EU Council, Frontex launched a new forum to exchange on the implementation of the EU Status Agreements in third countries. Bringing together EU Member States and third countries where Frontex has joint operations with executive powers, the meeting served as a platform to exchange practices and jointly address challenges in operational theatre, but also to follow-up on commitments taken at political level, such as at the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs held on 3-4 November 2022 in Tirana. The first meeting was attended by approximately 70 representatives from 14 Member States as well as Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine joined as special guests in view of the ongoing talks to conclude their respective Status Agreements.

#### **EU partners and international organisations**

##### **Frontex kicks-off cooperation with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)**

In March 2022, Frontex concluded a Working Arrangement with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). Under the agreement, the agencies will exchange operational experience and may conduct joint capacity building and training related to Frontex's use of aircraft in its surveillance activities. EASA will assist Frontex in the selection of best providers and equipment, as well as in monitoring the safety of the operations of Frontex aircrafts, including those unmanned.

##### **Strengthening cooperation with the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) actors**

In July 2022, Frontex concluded its first Working Arrangement with a civilian CSDP mission – EUCAP Sahel Niger. The cooperation will focus on the prevention of illegal migration as well as related cross-border crime, including terrorism, document fraud, in full respect of EU and international instruments protecting human rights. Frontex and EUCAP Sahel Niger have agreed to cooperate in the area of capacity building with a view to promoting IBM standards.

#### **Frontex liaison officers' networks**

##### **Frontex deploys the liaison officer to the Eastern Partnership region**

The Agency continued to further consolidate and expand the network of Frontex Liaison Officers (FLOs) in third countries, which in 2022 reached six FLOs covering 14 third countries. In July 2022, the FLO to the Eastern Partnership countries took up her duties in Chisinau, Moldova, with a mandate to cover Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine <sup>(17)</sup>. Although initially envisaged to be based in Kyiv, Ukraine, the Russian aggression in Ukraine led to a temporary deployment to Chisinau, with an intention to return to Kyiv once security conditions allow for it.

The FLOs in third countries continued to support the operationalization of status agreements, implementation of working arrangements and the negotiation of new ones and to be part of the ILO Networks established at local and regional levels.

##### **Finalised pilot for deploying Member States liaison officers**

In July 2022, Frontex finalised the one-year pilot for hosting Member States' Liaison Officers in the Agency's headquarters in Warsaw. The aim of the pilot was to test and fine-tune the modalities of the deployments, as set by the Management Board, before the network of the liaison officers reaches its full size.

The benefits and the lessons learned from the pilot were assessed in a comprehensive internal evaluation report, recognising the value of deployments and outlining further measures for improvement. The outcomes were

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*(17) Belarus was originally envisaged as part of the FLO mandate, but engagement with the country has since been suspended, in line with the broader EU's policy towards the country.*

presented to the 91<sup>st</sup> Management Board and led to an updated Management Board Decision on the rules and conditions for the deployment of the Member States liaison officers to the Agency, adopted in January 2023.

Following the pilot, the Agency continued to host a total of nine Liaison Officer's representing eight Member States and Schengen Associated Countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy (2), Slovakia, Spain (2), and Switzerland.

### HO3: Develop an upgraded management system aimed at ensuring accountability, regularity, and legality of all Frontex activities

#### Fundamental rights

A very important domain within the Agency's operational activities relates to the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights. In order to fulfil these obligations, during the reporting period, additional 22 Fundamental Rights Monitors (FROMs) were externally recruited <sup>(18)</sup> to fulfil the obligation of 40 FROMs required by Article 110(6) of the Regulation. The first batch of 20 FROMs took up their posts in the summer of 2021. At the end of 2022, the Fundamental Rights Office nearly reached its full enhanced capacity with 44 FROMs engaged/in service (30 at AD level, and 14 at AST level). In parallel, the newly appointed Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer took up his duties on 1 March 2022.

Upon engagement and before being deployed, the newly recruited FROMs followed a special training programme. Within the reporting period, the staff of the Fundamental Rights Office, conducted 1 183 deployment days visiting 50 countries with a significant focus on Greece, Italy, Lithuania, and Spain while in 2021, for comparison, the FRO conducted 200 deployment days, visiting 10 countries. The focus given to the selected countries was based on a risk assessment and Frontex operational engagement in those border sections within the reporting period.

Since some of the monitors also serve as forced return monitors, they took part in 37 return missions contributing to the full compliance of the activities with the legal framework in place. The Fundamental Rights Office delivered training to the standing corps and national officers on relevant standards and practices. In total, over 87 training days were provided (+74% vs. 2021).

The Fundamental Rights Office continued handling serious incident reports, with the number of cases related to fundamental rights increasing from 10 in 2020, 62 in 2021, to 72 in 2022. The highest number of the serious incidents' reports logged related to Greece (23 SIRs), Albania (15 SIRs), and Lithuania (11 SIRs). Furthermore, the complaints mechanism saw a substantial increase in cases (69 cases logged in 2022 compared to 27 in 2021, with 8 and 6 cases respectively assessed as admissible).

The FRO continued monitoring Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance (MAS) services in the situational room and cooperating with Frontex Situation Centre (FSC), Frontex Surveillance Sector (FSS) and Information Fusion Centre (IFC) to establish an efficient monitoring process by adopting policy documents, including a template on a fundamental rights assessment of the service requested and a concept note on cooperation between FRO and FSC/FSS/IFC.

In the framework of the FRO fundamental rights due diligence process, the FRO provided the Agency's International and European Cooperation division (IEC) preliminary assessments on fundamental rights implications of Frontex ongoing and planned structured cooperation with several of the third countries (i.e. Canada, Nigeria, Mauritania, Cabo Verde, Moldova, Gambia, Niger, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, etc.)

The office continued to provide input to the wide range of Frontex processes, from operational plans to evaluations and working arrangements, providing comments to more than 145 dossiers during 2022, including all operational plans and evaluations. The Fundamental Rights Officer also issued opinions on significant fundamental rights concerns, including three opinions on the fundamental rights situation in areas where Frontex is operating in Greece; an opinion on MAS services in the central Mediterranean; on the fundamental rights implications on the European integrated border management in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine; and

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<sup>(18)</sup> And additional 16 FROMs were re-hired in a higher function group/grade.

drafted a note collecting good practices implemented by MS and Frontex in order to respect and promote fundamental rights in the EIBM in response to the war in Ukraine.

The adoption by the Frontex Management Board of the Fundamental Rights Strategy at the beginning of 2021 and the Fundamental Rights Action Plan (FRAP) in November 2021 proves the commitment of the Agency to define and operationalise the compliance of fundamental rights in its activities. Following the adoption of these important documents, the Fundamental Rights Officer organised the inaugural meeting of the Fundamental Rights Action Plan Focal Points on 11 May 2022. During the reporting period, out of the 87 activities foreseen by the action plan to mainstream fundamental rights across all activities of the Agency, eight have been fully implemented; fifty-six have been implemented and were ongoing (are implemented on a systematic manner and a rolling-basis); seventeen were partially implemented; and two were delayed.

### Human resources

The Agency reached 2,063 filled posts by the end of 2022. This number entailed filling 753 vacancies along the year. However, due to the internal turnover (152 staff members were appointed to new positions after having successfully participated in an external recruitment process) and an external turnover (92 staff members left the Agency) the net increase in staff was 509. This result can be placed into perspective in view of the staff recruited by the end of 2019 when 749 were filled since Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 was adopted towards end of 2022. The extensive work completed within the human resources domain include the following areas:

#### Talent acquisition:

- 52 new external recruitment procedures launched with 812 job offers made and 50 secondments extended.
- 753 vacant positions were filled: 279 non-standing corps posts filled (TAs, CAs and SNEs), including 40 fundamental rights monitors, 65 posts filled in ETIAS, and 409 European Border and Coast Guard Officers (standing corps category 1) recruited.
- 50 trainees engaged for 5-months' Blue Book traineeship programme.

#### Personnel administration:

- 753 newcomers (TAs, CAs and SNEs) onboarded, involving induction sessions, individual meetings, personnel files creation, encoding in data bases, advanced payments, etc.
- HR reporting module operational, development of paperless standby duty verification and payment process initiated (work is being finalised).
- Concluding the contribution agreement for Frontex SNEs' children with the accredited European School in Warsaw and the adoption of MB Decision <sup>(19)</sup> on social measures linked to schooling of children of Frontex SNEs.
- Processing of approximately 550 schooling reimbursement applications, 40 social measures applications (top-up reimbursement of schooling costs and the supplementary aid for the disabled).
- Issuing 275 certificates to staff members and replying to 4,850 queries from Frontex staff members in the area of rights and entitlements and time management.

#### Career development and training:

- Alignment of the training activities to the outcomes of the strategic learning needs analysis and elaboration of the Policy for Learning and Development <sup>(20)</sup>.
- Development and implementation of digitalisation of request process for language courses and preparation of the digital request for other training requests (implementation expected in Q1 2023).
- Design of the concept and programme of the future Leadership Management Development Programme as part of the HR2.0 and beyond project.
- Management of annual appraisal process comprising 1,200 reports.
- Induction training run for three different target audiences (non-standing corps staff, standing corps and ETIAS Central Unit Division).

#### Expatriate services:

- Processing of the 350 MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) card applications and 152 PESEL (personal identity number) identification applications.

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*(19) Management Board Decision 69/2022 of 26 December 2022 adopting social measures linked to schooling of children of Frontex Seconded National Experts (SNEs).*

*(20) Executive Director Decision on Policy for Learning & Development adopted on 25 November 2022 pursuant to the Management Board Decision 60/2021 on the Framework for Learning and Development adopted on 25 October 2021.*

- 100 cars registered (ordinary plates), 11 diplomatic cars registered/deregistered.
- 145 tax refund claims processed, and 544 cases of other administrative assistance completed (medical services, bank-related issues, rental contract proofing, car tax related issues etc.).

### Financial management

The Agency continued to strengthen its internal capacity to achieve a full budget execution, by providing internal tools and adequate regular reporting for full overview and detailed knowledge of evolving budget implementation. As a result, the Agency implemented 99,4% of its 2022 budget, which demonstrates the efficiency and effectiveness of internal controls put in place and the significant improvements made in the budget management.

In parallel, the Agency continued to develop several financial management processes and improved collaboration with internal entities. An area of focus was the optimisation of grant-related processes. This focus improved the compliance of the final documents for calls for proposals, the evaluation process and subsequent grant management. Furthermore, the use of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) was implemented in return activities i.e. Joint Reintegration Services - JRS. The objective was to help the operational area to ensure longer-term partnership for activities, which brings more stability to the process and optimization. Given the success achieved, the use of FPAs can be further extended to other areas of activity of the Agency.

Despite the fact that the number of financial transactions increased more than four times in the past two years, whilst the staff size of the finance unit remained the same, all transactions have been closed and the end-of-year period was concluded successfully. The increase in workload applies as well to corporate travel service who successfully provided support to a growing customer-base despite limitations in terms of staff.

### Digital services and cybersecurity

During 2022, the work continued towards the reorganization and alignment of digital services in line with the Regulation's vision and growth of the Agency. Its key elements were formally approved in the form of ICT Strategy, to be considered as the baseline for programming, reporting, and budgeting activities in this domain. During 2022, the following improvements were implemented:

- **Cybersecurity** in the scope of organizational capabilities as well as concrete activities (e.g., volume of penetration tests, evaluations, risk analysis, monitoring).
- **Project management** where ICT PM2 Toolkit was updated with elements of portfolio management and prioritization of projects. The methodological elements have been practiced during the regular portfolio management meetings with business areas for better communication and planning. Prioritization and monitoring of the key performance indicators was fine-tuned in both portfolio and ICT and Information Governance Board meetings.
- A number of projects and initiatives progressed and were completed, i.a. elements of **IRMA** system for return operations and selected modules of vulnerability assessment processes (**VAP**) **platform** were developed and deployed; **OPERA** system was managed for its evolution and perfection maintenance as well as integrated with other systems; **FADO** project progressed for readiness towards the procurement phase; and GreenField project prepared a new safer and modern technical infrastructure for **EUROSUR**.
- Coordination of all Frontex business units in planning and executing budgets for all expenditures related to ICT technologies and projects, including an endorsed policy for Digital Products Management.
- Enterprise Architecture a significant project initiated in 2022 and progressing in 2023.
- In scope of administrative area, a number of critical workflows and automation processes were deployed including time registration system, Ares, widening the scope of use of electronic signature and a new service desk application for effectively supporting ETIAS.

### Security and corporate services

Within the reporting year, in corporate services, the most significant achievements were the conclusions of two tenders for office space. One secured additional office space in the Agency headquarters (HQ), while the other secured the office space for the ETIAS CU in another location in Warsaw. The space ensured under both contracts is to be delivered for occupation in Q2 of 2023. The ETIAS CU building will also function as Alternative Office Facility for critical functions in the Warsaw HQ should this facility be temporarily unavailable, and vice versa, creating the necessary resilience for the Agency's physical infrastructure.

### Legal and Procurement services

A total of 48 draft decisions of the Management Board and numerous draft decisions of the Executive Director were revised. The work of the legal team ensured the compliance of the Agency with the applicable legal

framework of the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896. This included the drafting of key documents for the implementation of the Frontex fundamental rights framework (such as the complaints mechanism) and assisting with the preparation of other key decisions on operational matters (such as on the storage and transportation of weapons) and governance matters (such as the security rules or the rules on administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings). Legal services maintained its delivery of client-oriented and professional legal solutions to the different levels of the Agency management while flagging inherent legal risks and remaining successful in defending Frontex in litigation cases (for which there has been an increase in 2022), both before national courts and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Legal advice and support in operational matters to business units focused on a wide array of thematic areas, spanning from the operationalisation of the EBCG standing corps to the drafting and implementation of operational plans governing Frontex's operations and activities, with a view to always ensuring the legality of actions on behalf of the Agency and its staff. Furthermore, the transparency office processed a continuously increasing number of applications for public access to documents with the significantly higher number of 469 applications received in 2022 than in previous years, which constitutes an increase by nearly 34 percent year-on-year.

All procedures included in the annual procurement plan of 2022 and timely submitted were published. The vast majority were complex and high-value tenders related to standing corps, operational support and increased administrative needs. The improved planning and monitoring of the annual procurement plan establishing new processes via formal exercises and consultation with the Management Board's Working Group of Budget and Accounts was duly followed in 2022.

#### Data Protection

In relation to compliance with data protection acquis, 2022 saw an increase in the demand of advice, not only internally, but also from relevant stakeholders, such as Member States and COM in their engagement with the Agency's activities. That increase was also translated into topics for consultation evolving in their complexity in line with the increased awareness in data protection matters. The year was marked by the negative opinions of the European Data Protection Supervisor in relation to the adopted Management Board Decisions 68/2021 and 69/2021 where EDPS highlighted several areas that could lead to non-compliance with the Data Protection Regulation and the EBCG Regulation, the Agency moved swiftly to addressing the EDPS recommendations and created an implementation plan to address in a systematic manner all the open issues. Equally, as a result of a negative Opinion of the EDPS issued in 2021, the Agency proceeded to redraft the Management Board Decision 56/2021 following the existing recommendations and sent the new text with the EDPS for prior consultation.

The EDPS also conducted an audit in October 2022. It was the first time the EDPS conducted an audit at Frontex since 2014. The scope related to the processing of personal data for the purpose of risk analysis, the processing of personal data for the purpose of identifying suspects of cross-border crimes operational personal data and its exchange with Europol and Eurojust, and the implementation of the data protection by design and by default principle, in particular for the processing of personal data resulting from the activities of screening and debriefing of migrants. Equally, the EDPS conducted a field visit at working level with the purpose of preparation for answering consultation on EUROSUR.

It is noteworthy to highlight that 2022 saw a substantial increase in data subject requests. While the previous year, the Agency received five requests for access, in 2022 the agency received 17 requests for access, which is an increase of 240% compared to the previous year.

#### Inspection and Control

Within the Inspection and Control Office, highlights for the period include the comprehensive work carried out in support to addressing recommendations received from scrutiny bodies i.e. FSWG, WF FRaLO, OLAF and EO whereby liaison functions were delivered as well as certain coordination tasks requiring internal horizontal action to address the recommendations received. Further to this and in compliance with IAS recommendations ICO initiated the Frontex project methodology development and the Project Management Office implementation with the support of the Centre of Excellence in PM<sup>2</sup> (CoEPM<sup>2</sup>). The Frontex project guide describing the methodology will be released at the end of March 2023. The same month, the second and refined version of the project portfolio will be made available. The PMO services will be gradually made available within 2023, expanding the existing project management consultation service already being offered.

#### Transparency and accountability

In 2022, the Agency prioritised efforts to ensure transparency and accountability. To process the increasing number of applications for public access to documents in a timely manner, the Transparency Office of the Agency was strengthened. Public register of documents was developed with around 1,900 key documents uploaded at

the end of 2022. Communication strategy was updated to ensure that the public is given objective, comprehensive, reliable and easily understandable information on Agency's work.

The Agency regularly and proactively reported to the European Parliament (EP) to assist it to fulfil its oversight role. The Agency shared with the EP a large number of documents on a regular basis, in line with the Regulation and reported comprehensively in the context of the discharge procedure, including on the follow-up to the recommendations received. Members of Executive Management participated whenever invited in meetings of Frontex Scrutiny Working Group and the EP's LIBE Committee to discuss issues of interest such as Frontex operations, cooperation with third countries, application of Article 46, and operational personal data processing. Delegations from the EP were hosted in Frontex headquarters and visited Agency's operations. In addition, in 2022, the Agency provided timely replies via the European Commission to 35 written questions submitted by the MEPs.

After the resignation of the former Executive Director, the Agency worked to ensure business continuity, enhance integrity and accountability arrangements at the cross-Agency level, improve the management culture, strengthen the fundamental rights framework, and regain stakeholders' trust. The action plan on remedial actions in the transition period was developed to that end. To further follow up on the issues raised in the OLAF report, the Head of Inspection and Control Office was tasked to draft an action plan which was presented to the Frontex Management Board in January 2023.

#### Internal Audit function

The internal oversight in the Agency was also reinforced with the establishment of the Internal Audit Capability, and the adoption of the Internal Audit Charter, paramount development to the establishment of a robust internal audit function to complement ongoing efforts to strengthen the existing Agency-wide oversight and accountability mechanisms. The head of IAC took up his duties on mid-July 2023. The first IAC Annual Audit Plan was adopted by the Management Board in January 2023. The establishment of the IAC enhanced the combined assurance approach by building on the synergies between the different assurance providers including IAS, ECA, EC's DGs and external contractors tasked with auditing the Frontex financial statements.

#### Communications

The Agency strives in providing coherent, relevant and timely information on the Agency's work to its internal and external audiences. To that end an external and internal communication strategy was developed by the Agency and endorsed by the Management Board. To reach various audiences different communication channels were used by the Agency, including the Frontex website, social media channels, the intranet and publications. In addition, Frontex actively communicated with a number of European and international media outlets and researchers. It also regularly promoted new recruitment notices to attract new talent.

A number of new audio-visual materials were produced to engage with the public and promote Frontex activities, including, 10 videos explaining the work of the Frontex standing corps officers and the main tasks of the various profiles, operations such as SAR workshops, EMPACT activities and the deployments to the Ukrainian borders.

#### Strategic management

The key achievements described in this segment of the document were attained under the strategic steering of Frontex Management Board, the Agency's main governance body, that conducted five regular and eight extraordinary meetings through the reporting period, providing support to the Executive Director *ad interim*, endorsing the amended organisational structure of the Agency and adopting strategic decisions setting the necessary frameworks for the Agency's work such as the Methodology for Development of Technical Standards for the equipment to be deployed in Frontex activities, the appointment of the Security Officer. The Board was regularly being updated on fundamental rights and data protection matters. In performing this work the Management Board was assisted the Executive Board as well as by several working groups, the Budget and Accounts focused on resources, internal control and horizontal matters such as the project of new premises and the working group to establish the technical and operational strategy for European integrated border management. Operational activities of the Agency, including return operations, were regularly discussed during most of the meetings and notable the developments and challenges resulting from the war in Ukraine and the increased migratory flows along the Western Balkan Route.

## Part I - Achievements of the year <sup>(21)</sup>

### 1.1. Strategic Objective 1

#### Reduced vulnerability of the external borders based on comprehensive situational awareness

##### Focus Area 1.1. Produce actionable information and analysis to enable the functioning of the European Border and Coast Guard

**Key Activity 1.1.1. Perform situation monitoring and surveillance in all four tiers of the EIBM and process information collected from all sources in support of the Agency's activities, with a focus on the pre-frontier area and non-EU countries.**

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Produce reliable and actionable information through 24/7 (near) real-time situation and crisis monitoring and surveillance, especially on illegal migration and cross-border crime.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Frontex closely monitored the situational picture at the external border of the European Union and the pre-frontier area during 2022 coordinating the delivery of operational information exchange with national coordination centres under the EUROSUR framework. The enhanced operational cooperation with the NCCs allowed for near real-time reporting of incidents and early warning of potential escalation of the situations, especially in areas affected by migratory pressures and refugee flows.
- RES-2. The Agency supported the collection and dissemination of information relevant to the European Situational Picture: notable, related to the war in Ukraine and its impact on refugee flows towards the European Union.
- RES-3. Frontex Situation Centre 24/7 monitoring and reporting capabilities issued more than 100 ad-hoc situation reports in near real time on outstanding events in the Central Mediterranean, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Mediterranean, Pas de Calais, Black Sea, Western Balkans, Canary Islands, Eastern EU Borders, Melilla, Norway and Moldova.  
Frontex delivered 29 early alerts about vessels presenting abnormal behaviour in the proximity of EU borders and in the pre-frontier area. As many as 233 vessels of interest were tracked, and daily reporting was in place. In this context, 1,779 reports were delivered to Frontex partners. Frontex surveillance aircrafts (FSA) 6 fixed-wing aircrafts and 2 remotely piloted aerial system (RPAS) performed Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance (MAS) delivering the operational results described in the highlights of the year above.
- RES-4. The establishment of a fully functioning centralised infrastructure for Frontex to support operational activities with the involvement of relevant divisions was mainstreamed in the context of the project for Frontex's new premises (HQ).
- RES-5. The deployment of standing corps – information officers in Lithuania, Romania and Moldova provided near real-time reporting and thus a near real-time situation picture, facilitating the exchange of information with all Frontex stakeholders in relation to the refugee flows from Ukraine. Similarly, the deployments in France, Italy and Greece improved near real-time reporting on migratory movements.
- RES-6. At crisis preparedness and crisis response level, the Agency activated crisis management mechanism to coordinate Agency's response to the war in Ukraine; maintained COVID-19 monitoring and response platform within the Agency; developed early responses to emerging crises (food security, energy). It also delivered crisis preparedness activities: at the strategic level these had the form of training sessions which gathered directors and senior managers; while at the operational level these were workshops which addressed heads of units, sectors, and managers. In parallel, several sessions were dedicated to SC deployed in the operational areas; at the expert level these were specialised training sessions for experts on incident command system concept and crisis room operational requirements; as

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(21) The exact formulation of expected results and indicators envisaged is presented in the Single Programming Document 2022-2024 accessible at: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/single-programming-document-2022-2024/>. The SPD 2022-2024 was amended by the Management Board via the Decision No 50/2022 available at: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/management-board-decision-50-2022-of-14-september-2022-adopting-amendment-n1-to-the-single-programming-document-2022-2024/> and via the Decision No 65 available here <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/management-board-decision-65-2022-adopting-amendment-n2-to-the-single-programming-document-2022-2024/>.

well as an awareness session to all staff delivered via a webinar that outlined an importance of the engagement of all staff members in crisis and teamwork in the times of crisis.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Partially achieved. Currently centralised management capabilities for Frontex (Frontex Centralised Infrastructure - FCI) were mainstreamed as a project currently led by a task force created at the Agency level. A centralised infrastructure for managing the Agency operational activities involving all relevant entities and including the adoption of an agency-wide policy will be available once the new HQ premises will become operational.
- IND-2. Achieved: currently the Agency has sufficient staff deployed as standing corps officers (category 1, 2,3), fulfilling the role of information officers in Frontex headquarters and other operational areas, to enhance situation monitoring and surveillance activities as well as an early warning in near to real-time.
- IND-3. Achieved: as a result of the work performed in 2022, the Agency enhanced its crisis management preparedness including the strategy, training, and exercises (delivered at strategic and operational level, including for SC deployed in the operational areas), crisis response and crisis monitoring.
- IND-4. Partially achieved. While the European Situational Picture has been further enhanced over the years, preparatory activities started within the Agency to establish a multiannual programme for further development of the EUROSUR ecosystem and ensuring there are no cover gaps vs. the requirements set in the regulation and the EUROSUR implementing act.

**Key Activity 1.1.2.<sup>(22)</sup> Maintain a robust awareness mechanism based on constant situation monitoring and risk analysis including pre-warning and forecasting, within all four tiers of the EIBM, and including cross-border crime.**

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Regularly provide analysis and assessments by border sections/border crossing points on all aspects of the European IBM to inform operational and strategic decisions, including decisions about the policy priorities and strategic objectives for the new multiannual strategic policy cycle on EIBM.
- OBJ-2. Increase knowledge and awareness on counterterrorism to hinder terrorist mobility as well as help detect, prevent, and combat cross-border crime within the border dimension, also by enhancing relevant data exchange with Europol.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

##### Strategic Risk Analysis

- Frontex delivered the Strategic Risk Analysis (SRA) 2022, which informs the multiannual strategic policy cycle on EIBM. This analysis is the outcome of a systematic joint efforts by Frontex and its EU partners who made insightful contributions and assisted in steering the work in the right direction. The strategic foresight process benefited significantly from a collaborative approach and modern practices in strategic planning. This report first examines the impact of megatrends and their interplay and then looks into the thematic areas relevant to Frontex's mandate, namely migration and returns, terrorism, cross-border crime and hybrid threats to identify the core threats and challenges for EIBM. Apart from that, it provides four future scenarios identifying both challenging and less challenging developments for Frontex and the EU. The concluding chapter provides an outlook with key findings for consideration.

##### Situational pictures

- The Agency monitored the situational picture covering the full scope of EIBM and ensured attribution of appropriate impact levels, where regular assessment was performed on a monthly basis and 12 'impact level change requests' were issued and sent to the MS, enhancing the capability to detect, prevent and combat illegal migration and cross-border crime.

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(22) Operational personal data was collected and processed for the purposes of risk analysis exchanged with Europol, Eurojust and MS competent law enforcement authorities in order to prevent, detect, investigate or prosecute cross-border crime (conditions for transmission of data to be further elaborated in the MB rules and in more specific terms for transmission to MS on operational plans and to EU Agencies on new working agreements). Personal data related to persons who cross the border without authorisation was collected and processed for the purposes of risk analysis and transmission of such data to MS authorities responsible for border control and migration.

- A European situational picture on illegal migration and prioritised fields of cross-border crime were established and maintained with specific situational pictures developed as required and in accordance with threats and relevant general developments.
- Cooperation with other EU Agencies, mainly EUAA and Europol was further increased, notably for the purpose of analysing migration related subjects such as secondary movements.

#### Maritime-related deliverables

- Internal and external stakeholders were supported in better understanding the pre-frontier situation through the collection of intelligence on *modi operandi*, routes, etc. from human sources (debriefing of migrants).
- Cooperation within the Maritime Intelligence Community – Risk Analysis Network (MIC-RAN) between the Agency and the MS authorities was strengthened and activities of the network were further developed by ensuring the active and efficient participation of all the actors involved.
- The analytical approach and methodology on maritime risk assessments was intensified and the exchange of information and analytical findings with MS maritime analytical units were increased to reinforce knowledge and awareness in the maritime domain.
- Internal and external stakeholders were supported in providing maritime assessments, improving their knowledge on various maritime security threats.

#### Risk analysis networks

- The Risk Analysis Unit established regional and thematic risk analysis networks to enable and support regular and ad-hoc tailor-made risk assessments as well as to improve information exchange within the EBCG community. Risk analysis networks in the Eastern Partnership and West Balkans continued to enable the routine exchange of information facilitating the production of regular analysis reports and early warnings.
- In 2022, the EDPS issued its opinion on the MB Decisions No 68 and 69/2021 regulating the personal data processing activities including personal data of suspects, witnesses and victims of cross-border crime and terrorism. The said decisions need to be redrafted during 2023. This put on hold any new processing activities; however, the Agency continued with the debriefing and screening activities. This was done in support of the MS and to ensure the collection of relevant information, including on suspects, which were subsequently transmitted to Europol in line with its mandate.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

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|--------|--|
| IND-1. | Achieved: the impact levels attributed to border sections at the external border were updated on a monthly basis.  |
| IND-2. | Achieved: high levels of reporting in the Blueprint network and wider EBCG community in connection with international crises in Ukraine, Middle East, Africa and COVID-19 were regularly delivered.  |
| IND-3. | Achieved: within the Agency, the Roundtable on Strategic Risk Analysis proved to be of great value in funnelling the information available at the level of all Frontex units and divisions for further analysis. Within the MS, the SRAN (Strategic Risk Analysis Network), a dedicated analytical network brought additional resources both in terms of knowledge and experience but also information and intelligence. Both the SRAN and the roundtable on SRA were fully embedded in the new SRA structure in 2022 and actively contributed to the development of the report. |
| IND-4. | Achieved: the preparation of the SRA 2022 entailed data/information collection process carried out jointly with the MS and other stakeholders of the SRAN (development of indicators, data collection and preparatory research). In addition, a total of 7 megatrends were assessed, both within the roundtable on SRA and the SRAN, as having the highest impact on the EIBM. Jointly with the thematic areas covered by the report, these megatrends have been the backbone of the research carried out for the development of the report.                                     |
| IND-5. | Achieved: biennial SRA 2022 was timely produced and shared with EU Institutions and all relevant stakeholders in July 2022.  |
| IND-6. | Partially achieved: with regard to maritime intelligence community and Risk Analysis Network one plenary meeting and one thematic workshop were organised in 2022. Bilateral meetings with MS authorities and internal stakeholders were conducted.  |
| IND-7. | Partially achieved: although assessments covering all aspects related to EIBM were produced the overall timeliness was below the envisaged 90%.  |
| IND-8. | Achieved: situational pictures were provided upon specific requests i.e. based on each bilateral agreement signed with a purpose of EUROSUR cooperation with third parties, a specific situational   |

- picture (SSP) shall be activated by IFC. In 2022, one bilateral agreement was signed with a third country (Moldova) and a dedicated SSP was subsequently activated by IFC (100%).
- IND-9. Achieved: tailor-made products produced in cooperation with experts from the Member States and neighbouring countries (border and coast guard authorities and law enforcement authorities) and other relevant partners (i.e., customs, JHA Agencies) were rendered.
- IND-10. Achieved: analytical products on document fraud which were produced in 2022 increased by 10% – when compared to the previous year.
- IND-11. Not achieved. A core team was established within RAU to implement capability for traveller-centric risk analysis through a dedicated project, using resources from CSAM re-structuring, this work will continue in 2023.

<p><b>Key Activity 1.1.3. Contribute to EBCG planning processes through the knowledge generated by situation monitoring risk analysis and vulnerability.</b></p>
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**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Increase the number and relevance of customer-centric products and services that will constitute the basis for EBCG planning processes.
- OBJ-2. Establish cross-border crime risk assessments as components of operational planning and strategic outlook for future trends and developments.
- OBJ-3. Produce knowledge generated by risk analysis and vulnerability analysis to feed into Frontex operational and strategic planning to further improve the offer of products and services to Member States and EU policy makers.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. A core knowledge basis for yearly planning of operational activities was established including production of tailored risk assessments to support the planning of joint operations; those focused assessments were included in the operational plans.
- RES-2. The Agency provided periodical and ad-hoc strategic analysis products on irregular migration and cross-border crime, which were presented to the EBCG community and relevant partners. Tailor-made reports were produced to support the short-term planning needs of the EBCG community as well as to support long-term strategic decision making, which were mainly delivered to relevant EU stakeholders (EC, EP, Council, etc.).
- RES-3. Country fiches describing pertinent vulnerabilities, risks, results from Schengen evaluation and Frontex FLO input were regularly updated, and the targeted support measures were put in place to remedy identified vulnerabilities in Member States border management.
- RES-4. Periodical strategic analysis products on irregular migration, cross-border crime, document fraud and all other border-management related challenges were presented to the EBCG community and relevant partners. Strategic analysis products on returns were disseminated to relevant stakeholders to improve the situational awareness. Strategic and tailor-made maritime risk analysis reports were produced to support the Maritime Intelligence Community's main priorities, as well as to support the objectives and actions defined in EBCG Regulation and relevant provisions (i.e. cooperation on coast guard functions).
- RES-5. Automated reporting platforms/dashboards were developed to enable more efficient information exchange with internal and external stakeholders maintaining the necessary oversight on operational data quality.
- RES-6. The Agency assisted the European Commission in gathering relevant data needed for the European Commission's implementation of Art.61 of the Regulation.
- RES-7. The Agency constantly monitored selected indicators to support the impact-level assessment and to trigger joint operational responses and European Standing Corps reallocations.
- RES-8. The Agency supported the development of the European standing corps profiles (identified training needs, new profiles, emerging requirements) through strategic analysis.
- RES-9. The Agency developed and delivered for the second time (the first one was in 2021) the Assessment for Operational Initiation report, to support the operational planning and establishment of operational priorities.
- RES-10. A dedicated VA knowledge product on the Eastern borders was produced.

## Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

1. Achieved: CBC tailored assessments for Assessment for Operational Initiation as well as tailored analytical reports on the cross-border crime dimension were delivered.
2. Achieved: contributions to the preparation, intelligence and operational phase of EMPACT Operational Activities were enhanced over the target initially set.
3. Achieved: regular/ad-hoc meetings, requests for support and number of Frontex products and services informed by the SRA 2022 were timely conducted based on needs received.
4. Achieved: the Agency completed the elaboration of 29 country fiches pooling pertinent vulnerabilities, risks, results from Schengen evaluation and Frontex Liaison Officers' input.
5. Partially achieved: provision of assessment for operational initiation for the yearly planning of operational activities was not finalised on time, due to unforeseen obstacles, delays in the review and feedback. However, the delay did not have an impact on the planning cycle; the product was still timely available for the bilateral meetings with the countries.
6. Partially achieved: provision of tactically focused assessments for operational plans of operational activities were delivered with delays, however, it did not have any impact on the planning cycle.
7. Partially achieved: provision of analytical contribution to the final evaluation of operational response. was delivered although an extension of deadline had to be requested. The underlying issues on the process were analysed with a view of overcoming this shortfall in 2023.
8. Partially achieved: the Agency consistently addressed the requests from the EU stakeholders, however, in certain cases the timeliness was impacted by the realignment of resources related to emergent threats i.e. Ukraine as well as on gaps in the provision of data from MS and other sources.
9. Achieved: the Agency timely prepared and delivered periodical strategic analysis products on all EIBM tiers, irregular migration, cross-border crimes, return, document fraud, maritime security threats, Assessment for Operational Initiation and country fiches to the Member States (MS) as well as requests from EU stakeholders and EBCG community.

**Focus Area 1.2. Create an EBCG environment and community of intelligence-led operational activities (considering the process of data collection, processing and information exchange and analysis in connection to, but not only limited to the EUROSUR framework review and networks).**

**Key Activity 1.2.1. Support the set-up and functioning of information exchange and risk analysis centres and networks, including in third countries.**

### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Enhancing EUROSUR capabilities to cover all EIBM fields and meet the EBCG requirements. Ensure an enhanced situation awareness on developments in the pre-frontier third countries through regular interaction in regional risk analysis networks and delivery of related product portfolio.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The Agency continued to work on strengthening and raising awareness on EUROSUR information exchange capabilities via specific situational pictures with third countries ahead of new COM model provisions on the cooperation with non-EU countries in line with the EDPS recommendations. EUROSUR information exchange capabilities with third countries were strengthened by introducing the EUROSUR framework, assisting with national coordination centres setup and enabling the information exchange via specific situational pictures including the activation for the first time of a specific situational picture (SSP) with a third country (Moldova).
- RES-2. Adapted reporting and information exchange to the widened EUROSUR's scope set on its implementing Regulation, in this line reporting and information exchange for the indicators defined by Annex I of Regulation 2010/581 were implemented under the EUROSUR bridging solution and as for the events defined by Annex II and III of Regulation 2010/581 are currently under implementation.
- RES-3. The Agency bolstered information exchange capabilities within regional and thematic risk analysis networks – such as the working group on return data for analysis – in the Schengen Area and pre-frontier area.
- RES-4. The continuation of capacity building within the framework of the Africa Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) led to the opening of Risk Analysis Cells (RAC) in Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Togo. A total of eight RACs provide a framework for information sharing on migrant smuggling and other border security threats affecting the EU and African countries.

- RES-5. The Agency continued to develop the action plans agreed in 2019 within the Risk Analysis Network – Maritime Intelligence Community, regarding (i) work areas and priorities; (ii) data collection mechanism and sets of risk indicators to facilitate the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data/information related to maritime security threats, including cross-border crime.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: All cross-border-crime indicators defined by Annex I of Regulation 2010/581 were implemented.
- IND-2. Achieved: Regular meetings and consultations with MS experts as well as advisory support covering all seven megatrends and the thematic areas of SRA 2022 were carried out.
- IND-3. Achieved: Regular network meetings and workshops, in particular strengthening thematic workshops to define sets of risk indicators within recent established thematic networks, such as Maritime Intelligence Community were completed.
- IND-4. Achieved: the level of involvement in enhancement of EUROSUR information exchange capabilities with third countries increased in comparison to 2021 through a series of activities conducted in support of third countries.
- IND-5. Achieved: Regular meetings, information exchange and joint analytical activities and reports in relation to the thematic risk analysis networks were carried out as initially foreseen.

**Key Activity 1.2.2. Drive the development of an EBCG community ‘ecosystem of information management capabilities’ by taking the business lead in the development of information management applications interacting with each other, using the same databases and technologies.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Ensure high-quality data and statistical analysis including the availability of the necessary tools, to be readily available to the Agency and the wider EBCG community, as well as fusion and continuous enhancement of the tools available for risk analysis and visualisation of analytical findings.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Information contributing to risk analysis, vulnerability assessment and situation monitoring was provided for both regular and ad-hoc requests in a timely and comprehensive manner. Data validity was ensured through regular data quality checks in line with the defined internal procedures.
- RES-2. The EUROSUR ecosystem was enhanced by defining and implementing a bridging solution using existing capabilities for ensuring compliance with the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/581 until the EUROSUR 2.0 ecosystem becomes operational.
- RES-3. New tools were defined and developed in line with user requirements.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. The delivery of statistical requests and analytical services was timely in 96% of the cases.
- IND-2. Achieved. Business architecture for EUROSUR bridging solution was defined and communicated to stakeholders. Implementation level 60%.
- IND-3. Partially achieved. The implemented EUROSUR bridging solution for information exchange covers 80% of the business requirements defined by the EUROSUR implementing Regulation 2010/581.
- IND-4. Achieved. No feedback was received regarding dissatisfaction of core users with the current available tools.

**Key Activity 1.2.3. Establish standards and implement common models for information sharing and analysis, including on cross-border crime in all four tiers of the EIBM.**

**Specific objectives**

Ensure further development of the EUROSUR framework.

**Results, main outputs/actions, key deliverables**

- RES-1. Operational and technical data standards were defined in order to support EUROSUR information exchange and fusion services as well as to facilitate automation of information exchange between the European and the national technical components.
- RES-2. Under the Data Governance Strategy, a general Data Governance Policy was defined to describe the roles and responsibilities on who takes decisions on how data are managed, processed, and shared.
- RES-3. The data quality and reporting on cross-border crime EUROSUR indicators and reported single events was increased by defining and implementing a data quality procedure in agreement with relevant stakeholders.

#### **Indicators: targets and baseline**

- IND-1. Achieved: three operational data standards were developed (for irregular migration indicators, cross-border-crime indicators, and events reporting).
- IND-2. Partially achieved: initial work on the establishment of operational standards for EUROSUR information exchange started, in line with the roadmap set in the EUROSUR programme including the development of technical data standards listed under the IND-1 above.
- IND-3. Partially achieved: three specific data policies were developed, and the adoption process is on-going.
- IND-4. Partially achieved: the existing EUROSUR Fusion Services are aligned with the EBCG 2.0 Regulation, while development is ongoing for the development of new capabilities (such as in the area of air border surveillance).
- IND-5. Partially achieved: the transition process related to the implementation of Copernicus Border Surveillance Service from the former 11 services to 17 new Copernicus products is ongoing.

#### **Focus Area 1.3. Contribute to the development and implementation of a fully interoperable and efficient European Quality Control Mechanism**

**Key Activity 1.3.1. Contribute to enhanced awareness on MS preparedness by assessing possible vulnerabilities of border management capabilities, while exploiting the full potential of Vulnerability Assessments and the Commission-led Schengen Evaluations.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Carry out vulnerability assessments according to the Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (CVAM).  
Share results of vulnerability assessments in tailored knowledge products with relevant stakeholders.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Frontex carried out vulnerability assessments according to the Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (CVAM). The assessments were shared in tailored knowledge products with relevant stakeholders.
- RES-2. Frontex delivered all 29 baseline assessment reports as foreseen by the timeframe outlined in the Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology (CVAM).
- RES-3. Further development of the Vulnerability Assessment Platform (VAP) was conducted, resulting in stabilisation and improvements of the data collection module.
- RES-4. Frontex organised workshops with Member States on Rapid Vulnerability Assessments (RVA), simulation exercises and list of installed capacities (LoIC) questionnaire. All agreed changes were implemented in VAP and subsequently applied in the Baseline Assessment 2023 exercise. New simulation exercise on detection of foreign terrorist fighters/other persons of interest was implemented and three other simulation exercises were successfully conducted.
- RES-5. Vulnerability assessments findings were used to develop the 29 separate country fiches, designed to support operational planning processes in the Agency. Apart from country fiches, Frontex also successfully delivered the additional 11 vulnerability assessment knowledge products.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: timely establishment and delivery of 29 baseline assessment reports per year.
- IND-2. Achieved: adoption of list of installed capacity (LoIC) every two years.

**Key Activity 1.3.2. Address identified gaps and shortcomings by designing and recommending measures to ensure MS preparedness to present any future challenges, to be implemented also with the support of the Agency.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Design and issuing of measures to ensure Member States preparedness to present and future challenges, to be implemented also with the support of the Agency.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Frontex Executive Director issued 52 new recommendations for measures, mostly in relation to vulnerabilities identified with regards to border checks (23 measures). This resulted in twenty Member States submitting their initial action plans for eliminating identified gaps and shortcomings.
- RES-2. In 2022, Frontex increased its efforts to provide support to Member States, resulting in 66 recommended measures closed during the twelve-month period. This was primarily achieved through more direct interactions with Member States.
- RES-3. In this context, Frontex conducted ten field visits in six Member States and provided technical expertise by respective units in Frontex. Namely, seven Member States received training in EUROSUR NCC operation, conducting screening and debriefing, document fraud detection or CIRAM. In addition, one Member State also deployed EBCG standing corps for the implementation of one measure within vulnerability assessment process.
- RES-4. In two cases in which the Member States did not implement recommended measures within the agreed time limit, Frontex Executive Director proposed to Frontex Management Board to adopt the relevant decisions in accordance with the procedure as set out by Article 32(10) of the Regulation. In doing so, Frontex engaged directly with the Member States in question in order to agree on the measures and the time limits contained in the mentioned MB decisions.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: bilateral talks on measures were conducted with all Member States, these were complemented with drafting initial proposals for measures after the interim baseline assessment phase completed.
- IND-2. Achieved: technical expertise offers were delivered to Member States as defined in the Article 32 (8) and (9) of the Regulation, these offers were based on Frontex catalogue of services.
- IND-3. Achieved: monitoring of the implementation of recommendations was conducted according to the Regulation and the CVAM – quarterly progress reports for Executive Management and the European Commission, updates during Management Board (MB) meetings were delivered.
- IND-4. Achieved: recommendations were issued according to timelines set by the CVAM.

**Key Activity 1.3.3. Maximise the synergies between the Commission-led Schengen Evaluation Mechanism (SEM), vulnerability assessments (VA) and national quality control mechanisms by ensuring interoperability by developing tools and platforms to support activities such as data collection and reporting, as well as further develop the CVAM by designing standards and benchmarks.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Ensure interoperability and maximised synergies between the Schengen Evaluation Mechanism and vulnerability assessment. Develop tools and platforms to support activities such as data collection, reporting and operational assessments, also for the benefit of national quality control systems.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Two Biannual Reports on Vulnerability Assessment results were delivered to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The reports included more specific information on Member States' gaps and challenges which enhanced their value also for the Commission in the context of SEM.
- RES-2. Further improvements of the Vulnerability Assessment Platform resulted in a new data collection module, while the assessment and measures modules were still in final stages of development.
- RES-3. Frontex observers actively participated in all five Schengen evaluations. Moreover, the Agency provided support for training of Schengen evaluators. A selection procedure to identify additional Frontex trainers that could deliver training for Schengen evaluators was launched in 2022. Moreover, Frontex

- Vulnerability Assessment Unit staff delivered training to standing corps cadets on Schengen matters (Module 2 in March/April 2022).
- RES-4. Development of CVAM was driven by testing of the new quantification models for border checks and border surveillance. Three testing workshops were organised in Member States, resulting in validation of the model for border checks and further development of border permeability component of the border surveillance model.
- RES-5. Regular monthly and/or quarterly meetings were held between the relevant units of the Commission and Frontex Vulnerability Assessment Units.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: timely delivery of 2 Biannual Reports to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.
- IND-2. Achieved: Frontex observers and trainers supported the Commission-led Schengen evaluation teams.
- IND-3. Achieved: timely delivery of quarterly progress reports on the implementation of measures within vulnerability assessment to the European Commission. -

#### Focus Area 1.4. Develop and implement the system for providing operational support and reinforcing Member States border control activities through establishing and operating the ETIAS Central Unit

**Key Activity 1.4.1. Establish ETIAS Central Unit to be ready to function by defining the operational concept for the Central Unit, delivering the capabilities and means (HR, technical, services), performing integration with ETIAS system and National Units and end to end testing of the whole system.**

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Ensure that the structure, the capabilities, procedures, and tools necessary for the establishment, management, and operation of the ETIAS Central Unit are delivered and that the transition from the project to the ETIAS Central Unit (CU) gradually takes place to perform the requirements set forth in the entry/exit system (EES), ETIAS and Interoperability regulatory framework <sup>(23)</sup>, in particular:

- to process travel applications,
- to self-monitor and audit the compliance of all ETIAS Central Unit activities,
- implementing the screening rules,
- support carriers and travellers, and
- to manually verify and re-categorise the links in the multiple identity detector.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. In 2022 ECU (ETIAS Central Unit) recruited and onboarded the second wave of ETIAS Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators, six shift managers and started the recruitment procedure for the third wave of ETIAS Operators. It also completed the recruitment for the Head of Assistance Centre Unit and started the one for the Deputy of Application Handlers Unit. In 2022, the Agency also launched the recruitment procedures for the following positions: ETIAS Team Leaders, Stakeholder Management Officer, ETIAS Risk Screening Officer and Data Management Officer.
- RES-2. In 2022, ETIAS Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators onboarded in Q4 2021 completed ETIAS training provided by ECU. In Q4 2022, ECU started the training for the Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators onboarded in Q4 2022 (training completion planned in Q1 2023).
- RES-3. In 2022, ECU continued the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) based on the available knowledge and materials about the tools that will be provided by eu-LISA with the final aim to provide

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(23) Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) (OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1), Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes (OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20), Regulation (EU) 2019/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems (OJ L 135, 22.5.2019, p. 27), as well as the Commission Delegated Acts and the Implementing Acts that will be adopted, respectively.

guidance through the development of the workflow of the different cases (including registration, operational and technical) and the explanation of the working arrangements that support these procedures.

- a. Throughout the year the internal SOPs for the Assistance Centre Unit were subject to further consultations resulting from the cooperation with eu-LISA and Carriers, while the SOPs for the Applications Handlers Unit will be further adapted to the final version of the software used by the ECU as soon as its update is provided.
- RES-4. In 2022, ECU continued to actively collaborate with eu-LISA, the European Commission and Europol on the logic, analysis, and design of the business requirements to be implemented in the ETIAS Central System in compliance with the ETIAS regulation. ECU worked also on the preparation of the Testing Strategy for ETIAS Central System and Carrier Supporting solutions to cover all ECU business and operational aspects related to the testing approach. To this end, it actively participated in ETIAS Test Expert Group with the aim to prepare the end users for Business Testing and Provisional System Acceptance Testing.
- RES-5. In 2022, ETIAS CU continued to progressively transit from project to operation mode by strengthening its organisational structure and through the development of internal rules and procedures. During the year four workshops on the strategic direction of the division were held and the managerial and core team members had the opportunity to discuss and develop the nature of the division, its culture and a mid-term strategy and an engagement framework. Bearing in mind the postponement of the entry into operations of the Entry/Exist System, the transition is still ongoing.
- RES-6. Throughout 2022, the activities for the design of the business requirements and logic to be implemented in ETIAS Central System continued. As a result, the development of the self-monitoring and internal audit capabilities could not be established in 2022. The planning for the development of the said capabilities was halted during 2022 and has been postponed to being initiated in 2023, once the development of the ETIAS Central System is more mature.
- RES-7. In 2022, ETIAS Central Unit Division developed a business impact analysis, conducted a risk assessment and drafted security, business continuity and disaster recovery plans as stipulated in Article 59 of the ETIAS Regulation. The plans will be further updated in 2023 based on the implementation of the supporting tools and of the alternative premises and back up site for ETIAS infrastructure. Once finalised, they will be submitted to the Management Board for adoption.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Partially achieved: During the reporting period, the following recruitment processes were initiated/finalised.
  - a. 60 ETIAS operators and 6 shift managers (finalised)
  - b. 1 Head of Assistance Centre Unit (finalised)
  - c. 1 Deputy Head of Application Handlers Unit (initiated)
  - d. 4 ETIAS Team Leaders (initiated)
  - e. 1 Stakeholder Management Officer (initiated)
  - f. 1 ETIAS Risk Screening Officer (initiated)
  - g. 1 Data Management Officer (initiated)
- IND-2. Target achieved. In 2022, all (100%) Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Operators recruited in Q4 2021 have completed the ETIAS compulsory training. All Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Operators recruited in Q4 2022 started their training as planned (completion planned in Q1 2023).
- IND-3. Target partially met. Due to the delays in delivery of the tools for ECU, the SOPs were prepared to the extent enabled by the knowledge about the functionalities of IT tools provided by eu-LISA and based on ETIAS Regulation and implementing acts. SOPs were developed in such a way to ensure flexibility and allow adaptations to the final software solution.
- IND-4. Target not achieved. Test completion rate [0%] - activity hasn't started. According to the updated eu-LISA planning, the testing phase involving ETIAS Central Unit has been postponed to July 2023. ETIAS Central Unit is preparing for the testing activities by defining the test strategy and test plan.
- IND-5. Target partially achieved. In 2022, ECU continued the activities aiming at establishing the ECU Division entities, including the development of the ECU strategy and the launch of specialised functions which are crucial for the setting up and operation of the ETIAS CU. The work will continue in 2023 with the final aim to be finalised before the start of operations.
- IND-6. Target not achieved. The activities for the development of the self-monitoring and auditing capabilities have been postponed to 2023.
- IND-7. Target achieved: ETIAS security, business continuity and disaster recovery plans have been drafted as planned by the end of 2022.

**Key Activity 1.4.2. Operate ETIAS Central Unit in a 24/7 mode in accordance with the ETIAS Regulation (processing the applications, supporting law enforcement requests, ensuring data subject rights, providing travellers and carriers assistance services, defining, and maintaining risk profiles and screening rules, managing public awareness with the European Commission, leading operational cooperation between the different ETIAS actors, management, and governance reporting).**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Ensure that the ETIAS Central Unit provides continuous uninterrupted 24/7 services.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. In 2022, ETIAS Central Unit ensured the protection of the data subject rights through several activities. It prepared, in close consultation with the EC and the EDPS, a dedicated section on the data protection aspects on ETIAS public website. It also continued to develop the cooperation modalities with DPO in relation to the processing of data subject requests.  
The Agency continued to cooperate with the EC, eu-LISA and MS to clarify issues related to the establishment and operation of repositories for reporting to the EDPS on how the data subjects requests will be handled and organised a meeting with the European Commission, the EDPS and eu-LISA on data protection issues.  
In 2022, the data protection impact assessment for the ETIAS Central System continued to be under the development by eu-LISA. Frontex, together with Europol, the EC and the EDPS took part in the consultations and provided its comments.
- RES-2. In 2022, the ETIAS CU Division continued to work towards the development of support services for carriers (as of EES entry into operation) and for the support to both travellers and carriers (as of ETIAS entry into operation) with the assistance of eu-LISA that will deliver the necessary tools for Assistance Centre Unit to perform its duties in line with the regulation.
- RES-3. In 2022, ETIAS CU kept up building a common understanding with the MS and ETIAS Screening Board on the risks and indicators that need to be reported to the ETIAS CU. It focused on the development of the template to be used, communication channel, the nature and format of risks and the risk descriptions process.
- RES-4. In 2022, ETIAS Division launched ETIAS website which includes information about the new travel requirement for the public. It also started regular weekly media monitoring and analysis reports aiming to detect and address cases of ETIAS-related misinformation across the globe. It also set up the network of press officers which includes representatives of 31 MS, European Commission, eu-LISA, Europol and EEAS (the latter as information multiplier to EU delegations). ETIAS Division also actively supported European Commission in public information and outreach campaigns.
- RES-5. Throughout the year ETIAS CU maintained and strengthened its cooperation with all ETIAS stakeholders by organizing meetings with ETIAS National Units, participating in several working groups and cooperating actively with key stakeholders such as EC, Europol, eu-LISA, EDPS.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged FP**

- IND-1 to 3 Target not achieved. Indicator applicable after the entry into operation.
- IND-4. Target achieved.: In 2022, ECU organised 3 ETIAS National Unit/ETIAS Central Unit meetings.
- IND-5. Target achieved. In 2022 the Agency carried out four training sessions for the ETIAS National Units. It also provided regular reports to all relevant stakeholders about the status, progress and risks of its activities.

## 1.2. Strategic Objective 2

### Safe, secure and well-functioning EU external borders

#### Focus Area 2.1. Provide effect-oriented and flexible operational response <sup>(24)</sup>

**Key Activity 2.1.1. Develop and implement a model for flexible, robust, and multipurpose permanent operational and contingency response, by deploying standing corps equipped to support the EU external borders and migration management along the four tiers access model upon vulnerability assessment and risk analysis.**

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Deployment Management Division support adequately the operational response developed by the agency with effective deployments of human resources and equipment.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Standing corps were deployed following the 13 established rotation periods for the joint operations. The suspension of the contract with the travel agency supplying the travel arrangements of the standing corps created several inconveniences with the timely deployments. Overall, deployment work-days for all three categories reached 618,730 i.e. 35% increase vs. 2021.
- In 2022, the Agency started implementing 18 joint operations, by deploying standing corps teams based on - and in line with - the approved plan of operational responses. Moreover, during the operational cycle, due to the crisis situation at the EU external border with Ukraine and on the basis of the Status Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova which entered into force on 17 March 2022, Frontex and the Moldovan authorities concluded the operationalisation of the Agreement and prepared the joint operation with executive powers for the implementation at the Moldovan - Romanian and Moldovan - Ukrainian land border. The joint operation was launched in record time on 18 March 2022. Technical equipment and human resources were deployed initially for border checks, while the border surveillance activities were activated at a later stage.
- In 2022, as a result of the bilateral meetings and operational needs identified during the implementation, and the dynamic increase of the migration flow and the crisis situation from Ukraine, 82 new operational locations were established in 13 MS/SAC/TC. Additionally, the newly launched JO in Moldova added a total of 20 operational locations and two local coordination centres. To support the expansion of the operational areas with the increased hosting capacities, Frontex urged to deploy the newly recruited and trained standing corps officers from batch five and opened and extraordinary targeted call for additional MS contribution to the category 3 pool and technical equipment. Furthermore, reprioritisation of operational activities was carried out followed by relevant redeployments between domains.
- Participating MS contributed with 19% of OPVs, 40% of CPVs, 91% of CPBs, 34% of FWA and 42% of helicopters to the operations 2022. In addition, 33% of the needs for FWA were covered by Frontex Surveillance Aircraft. Most of the remaining needs were covered by the host MS maritime and aerial assets co-financed by Frontex, while approximately 9% of the needs of maritime assets and 19% of the needs of aerial assets remained uncovered. An important factor here was the impossibility to co-finance TE from host third countries. As for the MMO Black Sea, a total of 32 maritime assets of host Member States (BGR, ROU) were co-financed by Frontex. Additionally, Frontex deployed 1 Frontex Surveillance Aircraft for 4 weeks.
- In terms of planning and deployment of terrestrial assets, the only significant gaps were of Patrol Cars (67%), while VMM had no gaps and MS just 4% gap.
- RES-2. Cross-border crime detection officers' network was further trained and expanded under the land and sea joint operations, especially the ones contributing to EMPACT Joint Action Days. This standing corps profile particularly focused on the cooperation with the motor vehicle crime detection officers under motor vehicle related crime ('Joint Action Day Mobile' and the 'Mobile Operational Support Teams Pilot Project') and the prevention, detection and combatting of the following types of cross-border crime: migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, tobacco products and drugs smuggling as well as illicit waste and firearms trafficking. (*specific information on activities 2.1.3. and 2.2.1 below*).

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(24) As set forth in Article 7(4) of the European Border Coast Regulation, the Agency shall not support any measures or be involved in any activities related to controls at internal borders.

New operations in seaports (Genoa, Rotterdam) were commenced, targeting a variety of cross-border crimes typical for such locations where crossing of illegal goods by land and sea goes parallel with the violations related to passenger flows. (*specific information on activities 2.1.3. and 2.2.1 below*).

The operational work in the field was reinforced by two pilot projects (ISA-CBC and MOST CBC) as well as the elaboration, distribution, provision and translation of the guidelines and handbooks related to the detection and counteraction of such cross-border crime. (*specific information on activities 2.1.3. and 2.2.2 below*).

- RES-3. Standing corps with the profile Frontex Return Escort and Support Officers (FRESO) carried out escorting tasks for both chartered and scheduled flights in return operations based on operational requirements and provided assistance in return operations as the back-up team on board of charter flights.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: SC category 1 deployments reaching 217,019 work-days i.e. 81% increase vs. 2021 (further details on Annex 2 of the document) this volume was achieved despite the natural difficulties such a new endeavour posed for a growing corps in terms of provision of adequate equipment, service weapons, profiled expertise, etc.
- IND-2. Partially achieved: In 2022, the operational needs for human resources identified per domain were as follows: on land an average of 1,137 standing corps officers, in air an average of 243 standing corps officers, while in the sea an average of 683 standing corps officers per deployment period, making a total average need for all domains of 2,063 standing corps officers. During the implementation of the joint operations an average of 805 standing corps officers on land, 194 standing corps officers in air and 540 standing corps officers in the sea were deployed per deployment period, making a total average in all domains of 1,558 standing corps officers deployed. Even though operational needs were not met in full in terms of human resources, the most critical areas were prioritised through the continuous assessment of the operational needs and redeployments of available resources to the most affected operational areas in line with the MS/TC support requested.
- IND-3. Achieved: The Agency manage to timely redeploy standing corps based on the evolving situations at the operational theatres e.g. Ukraine war and Moldova Status Agreement. As a result of this, in 2022 approximately 400 officers were redeployed, out of which one third pertaining to categories 1 and 2.
- IND-4. Achieved: 81 return operations were carried out and 14 return operations were backed up with onboard FRESO teams.

**Key Activity 2.1.2. Promote the EU shared responsibility in coordination of the aforementioned operational activities by increasing the Frontex pivotal role and by using the antenna offices ( ) as platforms for the Frontex response actions.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Develop the operational response plan as part of a multiannual planning cycle.
- OBJ-2. Continue establishment and deployment of the standing corps to the operational activities.
- OBJ-3. Plan, implement and evaluate permanent multipurpose operational activities at the EU external borders and at the borders of key third countries.
- OBJ-4. Utilise and expand the rollout as regards the access of the members of the teams to SIS II.
- OBJ-5. Continue the process of establishment of the antenna offices based on the achievement during 2021.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. During 2022, Frontex Operational Coordination Centre (FOCC) acted as the Central Multidivisional Coordination Platform for the internal coordination and facilitation of operational activities and return operations. FOCC was reinforced by the assignments of coordinative staff benefitting from the platform in the performance of their taskings.
- RES-2. Regular weekly executive briefings were organised to keep the executive and senior management aware of operational developments in operational activities and standing corps deployments. Weekly operational table meetings with the participation of different Divisions and Units were organised to update the Agency's management cross-divisionally and to discuss on any emerging issues regarding the deployments and the implementation of the operational activities. Moreover, periodical operational coordination meetings (OPCOM) were held with the Director of Operational Response Division, the Heads of units and all the Frontex Coordinating Officers and occasionally also with

- Frontex Tactical Support Officers to update the management and Frontex Coordinating Officers of all joint operations on the operational developments in different joint operations.
- RES-3. Standardised and regular communication between the Agency's headquarters and the coordination structures of joint operations was maintained. Frontex chain of coordination was continuously represented in the coordination structures of the joint operations. Daily coordination meetings (e.g.: joint coordination board meetings) and reporting structures were in place for each ongoing joint operation, as described in the relevant operational plans.
- RES-4. The establishment of pilot project for the antenna office (planned for 2023) is being developed based on recommendations provided to the Management Board. In 2022, a call for expression of interest was launched where three Member States expressed their willingness to host the pilot project, whereas four Member States will act as observers. The antenna office shall fulfil the logistics-related tasks set by the Regulation.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. 1. Achieved: The operational activities were implemented within the three main clusters: Multipurpose Operational Activities in the Member States (MOA-MS), Multipurpose Operational Activities in Third Countries with executive powers (MOA-TC) and Coordinated Operational Activities in Third Countries (COA-TC). Planning for the 2022 operational activities started in February 2021 based on risk and vulnerability assessments. Operational needs and hosting capacities were defined and shared with Member States and third countries. The responses were collected and evaluated thus setting the bases for the initiation of the Annual Bilateral Negotiations (ABN) 2022 process.
- IND-2. 2. Achieved and exceeded: In 2022, 20 operations (versus 16 targeted) were implemented, as follows:

Nr	Domain	Operation	
1	Air, land and maritime	JO Coordination Points Air, Land and Sea 2022	
2	Air	JO Focal Points Air 2022	
3	Land	JO Terra 2022	JO Albania Land 2022
		JO Montenegro Land 2022	JO Serbia Land 2022
		JO Moldova 2022	
4	Maritime	JO Poseidon 2022	JO Opal Coast 2022
		JO Ledra 2022	JO Montenegro Sea 2022
		JO Themis 2022	JO Albania Sea 2022
		JO Indalo 2022	JO Neptune 2022
		JO Canary Island 2022	JO Genoa 2022
		JO Minerva 2022	JO Netherlands Sea 2022
		MMO Black Sea	

Table 6. List of operations 2022.

- IND-3. Achieved and exceeded: In 2022, the level of deployments in all operations reached a total of 618,730 person-days (Cat 1: 217,019, Cat 2: 151,694 and Cat 3: 250,017) and a total of 17,268 days of deployment of aerial and maritime assets plus a total of 94,340 asset days of terrestrial equipment such as patrol cars and thermo-vision cars.
- IND-4. Partially achieved: Following the MB Decision to establish an antenna office, the preparations for such capability are in place within the timeline foreseen.

**Key Activity 2.1.3. Tighten up the operational support to coast guard and law enforcement activities against cross-border crime, including document, identity and vehicle checks as an integral part of the joint operations.**

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Developing law enforcement related modules to be integrated under joint operations.
- OBJ-2. Testing new modalities of activities related to cross-border crime prevention, detection and combating with the purpose of examining its possible application under the framework of joint operations with law enforcement elements.
- OBJ-3. Contribute to the EMPACT by means of the operational activities focusing, inter alia, on cross-border crime prevention, detection and counteraction according to the Council Conclusions on setting the EU's Priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime set for 2022–2025.

- OBJ-4. Ensure that Frontex Forgery Desk is functioning properly and is staffed adequately in order to provide effective checks on travel, identity, maritime and vehicles documents in the European border and migration management operational activities.
- OBJ-5. Increase the use of Frontex Reference Manual and FIELDs (Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Document System) services for supporting more effective frontline checks on travel, identity, maritime documents and vehicles in the European border and migration management operational activities, supporting mainly Member States.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. New modules or concepts of standing corps use were developed e.g., incorporating Cross-Border Crime Detection Officers (CBCDO) profiles into the coast guard cooperation (MMO Black Sea) and enhanced use of Frontex's document expertise in Joint Action Days (JADs).
- RES-2. Two ongoing pilot projects: Investigation Support Activities on Cross-Border Crime (ISA-CBC) and Mobile Operational Support Teams for combating Cross-Border Crime (MOST-CBC) continued developing measures to better support border control measures in detecting cross-border crimes. The completion and results of the MOST pilot project were used when integrating the concept as a standard tactical method in joint operations in 2023. ISA-CBC pilot project will be finalised in 2023 and potential continuation and/or integration will be assessed after the evaluation of its results.
- RES-3. Frontex contributed to over 130 European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Operational Actions (OA) and led five Joint Action Days contributing to all EMPACT Operational Action Plans relevant to border control and the Agency's portfolio.
- RES-4. The limited number of standing corps officers assigned to Frontex forgery desk did not allow to implement and improve the concept, service portfolio and the related processes of the forgery desk. The Agency's process to ensure the long-term use of standing corps in the headquarters for operational activities is still ongoing. In view that standing corps recruited do not normally have the 20+ years of experience of document experts working in the Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud of the Agency, hence at least one year of onboarding and training on-the-job process is required for them to be able to perform the duties hampering the full achievement of the envisaged result.
- RES-5. Access to the Reference Manual was granted to deployed standing corps category 1 ALDO on a need-to-know basis. According to the current FIELDs policies, Frontex can only manage access restrictions and is not in the position to grant access, a privilege reserved to Member States (MS) by the INTERPOL Rules on the Processing of Data. In 2022, the number of users of the Reference Manual reached 1,729. Four Reference Manual workshops took place with the participation of 83 representatives from 24 countries (EU Member States, Australia and Canada), resulting in the production of 588 new/amended Quick Check Cards (QCC).

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved and exceeded: 5 Joint Action Days coordinated by Frontex as an action leader; 4 of them - JAD Arktos 4, JAD Danube 7, JAD Finestra 2, JAD Mobile 5 were concluded in 2022 and 1 of them - JAD Stopover 2 was planned in 2022 and implemented in January 2023. Frontex was a co-leader of the JAD Child Trafficking and JAD Southeast Europe (SEE). Frontex was also a leader of the EMPACT Action Days (EAD) operation TRASH as well as a co-leader of the EAD EMPACT Air Days. Lastly, Frontex introduced strong law enforcement component into cross-border crime and counterterrorism in the framework of joint operations, namely: JO Genoa, JO Neptune, as well as JO Netherlands Sea.
- IND-2. Achieved: Three Cross-Border Crime Detection Officers (CBCDOs) were deployed to the Multipurpose Maritime Operation (MMO) Black Sea.
- IND-3. Achieved: Frontex continued the implementation of two pilot projects - (ISA-CBC) concluded in 2022 and (MOST-CBC) with the latter to be finalised in 2023.
- IND-4. Partially Achieved: two document fraud teams were established by assigning staff to operational activities. However, one is composed exclusively of Seconded National Experts (SNEs) who can work in the field operations without executive power, while the second one is composed of four standing corps category 1. Out of the expected ten standing corps category 1, four were operating at the end of 2022.
- IND-5. Partially Achieved: The Reference Manual can be consulted via mobile phones and desktops and is regularly updated (588 new QCC, 326 presentations, 320 alerts, and 15 modus operandi notices developed in 2022). FIELDs was integrated with French national application launched in early April 2022. The regular update (content creation) of the FIELDs since it became operational resulted in the system being populated by 1,015 QCC at the end of the year.

## Focus Area 2.2. Position Frontex as an important player in the area of combatting cross-border crime <sup>(25)</sup>

**Key Activity 2.2.1. Position the Agency as a one-stop-shop for the EU Member States and partner third countries to support the fight against cross-border crime including terrorism and all forms of document and vehicle frauds along the four tiers access model.**

### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Development and enhancement of the partnership with key EU agencies and bodies, international organisations, EU, and non-EU countries with the aim to enhance the sustainable response to cross-border crime threats.
- OBJ-2. Enhance Frontex role in the EMPACT by leading, co-leading and supporting operational activities within the selected crime priorities under the new EMPACT new Cycle 2022–2025.
- OBJ-3. Increase the capacity in prevention, detection, and combat of cross-border crime, including the support to the investigations led by the mandated entities.
- OBJ-4. Increasing contribution of the high-level roundtable on document and identity control to the related strategic decisions of the Agency, fostering the alignment of national technical and operational activities with those undertaken by the Agency.
- OBJ-5. Enhancing the operational support provided by the Expert Group on Document Control (EXP-DOC Group) in the implementation of the European border and migration management operational activities, supporting the Member States in the fight against related frauds.
- OBJ-6. Integrate the operational perspective on document checks as well as the fight against document and identity fraud into key policy working groups at the EU and international levels.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

The below-implemented activities contributed to the detection, prevention and fight against cross-border crime in accordance with the specific objectives of 2022, increasing the awareness, readiness and operational results of the border guard, customs and law enforcement agencies deployed along the border.

**Joint Action Days (JAD).** Frontex has coordinated 5 JAD and 1 European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Action Days as well as co-led 2 JAD and 1 EMPACT Action Days. The Agency increased the support offered to the MS by engaging third countries in operational activities such as JAD Arktos 4, Mobile 5, Danube 7 and Finestra 2 as well as EMPACT Action Days (EAD) operation TRASH, all of them supported by the Centre of Excellence for Document Fraud. Frontex co-lead as well EAD EMPACT Air Days and JAD Southeast Europe (SEE).

**JAD Arktos 4** (May 2022) focused on migrant smuggling, smuggling of excise goods (especially tobacco products) and related document fraud. It took place at the north-eastern external land borders of the EU and was held within the frameworks of respective EMPACT Operational Action Plans (OAPs) 2022. It was led by Frontex and co-led by Poland and Estonia. The JAD involved 6 Member States, Europol, INTERPOL, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Eurojust. It resulted in the seizure of more than 15 million cigarettes, 7,800 pieces of smuggled tobacco, 2 tons of raw tobacco, 2,000 litres of smuggled fuel, 20 stolen vehicles, 36 forged documents, EUR 2.9 million undeclared cash. A total of 964 refusals of entry were imposed, 445 overstayers and 236 facilitators of migrant smuggling were identified and investigated.

**JAD Danube 7** (June–July 2022) was held within the framework of migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, and document fraud OAPs 2022. Frontex coordinated the JAD which was co-led by Austria with a number of Member States and third countries as well as Europol and INTERPOL, with the focus on the Western Balkan area, the south-eastern European external border and selected border crossing points at the EU Eastern external border. It resulted in 88 suspected people smugglers arrested, 4,092 irregular migrants detected, EUR 27 million of undeclared cash detected, 330 kg of drugs, 89 fraudulent documents identified, and 26 stolen cars seized.

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<sup>(25)</sup> The Agency in the performance of operational activities will carry out its duties in accordance with article 54(3) and Article 82(1) of the Regulation stating that 'the members of the standing corps deployed shall have the ability to carry out border control or return tasks, including tasks requiring executive powers provided for in the relevant national law or, in the case of statutory staff, the tasks requiring executive powers set out in Article 55(7)' and 'shall have the capacity to perform tasks and exercise powers for border control and return as well as those which are necessary for the realisation of the objectives of Regulations (EU) No 656/2014 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 and (EU) 2016/399 on Schengen Borders Code and Directive 2008/115/EC on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals'. In the performance of actions within the law enforcement domain, the mandate of the Agency is to contribute to the detection, prevention and combating of cross-border crime at the external borders, however, the Agency has no mandate so as to conduct or assist criminal investigations.

**JAD Finestra 2** (December 2022) focused on migrant smuggling, trafficking of firearms, smuggling of excise goods (especially raw tobacco and cigarettes) and related document fraud. It took place at the Eastern and South-Eastern land border between Moldova and Romania and was held within the frameworks of respective EMPACT OAPs 2022. It was led by Frontex and co-led by Romania, involving several other EU Member States, third countries as well as Europol, INTERPOL, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). It resulted in the seizure of excise goods, more than 2.3 million pieces of cigarettes, 3,240 kg of tobacco, 3,395 parcels with cigarette packs, 4,258 litres of alcohol, 4 stolen vehicles, 750 kg of pyrotechnic articles as well as 22,657 bottles of antiseptics and 3 firearms. A total of 188 illegal stays have been detected and 39 facilitators detained.

**JAD Mobile 5** (October 2022) took place with a total of 23 participating countries supported by Europol, INTERPOL and the Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET) with the aim to combat the trafficking of stolen vehicles, their parts, stolen boats and engines as well as preventing migrant smuggling and associated document fraud. The operation was led by Frontex and co-led by Germany, Greece, Poland, Europol and INTERPOL under EMPACT OAP Organised Property Crime. The operation brought together 17 EU Member States and 6 third countries and resulted in the seizure of 522 stolen vehicles; 275 stolen car parts; 110 fraudulent documents; 91 people smugglers arrested; 5 agricultural equipment seized, 7 stolen boats as well as 7 stolen boat engines were seized.

**JAD Child Trafficking** (June 2022) was co-led by Frontex and coordinated by Portugal and Spain. JAD Child Trafficking was rolled-out in 30 countries including Member States and third countries. A wide range of law enforcement authorities including police, immigration and border control agencies, transport police, social assistance and child protection services and labor inspectorates participated in the joint action. It led to 134 suspects for trafficking in human beings for sexual/labour exploitation identified. Overall, 226 fraudulent documents were detected as well as 134 potential victims of human trafficking were identified, 15 of whom were confirmed to be minors.

**JAD Southeast Europe, JAD SEE** (October 2022) was led by Spain and co-led by Frontex and Europol, Albania and Hungary. It was implemented under EMPACT Firearms OA 8.1 and targeting firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, associated document fraud, drugs trafficking and trafficking in human beings. It resulted in 382 arrests during joint actions against traffickers using the Balkan route, 2,476 illegal entries, 106 firearms (mainly rifles, pistols) and 12,250 pieces of ammunition and 304 kg of cocaine, 147 kg of cannabis as well as 5,402 plants of marijuana.

**EMPACT Action Day (EAD) operation TRASH** (November 2022) as the Operational Action (OA) 2.2 under environmental crime priority in Operational Action Plan (OAP) 2022 targeted illicit waste trafficking via the EU external borders, both land and sea, as well as related criminal activities such as document fraud. Frontex was the action leader, with France, Hungary, Italy and Europol as co-action leaders as well as 16 Member States and 6 third countries as participants together with Europol and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). It resulted in a total of 2,547 controls, out of which 91 positive detections which implied the seizure of 2,000 tons of illicit waste (mainly plastic, metal, e-waste and end-of-life vehicles) as well as 3 cases of illegal ship disposal. The operation was complemented with 43 arrests, the imposition of fines and several suspects were reported to the judicial authorities.

**EMPACT AIR Days** (EMPACT Cocaine, Cannabis and Heroin, OA 3.3): oriented to combat international drug smuggling via airports (passenger traffic and cargo) through joint action days (EMPACT Action Days – EAD) with a special focus on direct/connecting flights from South America. Participation of 15 EU Member States/Schengen Area Countries (SAC) and four Agencies, namely FRONTEX, EUROPOL and INTERPOL/AIRCOP. Acting as co-leader, FRONTEX provided a relevant contribution assessing the activities and providing operational support during the implementation period, including the management of the coordination centre established in Policia Nacional premises. EMPACT Days in air domain provided a general overview of drugs seizures at EU airports, prominent results have been reported from Spain and participating authorities e.g. 188 kg of cocaine seized among other illegal substances.

Frontex actively supported other operational activities in the discharge of its mandate, contributing towards regards improved capability of border authorities, police and customs to counteract cross-border and organised crime, including terrorism:

**Joint Operation Netherlands Sea (February 2022 – January 2023)** aimed at providing technical and operational assistance to the Port Police at the Port of Rotterdam, with the involvement of France, Belgium, Sweden, Romania, Germany, Europol and INTERPOL. The JO contributed to border control activities with special emphasis on the prevention and detection of any serious crime with a cross-border dimension. The objectives were to enhance border security, operational inter-agency cooperation, collection and exchange of information, identify possible risks and threats, and to establish and exchange the best practices. In the course of the JO, two Frontex standing corps officers with the profile of Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer (CBCDO) were deployed. Among the results achieved 2,400 kg of heroin and 800 kg of cocaine were detected.

**Joint Operation Genoa (July – November 2022)** was implemented under the platform of Multipurpose Operational Activities at the EU Member States (MOA-MS 2022) in the selected specific seaport at the external EU sea borders, it concentrated on Mediterranean seaports and the movements of suspected terrorists using established ferry routes to move between the EU and North African countries during the busy summer tourist season. JO Genoa 2022 was extended in scope to combat cross-border crime and terrorism also forming part of a wider international sea border operation ‘Neptune IV’ coordinated by INTERPOL in partnership with Italy and France. The results were 50 hits on databases-related to terrorism; 421 incidents reported in JORA2; 376 smuggled counterfeit goods/wildlife/drugs/tobacco; 5 stolen cars.

**Joint Operation Neptune (August-September 2022)** aimed at supporting French authorities with preventing and detecting cross-border crime activities including the detection of travelling terrorists, foreign terrorist fighters and other subjects of interest while conducting the first and second line border checks in the port of Marseille (France). It concentrated on Mediterranean seaports and the movements of suspected terrorists using established ferry routes between the EU and North African countries during the peak summer season and was implemented in the framework of multipurpose operational activities-sea in August-September during the implementation of the INTERPOL’s ‘Operation Neptune IV’. Frontex standing corps officers were deployed at seaports in Italy and France to assist with border checks, screening and profiling of suspected terrorists, preventing unauthorised border crossings, identification of document fraud and detecting cross-border crime. Results: 28 TT/FTF and subjects of interest detected; 3 CBC incidents detected; 7,240 cigarettes intercepted.

**Multipurpose Maritime Operation (MMO) Black Sea (August - December 2022)** enhanced the operational support to Romania and Bulgaria (Romanian Coast Guard and Bulgarian Border Police) in order to control illegal immigration flows, tackle cross-border crime and to enhance European cooperation on coast guard functions and law enforcement activities. MMO Black Sea contributed to EMPACT Operational Action (OA 2.2) focusing on Illegal waste trafficking. Frontex facilitated the establishment of Joint Analytical Centre in Constanta between Border Police and Customs with CBCDO presence. (Further details under KA 2.3.2.).

**Handbook on Firearms for Border Guards and Customs.** In the framework of EMPACT – Firearms, Frontex, supported by EU and international partners, distributed the handbook to support national border guards and customs authorities. The handbook is available in three geographical versions: EU; international; and Western Balkan version. The last one was completed in November 2022. The aim is to support border guards/police and customs officers in improving their capacity for detection of firearms, its parts and ammunition.

Based on the handbook materials, Frontex developed a working group on firearms which developed and implemented a ‘5-day Firearms Detection Course’ for front-line border guard and customs officers including Frontex standing corps. The first course was organised in Moldova for different law enforcement authorities as part of EMPACT Firearms (FIA) OA 6.3 as a follow-up measure initiated by the ‘EU Support Hub for Moldova’.

Active engagement in EU Council networks, European Commission initiatives and relevant international and regional projects contributing by means of the tailored operational response i.a.:

- Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) and COSI Support Group managing EMPACT on behalf of Council;
- Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP) and Law Enforcement Working Party on Customs (LEWP-Customs);
- European Firearms Experts steering group;
- Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET), Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP). SEACOP is the part of the EU’s Global Illicit Flows Programme (GIFP) managed by European Commission. Frontex joined the project based on ED’s approval.

In 2022, the high-level roundtable established a working subgroup tasked with contributing to the Operational Reference-Capability Framework in Document Check, providing expertise in the elaboration of specific operational recommendations on document and identity check-related training and technical equipment.

In 2022, the Agency’s Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud was present in key ICAO working groups, referring to the ICBWG and the NTWG. The Agency participates in both working groups as part of the delegation led by the European Commission (DG HOME), providing expertise on identity and document control, evidence of identity, and document inspection systems and tools actively supporting the development of technical standards as well as guidance material developed at the international level by ICAO.

## Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved. The Agency increased its support to operational activities by EU bodies and agencies, EU Member States, partner third countries, and international partner organizations within the law enforcement and cross-border crime remit. Strong partnership particularly with Europol and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), and international organizations, notably INTERPOL and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as regional working groups including the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) and the Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET). Enhanced cooperation with Western Balkans.
- IND-2. Achieved. Detailed engagement of the Agency in EMPACT Action Days are described in detail within IND-1 of Key Activity 2.1.3.
- IND-3. Achieved. The Agency successfully contributed to operational results i.e. seizures as detailed per operation above.
- IND-4. Achieved. The Agency successfully contributed to operational results i.e. detection, investigation and referral of suspected irregular migrants, smugglers, cross-border criminals as detailed per operation above.
- IND-5. Achieved. Overall JADs conveyed a high level of participation with the engagement of 21 EU Member States, 8 third countries, 5 EU bodies and 2 international organizations.
- IND-6. Achieved and exceeded. In 2022, Frontex increased its contribution to the EMPACT, it was involved in 129 Operational Actions – in 12 as the action leader, in 23 as the action co-leader, and in 92 as a participant.
- IND-7. Achieved. Sustained contribution to EMPACT managed by Council and Law Enforcement Working Party Customs (LEWP-C) Action Plans was delivered as well as engaging in the cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union's (DG TAXUD) and Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET) engaging SELEC into one of JADs for the first time.
- IND-8. Achieved: two high-level roundtable meetings and one plenary meeting (HLRT and Document Expert Group (EXP-DOC)) were held. The EXP-DOC group participated in two information session meetings and one plenary meeting and four Reference Manual meetings. Concerning the maritime domain, two experts of the EXP-DOC contributed to a document fraud exercise organised under an activity organised by the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) Presidency (Germany).
- IND-9. Achieved: In 2022, the Centre of Excellence for Combating Document Fraud (CED) participated in ICAO activities i.e. Implementation and Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG), New Technology Working Group and Traveller Identification Programme, Symposium to support the European Commission and it provided operational expertise to the EU-level guidance materials being developed for the Schengen Masterlist and the Visible Digital Seal.

**Key Activity 2.2.2. Enhance the technical and operational assistance to the Member States in relation to prevention, detection, combating cross-border crime, including the pre-investigative and investigative measures conducted by MS, and cooperating with other union Agencies when relevant.**

## Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Provision of tailored support to pre-investigation phase and investigations conducted by EU Member States and third countries with the purpose of combatting cross-border crime.
- OBJ-2. Creation of the platform, provision of services and products facilitating to the border management authorities of EU Member States and third countries to launch and conduct the investigative/operational work.
- OBJ-3. Facilitate the communication and cooperation between the entities eligible for the investigations related to serious crime committed or attempted to be committed at, along and in the proximity of the borders.

## Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The extended Investigation Support Activities on Cross-Border Crime (ISA-CBC) pilot project was tested comprehensively and promoted to a fully-fledged operational product serving EU Member States. Pilot project will be accomplished in 2023 and subject to the evaluation.

**Investigation Support Activities on Cross-Border Crime (ISA-CBC) 2.0 Pilot Project.** It was created to support concrete actions from national drugs investigation units and customs authorities by using Frontex capacities, supporting operations in the maritime domain and reinforcing specific ports/airports targeted by drug trafficking routes crossing EU borders. It supported EU Member States, the Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and Europol in tackling the cocaine and hashish routes.

The new implementation plan for ISA-CBC 2.0 (2021–2023), in accordance with the Regulation and the EU Drugs Strategy has been operational from 2021, and it includes new geographical areas and other types of cross-border crime (trafficking in human beings, excise fraud, organised property crime, migrant smuggling), boosting the cooperation with Latin America, especially Colombia. The activation of ISA-CBC 2.0 to support large-scale operations led by national authorities was used under EMPACT drugs priorities primarily. In this framework, Frontex is also contributing to the EU Drugs Market report and other European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) products from the EU external borders perspective. The pilot project managed to provide support additionally to the following large-scale operations against drugs trafficking:

**OP TAYRONA IV** (EMPACT Cocaine, Cannabis and Heroin, OA 8.2): aimed at coordinating and developing transnational investigations against organised criminal groups involved in the wholesale cocaine trafficking from Colombia to the EU. It focused on containers/cargo vessels, while Frontex provided technical assistance with suspect vessels crossing the Atlantic Ocean having a co-leader role. Cocaine seizures reported by Colombia in 2022 were above 34 tons.

**OP AZUL** (EMPACT Cocaine, Cannabis and Heroin, OA 3.2): implemented for 3-week period in Azores Archipelago, Portugal. The Portuguese authorities had an overall responsibility and coordination role in the operation, in cooperation with MAOC(N) and Frontex as co-leaders, Europol and other participating national authorities. Frontex participated in the task force targeting high risk pleasure crafts. The implementation period took place in May, June with the intensification of sailing boats crossing the Atlantic before the hurricane season in the Caribbean.

**OP WHITE SEA II:** focused on cocaine drop-off cases in the North Sea of cocaine routes from Latin America. Coordinated by Belgium customs with police and the navy and participated by France, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Portugal, the UK, Europol, MAOC-N and Frontex. It was supported with a wide range of services and resources, such as maritime analysis, EUROSUR Fusion Services, deployment and training of technical equipment as well as concrete financial support with co-financed maritime assets and technical meetings. Belgium reported seizure of 5.7 tons of cocaine in the second edition of this operation with three cases with seizures above 1 ton.

- RES-2. The extended Mobile Operational Support Teams against Cross-Border Crime (MOST-CBC) pilot project was tested, enlarged and upgraded to a fully-fledged operational tool providing the EU Member States with technical and operational support. The decision was made to incorporate the module under the JO Terra land 2023 in the selected locations.

In 2022, Frontex implemented the Mobile Operational Support Teams pilot project (MOST) aimed at delivering technical, tactical and operational measures to provide enhanced support to the host Member States in the detection, prevention and in combatting motor vehicle crime, as well as in targeting associated document fraud. The concept of mobile activity, complementary to the existing JOs in the land domain, increased the efficiency of law enforcement activities at the EU external borders and brought additional operational results through its tailored approach, i.e. by the multi-agency approach to ensure the comprehensive checking, provision of specialised equipment and facilitated checks against relevant databases. In 2022, the Mobile Operational Support Teams was implemented in Croatia, Greece, Hungary, and Romania performing 450 enhanced vehicle checks. As a result of those activities 14 stolen vehicles with a value of approximately 200,000 EUR were detected. MOST CBC module will be incorporated under JO Terra Land 2023, thus proving its efficiency when piloted.

- RES-3. The Agency provided relevant technical/analytical/capacity building assistance in supporting national investigations related to cross-border crime, including terrorism in response to stakeholders' requests.
- RES-4. The Agency increased the number of cases related to cross-border crime operationally supported by Frontex and in the generated operational results.
- RES-5. Reinforced Frontex involvement in EMPACT operational actions, including expanding new domain of environmental crime priority in the form of Empact Action Days in the framework of ongoing joint operations and co-leading the EMPACT Air Days targeting drugs smuggling via air from Latin America to EU.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved and exceeded: the number of cases related to cross-border serious and organised crime, including terrorism supported by ISA-CBC increased by 250% (from 20 to 50).
- IND-2. Achieved: the number of cases related to cross-border crime, supported by MOST-CBC increased by 55% (from 9 to 14), the number of EU Member States and third countries participating in cases increased from 3 to 4 Member States.
- IND-3. Achieved and exceeded: the number of requests from EU Member States and third countries to support cases related to cross-border serious and organised crime, including terrorism actually implemented under ISA-CBC pilot project increased by 250%.

- IND-4. Achieved and exceeded: the number of detections, seizures and apprehensions realised under Frontex-led pilot projects increased by 220%.

**Key Activity 2.2.3. Enhance operational cooperation with customs in prevention, detection and counteraction of cross-border crime by organizing, supporting and coordination of joint operational activities.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Align operational efforts of Frontex with EU MS and TC customs authorities.
- OBJ-2. Enhance and maintain the co-operation with Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union's (DG TAXUD), including European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET), EU Council related working and expert groups such as LEWP-C, as well as initiatives within customs remit or with customs component, such as World Customs Organization (WCO) or EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) and Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC).
- OBJ-3. Supporting harmonisation of the EMPACT OAs and the LEWP-C action plans.
- OBJ-4. Extend and actively maintain the MMO platform for customs activities along with and in alignment with the law enforcement component.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Specific objectives of the activity were established to highlight the importance of inter-agency cooperation at European and national levels particularly with Customs authorities working side-by-side with border control authorities at the external borders. In 2022, Customs became more regularly co-operation partners in operational activities organised or participated by Frontex under EMPACT.
- RES-2. In line with the European integrated border management elements and core principles, the Agency sought cooperation on its operational responses also with other relevant authorities, each within their respective roles, involved in combatting cross-border crime at the external borders. The Agency witnessed increased contacts and engagement, partly due to the increased visibility and activities of the Agency as well as of other authorities interested in cooperation with Frontex.
- RES-3. The Agency participated in numerous *fora* and maintained cooperation i.e. with the Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union's (DG TAXUD), including European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET), EU Council related working and expert groups such as the Law Enforcement Working Party Customs (LEWP-C), as well as initiatives within customs remit or with customs component, such as World Customs Organization (WCO) or EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM), the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) and Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC).

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. The number of the activities were at similar level as in 2021, but the customs co-leadership of some Frontex led EMPACT activities was reinforced through JAD Arktos 4, JAD Finestra 2 and EAD TRASH, with important component of Member States' customs and OLAF participation in facilitating effective enforcement of the EMPACT actions.
- IND-2. Partially achieved. The number of customs operations supported by Frontex remained at the same level as in 2021 despite the increase envisaged. However, the Agency recalls that its engagement depends on the LEWP-C Action Plan produced biannually. Furthermore, a large number of actions were transferred to EMPACT different OAPs under the new 2022–2025 cycle where Frontex cooperates with customs closely including JADs, OAs, and EADs. In practice it includes active engagement with customs in the preparatory phase, e.g., inviting customs to become a participant in Frontex-(co)led JADs thus facilitating the cross-agency cooperation at national and European levels.
- IND-3. Achieved. Frontex regularly took part in LEWP-C meetings, CELBET Steering Committee and specific operational meetings as well as the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO), WCO meetings and selected EMPACT activities, in which customs take part.
- IND-4. Achieved. Despite the number of MMOs with customs engagement remained the same as in 2021, the engagement of customs in MMO has indeed increased as envisaged due to the set-up of the joint centre and deployment of CBCDO with customs background.

**Key Activity 2.2.4. Support checks on any relevant documents and transportation means by providing centralised information systems (FADO and FIELDS), a 24/7 remote assistance and by deploying document fraud task forces in field operations along the four tiers access model.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. To implement FIELDS services for supporting more effective frontline checks on travel, identity, maritime documents and vehicles in the European border and migration management operational activities, supporting mainly the Member States.
- OBJ-2. To develop the FADO project according to the assigned resources and the established plan <sup>(26)</sup>.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. The FIELDS standard operating procedures have been designed, developed and tested. Currently, SOPs are under periodical review for improvement.
- RES-2. For the new FADO system, the documentation for the technical design and development was finalised in September 2022, but the tender procedure was not launched yet. The related specific objective was not achieved as a result of delays in processing internal workflows for the tender procedure.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. FIELDS Project phase was completed with the operationalisation of the system piloted in France in April 2022. The work of producing QCCs on behalf of the EU, Canada and Australia continued in the Reference Manual activities. The first Regional Group specifically dedicated to FIELDS was established including Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and Moldova, whose representatives actively participated in the first FIELDS workshop, resulting in the creation of 45 QCC, 51% of which related to new documents not yet available in the Reference Manual nor in FIELDS (new content).
- IND-2. Not achieved. All documentation for the procurement for the new FADO was prepared, but the tender was not launched within 2022.

### **Focus Area 2.3. In the frame of the tripartite working arrangement, reinforcing the cooperation between Frontex, EMSA and EFCA for the development of European cooperation on Coast Guard Functions**

**Key Activity 2.3.1. Strengthen the coast guard function of the Agency through multi-agency cooperation (joint capacity building and sharing of assets, support for the implementation of the coast guard function).**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

To steer and enhance processes related to the interagency cooperation with European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach in the implementation of European Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions (CGF) and in the context of the development of the standing corps.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. The practical handbook on European cooperation on coast guard functions: under the lead of EFCA in the framework of the Technical Subcommittee 2 (TSC2) – capacity building part, the three Agencies (EFCA, EMSA, Frontex) started a process to develop an online portal with the support of Member States in order to make the practical handbook accessible. The baseline for its creation is the European Commission's recommendation establishing a 'Practical Handbook' on European cooperation on coast guard functions of 20 July 2021 which results from the Article 69 of the Regulation.
- RES-2. Technical sub-committee 3 (TSC3). During the reporting period, five TSC3 meetings were organised, and the deliverables expected under the Annual Strategic Plan 2022 were rendered.
- RES-3. Frontex, EFCA and EMSA successfully implemented the Annual Strategic Plan 2022 within the remits of the inter-agency cooperation. The three agencies efficiently combined their joint efforts to achieve the objective to further promote European cooperation with national authorities on coast guard functions at EU level. The annual report of the inter-agency cooperation under the TWA framework is available under Annex 7.

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*(26) Stages: 1) Initiation phase is completed in 2021; 2) Planning phase - completion 28/02/2022; 3) Execution phase - completion 31/12/2023.*

- RES-4. The Annual European Coast Guard Event was organised in Warsaw in the format of a two-day event in June 2022, hosted by Frontex as the chair of the Tripartite Working Arrangement.
- RES-5. In 2022, the Agencies continued their cooperation within the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF). Frontex co-organised a workshop with Croatian ECGFF chairmanship focusing on Multipurpose Maritime Operations – best practices.
- RES-6. The agencies were actively supporting Coast Guard Global Summit (CGGS) initiatives, whose chair is Japan since 2019. Frontex, EFCA and EMSA are part of the core group members in charge of developing the activities in support of the joint consultative forum, and Frontex took an active part in a human resources development program as well as in general online symposium held in November 2022.
- RES-7. In 2022, the Agencies continued to cooperate in the frame of the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum (NACGF) chaired by Spain with the role of observers where all three agencies have agreed to reinforce their involvement in relevant expert working groups of the NACGF. Frontex is taking part in four working groups: Maritime Security, Search and Rescue, Illegal Drug Trafficking, and Illegal Migration.
- RES-8. Regarding the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC), forum activities were put on hold due to the war in Ukraine, as Russia was supposed to take over the Presidency in 2022.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. The working group for the online portal of the practical handbook on European cooperation on coast guard functions benefited by the engagement of an ample number of national authorities performing coast guard functions in the Member States.
- IND-2. Achieved. During 2022, five TSC3 meetings were organised exceeding the four events envisaged.
- IND-3. Achieved. Nine workshops (in the frame of coast guard fora such as European Coast Guard Function Forum (ECGFF), North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum (NACGF), the Annual European Coast Guard Event were conducted exceeding the five events originally envisaged.

**Key Activity 2.3.2. Implement multipurpose maritime operations (MMO) in cooperation with EFCA and EMSA in order to support the coast guard function including SAR as a component of IBM to improve coordination and mutual knowledge between stakeholders and identify synergies with Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations in reference to the European Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. To reinforce the interagency cooperation (EFCA, EMSA and Frontex) in order to support MS national authorities dealing with coast guard functions.
- OBJ-2. To share and to promote best practices among the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and non-EU countries as well as within coast guard fora.
- OBJ-3. To maintain and further extend the MMO platform to customs and law enforcement measures combatting cross-border crime.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Multipurpose Maritime Operation Black Sea 2022: the operation was successfully implemented between August and November, in cooperation with EFCA, EMSA and six Bulgarian and Romanian authorities dealing with coast guard functions, and the European Union Satellite Centre (EU SatCen). This MMO allowed to significantly develop the cooperation between Frontex and Romanian Customs authorities by establishing a joint analysis team.

In order to provide increased technical and operational assistance to the host Member States, Frontex co-financed 32 maritime and 1 aerial asset and deployed standing corps officers: 6 European Coast Guard Functions officers and 5 Cross-Border Crime Detection officers. In addition, 2 standing corps category 3 – information officers were deployed in Frontex Situation Centre (FSC)/Maritime Aerial Surveillance (MAS) during the Frontex Surveillance Aircraft (FSA) deployment in MMO and National representative in the International Coordination Centre ICC (Frontex Operational Coordination Centre – FOCC Warsaw) from each host Member State.

EU SatCen and EMSA Copernicus related services were used within MMO and delivered under the umbrella of EUROSUR Fusion Services with these results for each coast guard function. The main outcomes were as follows:

- **Border control** (cooperation with Romania coast guard and Bulgarian border police) – 49 related incidents:
    - Three incidents on irregular migration by the sea (Bulgaria – 2 cases with 55 persons on board, Romania – 1 case with 80 persons on board); and one incident on irregular migration in maritime Border Crossing Point (Bulgaria: 2 people) 1 prevention of departure (Bulgaria with 18 persons on board);
    - 28 hits on databases; 4 refusals of entry; 1 incident on document fraud; 2 administrative cases (1 sailor document issue, 1 undeclared weapons); and 9 others (2 overstay, 2 dead sailors found on board of vessels, 2 issues regarding vehicle identification numbers, 3 stolen vehicles)
  - **Fishery control (cooperation with EFCA community):**
    - 50 joint patrols and 22 joint inspections;
    - 75 fishing vessel sightings forms (FVSF) were sent to EFCA by the Bulgaria/Romania Border Police (via European Coast Guard Functions Officer ECGFO in FOCC);
  - **Environmental protection (cooperation with EMSA's community):**
    - 10 joint patrols and 6 joint inspections;
    - One potential marine pollution sighted by a Romania Maritime Administration expert during a joint patrol with a Frontex co-financed maritime asset
  - **Maritime search and rescue – 7 incidents:** 3 cases associated to the 1 irregular migration + 2 avoiding border control in maritime domain – already mentioned to Maritime Border Control
  - **Maritime, ship and port security – 13 incidents:**
    - Two cases with drifting/landed maritime mine,
    - 11 records to cargo in border crossing points of gamma radiation over the legal limit;
  - **Maritime customs activities (joint border police/customs activities) – 14 incidents:**
    - Five smuggling of goods – goods of approximative value of over EUR 70 000,
    - Nine cases related to the infringement of intellectual property rights, goods with an approximative value over EUR 2 million.
- RES-2. **Boarding handbook.** The 4th Boarding Group meeting focused on the finalisation of the update of the handbook on best practices and guidelines on Frontex coordinated joint maritime.
- RES-3. **Search and rescue (SAR) workshops in different sea regions around Europe.** Three SAR workshops, including a SAR seminar, tactical emergency casualty care awareness session and multipurpose maritime exercise were organised in Cagliari, Italy within JO Themis 2022, Rhodes, Greece within JO Poseidon 2022 and Constanta, Romania within MMO Black Sea 2022.
- RES-4. **Expertise related to coast guard functions in different law enforcement, customs and military projects.** MMO Black Sea 2022 provided the possibility to enhance the support offered by Frontex in the area of law enforcement to the host member states, Romania and Bulgaria. The MMO Black Sea 2022 focused on the implementation of the following coast guard functions: border surveillance at sea, including support to search and rescue (SAR), general law enforcement, fisheries control by surveillance and joint checks following EFCA Black Sea Joint Deployment Plan, environmental protection and customs control (in accordance with Article 68(4) of the Regulation).

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

1. Achieved. There was one ad-hoc MMO implemented.
2. Achieved. In terms of the number of SAR drills implemented three SAR workshops were performed in 2022.
3. Achieved. In terms of the number of activities performed with the involvement of the customs, the target (1) activity was met.

#### Focus Area 2.4. Support migration management by ensuring effective returns

##### Key Activity 2.4.1. Extend the assistance to MS in all stages of the return process.

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Provide operational and technical assistance in the whole return process, from the pre-return stage, support to (assisted) voluntary and forced returns, to support in the area of post-arrival/post-return, including pooling and sharing of information and practices as well as return operations organised by Frontex on its own initiative.
- OBJ-2. Provide technical resources to MS to conduct efficient returns in accordance with Frontex standardised procedures.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The Agency successfully continued rendering technical and operational assistance to MS in the frame of current forced-return operations, including operations organised on own initiative through the first two fully-fledged Frontex organised return operations to Albania and Nigeria, as well as on technical assistance to MS in relation to voluntary returns and departures.
- RES-2. Frontex maintained its technical and operational assistance in the area of pre-return through special measures including Technical Assistance Projects for Third Countries on Return, Readmission and Reintegration (TAP4RRR), the deployment of European Return Liaison Officers (EURLO) covering 10 key third countries of return and with the support of return specialists (RS) with 46 officers carrying out 63 deployments in 13 Member States.
- RES-3. The transfer of the European Return and Reintegration Programme (ERRIN) was successfully completed. As of April 2022, the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS) were officially launched. 784 cases, covering 1,015 persons were provided with reintegration assistance.
- RES-4. The Agency fostered an active engagement with MS through different networks, initiatives and measures.

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved. A total of 24,867 non-EU nationals were returned with Frontex support by air and land. 39% of third-country nationals returned voluntarily with Frontex support (26% in 2021).
- 291 operations by charter flights (9,919 persons) → 91% of the envisaged target
  - 8,789 returns by scheduled flights (14,937 persons) → 110% of the envisaged target
  - Including 80 third-country nationals returned through first Frontex fully-fledged JRO.
- IND-2. Achieved. In 2022, in total 8 projects were (partially) implemented or under development, including Frontex Return Mobility project, in the framework of interpretation project, as part of the Toolbox for children in Return project. In 2022, the 'Good Practices on Returning Children and Families' was adopted, as well as the development of the IRMA Module for Long-Term Identification Missions, and specific access for and use by Return Specialists of the existing Readmission Case Management Systems.
- IND-3. Achieved. The support provided was deemed satisfactory taking into account that in 2022 no negative feedback towards the support was provided. The Agency worked on the development of an automatic ticketing system - with entry into force in 2023 - facilitating proper management of IRMA related tickets as well as enabling for automatic delivery of satisfaction from customers.
- IND-4. Achieved. The Agency conducted scheduled events i.e. two Return Data Experts and Analysts meetings in March and November as well as two hybrid IRMA 2.0 training sessions were organised in November and December 2022, one for operational managers and one for general users.
- IND-5. Achieved. Transfer of ERRIN activities to Frontex were successfully implemented by end of June 2022.
- IND-6. IND-6. Partially achieved: 814 cases were submitted by MS under the JRS since 1 April (661 ongoing, 153 finalised). In total it was 1,049 persons (858 adults and 191 minors). The difference with the envisaged target was due to the fact that the JRS only started in April 2022, as well as MS gradually took up on Frontex offer on Joint Reintegration Services, where a steep increase of participating MS throughout 2022 was achieved (5 in April vs. 16 in December)..
- IND-7. Achieved. Activities were carried out as planned with 11 network meetings held, including two PRAN meetings and one Third Country Core Group (TC-CORE) meeting, two DCP meetings, two VRN meetings, two PRRN meetings and two HLRT on returns. Additionally, bilateral meetings were held with all 30 MS and SAC to discuss overall return cooperation, bottlenecks, and possible areas for support as well as the plans for the upcoming operational year.

**Key Activity 2.4.2. Strengthen MS return capacities through the use of the standing corps, capacity building, further developing of return IT tools and reducing administrative burden.**

### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Provide human resources to MS to conduct efficient returns in accordance with Frontex standardised procedures, focusing on all stages of the return process.
- OBJ-2. Support the use of relevant IT systems, enhancing the sharing of information of different EU IT systems and national RECAMAS (return case management system) and the digitalisation of the return process, allowing for improved return data collection and overall proactiveness of the Agency.
- OBJ-3. Provide training in the use of the above-mentioned IT systems, especially IRMA/ Frontex Application for Return (FAR) and RECAMAS.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Throughout the year, RS, FRESOs and monitors were deployed to different MS based on the needs communicated to the Agency.
- RES-2. The Agency continued developing standard operating procedures, guidelines, and best practices for relevant stages of the return process (details under IND-2 below).
- RES-3. Material progress was achieved in the area of digitalisation of returns, IRMA 2.0 and FAR further developed (details under IND-3 and IND-6 below).
- RES-4. During 2022, the Agency supported the improvement of national RECAMAS according to the updated reference model by carrying out gap analysis and through the implementation of recommendations identified and development of interfaces. Relevant to note that is not a linear process where most interested MS have made the gap analysis of their national RECAMAS already with Frontex support and consider performing a new gap analysis upon major changes being completed, while other MS/SAC are more reluctant to make use of this form of support from the Agency.
- RES-5. The Agency maintained a wide array of support services to MS/SAC with regard to the digitalisation of return processes e.g., videoconferencing, Readmission Case Management System (RCMS), web service solution (details under IND-6 below).

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved. In total, 319 monitors were on board of both charter and scheduled flights. In 2022, 108 deployments of return specialists took place, 45 FRESO and 63 RS were deployed supporting both MS and carrying out escorting tasks in 81 return operations (54 on board of charter flights and 27 on board of scheduled flights), providing assistance in 14 return operations as the back-up team on board of charter flights and (category 3) FRESO have provided support on board of 5 return operations.
- IND-2. Achieved. Standard operating procedures and/or guidelines were produced including: 'The Good Practices in Returning Children with Families'. Strategic Framework for the 'Technical Assistance Projects for Third Countries on Return, Readmission and Reintegration (TAP4RRR)', and the TAP4RRR rolling plan framework was drafted to allow MS to provide proposals for capacity building projects in third countries. The best practices on identification and acquisition of travel documents are on its final stages and will be consulted with the MS and finalised in 2023.
- IND-3. Achieved. The Agency fulfilled over 80% of stakeholder business requirements for improvement of IRMA 2 including access, content management, long- and short-term identification missions.
- IND-4. Achieved: Training events were provided above the initial forecasts of up to **47 training sessions** which were organised in 2022, with details as follows:
  - 1. IRMA 1.0: A total of 14 online training sessions with the participation of a total of 32 users.
  - 2. IRMA 2.0: A total of 2 hybrid training sessions with the participation of a total of 102 users.
  - 3. FAR Scheduled Flights: A total of 27 online training sessions with the participation of 137 users.
  - 4. FAR Charter Flights: A total of 4 training sessions with the participation of a total of 27 users.
- IND-5. Mostly achieved: The completed percentage of MS national RECAMAS mapped reached 51.61% (i.e. 16 MS/SAC) vs. the envisaged 60%. The difference with the envisaged target was due to the lower number of requests for gap analysis from the MS.
- IND-6. Achieved. The progress on the digitalisation activities and processes continued in 2022 with a total of 14 project/activities which were supported in 2022 in this regard including:
  - 1. IRMA 2.0 project - modules:
    - a. Long-term identification missions' deployment to production, preparation for the pilot go-live.
    - b. Short-term identification missions - partial development of the module, requirements refinement and re-tendering of the development phase.
    - c. Grants management missions - refinement of requirements and re-tendering of the development phase.
    - d. Charter flights module - redefinition of requirements in line with revised business needs.
    - e. Return by scheduled flights 2.0 - maintenance and further development, including implementation of the transit process and financial procedures.
    - f. Access management and content management modules development and qualification for production. The application is planned to go to production in Q1 2023.
    - g. Encryption scheme - redefinition of requirements in line with EDPS feedback on IRMA 2.0 DPIA.
  - 2. Return and reintegration application - planning phase of the project and development of business requirements.
  - 3. Return data collection - support and management of the return data collection scheme.
  - 4. Reintegration assistance tool - evaluation of possible take-over and hosting of the system.
  - 5. Readmission case management system - evaluation of possible hosting of the front process segment by the agency.
  - 6. Ticketing tool for IRMA Service Desk - development of the phase 1 of the application

7. IRMA 1.0 maintenance – development of required workflows and actualisation of content until deployment of IRMA 2.0.
8. Charter flights 1.0 maintenance – migration to newer technology stack (SharePoint 2019) and requirements implementation until development of charter flights 2.0 under IRMA 2.0 platform.
9. Return data hub – concept initiation.

<b>Key Activity 2.4.3. Enhance returns through closer cooperation with non-EU countries in the field of return.</b>
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**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Contribute to the implementation of the EU return and readmission policy.
- OBJ-2. Enhance awareness of non-EU countries and to facilitate cooperation between them and the EU Member States in return-related matters.
- OBJ-3. Build return, readmission, and reintegration capacities of non-EU countries.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. The Agency actively fostered different fora with MS to discuss and identify challenges/solutions regarding cooperation with non-EU countries (details under IND-1 below).
- RES-2. Frontex sustained the provision of operational support to MS and non-EU countries on return related identification and documentation procedures within the current scope through EURLO network (details under IND-2 below).
- RES-3. Substantive work was completed in support of readmission capacity-building activities (details under IND-3 below). However, the Agency acknowledges the need to carry out third country reintegration capacity projects in partnership with MS (details under IND-4 below)
- RES-4. The work of Return Liaison Officers was managed and supported by Agency through the EURLO network. (Details under IND-2 below).

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. During 2022 events, workshops and meetings were held as planned, including:
- 16 identification missions: 4 short-term and 2 long-term were supported, during which 1,640 persons were interviewed and 1,081 persons were identified.
  - 15 meetings and workshops (8 country working group meetings and 5 ad-hoc workshops) on specific third countries took place to support the exchange of information and identify opportunities.
  - One return familiarization visit was organised, and two others were supported.
  - One Third Country Core Group (TC-CORE) meeting (new working group of the PRAN) was set up to discuss the proposals for the TAP4RRR as well as overall developments in third country cooperation.
  - Two awareness sessions on EURLO deployments were conducted and three awareness sessions /thematic workshops TAP4RRR were organised for MS to raise the awareness for the possibilities for and discusses proposals for capacity building projects in third country for EURLOs and MS.
- IND-2. Achieved: During 2022, 11 European Return Liaison Officers (EURLO) were deployed by the Agency. By the end of 2022, eight EURLOs were in place covering ten key third countries of return (Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, and Vietnam). The EURLO deployment to Afghanistan was discontinued after the change of the regime. Two positions remained vacant at the end of 2022 for which MS have not proposed any candidates so far. Preparations for new deployment to Iraq in 2023 were conducted.
- IND-3. Achieved: In the reporting year the Strategic Framework for the TAP4RRR was developed and finalised, and the TAP4RRR rolling plan was initiated to allow MS to provide the proposal for capacity building projects in third countries. Furthermore, the draft of 'Best Practices on Identification and Acquisition of Travel Documents' was further developed and will be consulted with MS in 2023.
- IND-4. Not achieved: the Agency did not implement any third country reintegration capacity projects due to lack of proposals from MS, however, under TAP4RRR Pillar 2, three project proposals have been presented to be further developed in 2023.

### 1.3. Strategic Objective 3

#### Sustained European Border and Coast Guard capabilities

**Focus Area 3.1. Implement Capability Development Planning, including contingency planning, instrument as a vehicle for integrated planning of EBCG capabilities**

##### **Key Activity 3.1.1. Education and training of the European border and coast guards.**

###### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Ensure a harmonised and common approach to EU border and coast guard training in the Member States, based on common standards, by developing and delivering educational methodologies and frameworks (Common Core Curricula, European Joint Master's, training in course design in line with Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF)).
- OBJ-2. Strengthen the border management capacities of the Member States by providing direct assistance for the development of national training programmes and supporting cooperation among border and coast guards training institutions.
- OBJ-3. Support border management capability development in the Member States by providing specialised training programmes and products on strategic components of European IBM Strategy and promoting high and consistent standards of border control at the external borders of the European Union.

###### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. The Agency updated the Common Core Curriculum for basic training and carried out an assessment on the implementation of the Common Core Curriculum mid-level.
- RES-2. The year 2022 was devoted to the elaboration of a legal – financial and procedural – framework specific to the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management programme (EJMSBM) through a multiannual framework partnership agreement and financed with specific grants. The call for grants documentation is currently in the process of consultation with relevant Frontex entities. Due to the complexity of this procedure, the signature of the framework partnership agreement, the actual commitment of funds and the signature of the specific grant agreement shall take place in 2023.
- RES-3. Harmonised standards for training design and delivery and alignment with Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for border guarding competency references was ensured by certifying MS experts in Course Design in line with Bologna/Copenhagen Principles using the SQF for border guarding.
- RES-4. Harmonised training delivery approach ensured by the certification of MS experts as Frontex trainers in two courses on border and coast guard training delivery methodology.
- RES-5. Specialised training programmes and products on strategic components of EIBM Strategy was developed and delivered to support capability development in the Member States, the implementation of EU policies and/or the deployment of (new) large scale IT systems for border security. Priority was assigned to those countries requiring support to implement recommendations for improvement issues under the VA or Schengen Evaluators' processes.
- RES-6. Development and implementation of specialised training programmes for the instructors of Member States border and coast guards fostering harmonisation of the border guarding education processes and the further professionalisation of the EBCG was carried out.

###### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: CCC Basic updated and CCC mid-level implementation report published.
- IND-2. Achieved: 15 experts in course design from MS were trained and 30 subject-matter experts from MS who deliver Frontex training were certified as Frontex trainers.
- IND-3. 27 courses were delivered, and seven self-study online training sessions were provided for the MS/SAC/TC participants.
- IND-4. 4,294 MS/SAC/TC officers were equipped with specialised training as presented in Table 9 in key activity 3.2.1. below.
- IND-5. 97 Specialised training activities were implemented as planned.

### Key Activity 3.1.2. Foster integrated approach to planning

#### Specific objectives:

Ensure capability development through coherent implementation of integrated planning.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

Capabilities met the operational needs.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

Percentage of capabilities resulting from integrated planning vs. ad-hoc. Target achieved 80%.

### Key Activity 3.1.3. Plan, programme and report on capability development and implementation .

#### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Plan and develop capabilities.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. During 2022, 23 MS/SAC delivered their national capability development plans (NCDP), while the NCDP of 5 MS/SAC are still missing. The deadline for submitting the NCDP was extended.
- RES-2. The Agency worked on the preparation of the capability overview, however, delays in receiving some national CDPs forced to move the completion of this capability overview to March 2023.
- RES-3. The Multiannual Acquisition Strategy was submitted to the European Commission for its opinion at the beginning of May 2022 with a view of being adopted by the Management Board in September 2023.
- RES-4. The Multiannual Plan for the Standing Corps was adopted in March 2022.
- RES-5. Development of the Agency's umbrella CDP and other sub-strategies were initiated in 2022 and will be finalised by 2023.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Partially achieved: the ratio between planned and executed activities reached 85% execution of planned activities.
- IND-2. Partially achieved: The capability overview was developed and is to be submitted to the European Commission by the end of Q1 2023.

### Key Activity 3.1.4. Develop, manage and operate supporting tools and systems

#### Specific objective:

Adequate tools and systems in support of capabilities.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

Opera Evo 2022:

- RES-1. The last remaining business capability under Opera Evo project (document management) was delivered and deployed to production environment. In October 2022, the product management plan was approved, and the Agency switched from the project phase to the product management phase.
- RES-2. Opera Evo team managed to close 601 incidents and 933 bugs; the former were discovered in production while the latter were identified in the testing environment prior to the deployment to production. A total of 121 changes were implemented through 14 new releases of the system.  
The most significant changes were the option to support the deployments of heavy technical equipment with back-ups, the option for a deployed technical equipment to support multiple operational activities in the same given period and changing the nomination period for category 2 officers from operational years to calendar years. Since the production management phase, no new business capability was requested by the product owners.
- RES-3. The external expert database is no longer in use as of September 2022.

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

Achieved: The ratio between planned and implemented actions was 85% as envisaged covering maintenance and upgrade actions.

#### Key Activity 3.1.5. Develop concepts and requirements to meet future needs.

##### Specific objective

Develop the necessary capability concepts and requirements for capabilities in line with the Agency's Capability Development Plan.

##### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Following the recommendations made by the Fundamental Rights and Legal Aspects of Operations Working Group, the Agency explored possibilities on how those recommendations could be implemented while operating on platforms such as ships, aircraft and vehicles as well as on persons. Focusing initially on the latter, field visits took place in Estonia and in Latvia in late spring 2022, to collect information on legal aspects, data protection, operational issues and technical features. A survey was launched in October 2022 and sent to the MS/SAC to map different applicable national legal frameworks to assess the feasibility of category 1 officers to operate this kind of equipment while being deployed and how the information recorded could be accessed.
- RES-2. A concept note on personal equipment for standing corps category 1 officers was developed in December 2022 aimed at ensuring that the proper equipment is provided to the category 1 officers to enable them to effectively perform their tasks and to give them the necessary versatility and operability.
- RES-3. The pilot eco-driving training project took place in February and in March 2022. Standing corps members deployed in Latvia and Lithuania were provided with both theoretical and practical training aimed at reducing fuel consumption. The training was paused due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and will be resumed in 2023.
- RES-4. An external consultancy was commissioned to advice on how to measure the environmental footprint of the capabilities (human resources and technical equipment) deployed in operational activities. The study was concluded in August 2022 and offered preliminary results on where most important impact lies. The Agency will now work on integrating the calculation tool within the Opera Evolution system.
- RES-5. Due to an upsurge in operational needs for the dog handler profile in 2022 and the limited capacity of the MS to respond through deployments of category 3 officers, the Agency undertook a series of field visits during the fourth quarter of 2022 to map the current capabilities and the planned developments in the different MS.

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

Achieved: Ratio between the number of planned and implemented activities set at more than 85% was met.

#### Key Activity 3.1.6. Assurance of processes

##### Specific objectives

- OBJ-1. Administrate the capability development processes in legal and regular manner.
- OBJ-2. Ensure continuous improvement.
- OBJ-3. Manage stakeholders through e.g., Pooled Resources Network and other forums and formats.

##### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The ISO certification was postponed to 2023 and will change the initial expected result to 'Establishing Implemented Quality Management System'. While the quality management system and processes for operational occupational safety and health have been established, they need to be fully operationalised before going for the certification for two select processes requiring additional time, hence this must be postponed to 2023.
- RES-2. The Agency conducted the meetings related to the Pooled Resources and Capability Development Network as planned.

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Partially achieved: processes have been mapped and they are in the process of validation, but more time is required to achieve ISO certification. Target achieved by 80%. The plan towards the ISO certification will be updated by early 2023.
- IND-2. Partially achieved: the survey on the stakeholder's satisfaction has been prepared and will be validated and launched in early 2023.

### Focus Area 3.2. Provide trained and equipped standing corps to enable response to current and emerging challenges

#### Key Activity 3.2.1 Education and training of the European border and coast guards – standing corps.

##### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Further develop and deliver the basic training programme for the EBCG Cat. 1 following Common Core Curricula and training quality standards.
- OBJ-2. Strengthen the cooperation with the Member States training institutions to support the implementation of the training programmes for Standing Corps.
- OBJ-3. Further develop and professionalise the standing corps by delivering specialised training programmes for all border management related functions, in line with the identified capability development needs and tailored to the specific operational tasks and profiles.
- OBJ-4. Further develop core operational leadership and management competencies of selected the EBCG Cat. 1 to enable a harmonised implementation of the operational chain of command and coordination while promoting the organizational values and culture of the Agency.
- OBJ-5. Ensure harmonised standards for training design, delivery, monitoring, and quality assurance implemented, including the SQF competency references, course design procedures, digital learning solutions and trainers' certification system.
- OBJ-6. Improve the technical capability for management, administration, recording, monitoring, and reporting on large-scale training data through enhanced educational technology and business intelligence tools, optimised business processes.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. European border and coast guard standing corps category 1 officers were trained in 2022 in accordance with the extended basic training programme and basic training programme.
- RES-2. An external evaluation of design and implementation of the extended basic training programme for the EBCG SC category 1 was conducted under the aegis of DG HOME, where the final report shall be issued in February 2023.
- RES-3. The Agency awarded the necessary grants to implement the basic training programme for EBCG SC category 1.
- RES-4. The Agency delivered seven sessions of the 'Training Delivery Skills courses' and two of the 'Border and Coast Guard Training Delivery Methodology courses' in order to ensure a harmonised approach to training delivery.
- RES-5. A training programme on 'Operational leadership and management' was developed and delivered for selected EBCG category 1 officers.
- RES-6. New learning technologies were developed to improve technical capability for management, administration, recording, monitoring, and reporting on large-scale training data and to centralise the platforms in a system designed for management and monitoring of learners' records for the creation of training maps and for facilitation of training management.

### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved, All EBCG SC category 1 officers were trained according to the basic training programme.
  - a. All planned iterations of basic training programme were implemented as planned.
  - b. A total of 85 subject matter experts were certified as Frontex trainers for specialised courses and basic training programme.
- IND-2. Achieved: activities completed with relation to specialised training:
  - a. First two iterations of Operational Management and Leadership Training were implemented.

- b. With the support of content experts nominated by the MS, along with highly specialised fundamental rights external expert, and in line with recommendations presented by the Consultative Forum, tailored fundamental rights online modules and contact sessions were embedded as an integral part of all relevant specialised training dedicated to the standing corps. The content developed is to be further delivered with the support of the dedicated team of Frontex certified FR trainers.
  - c. Tailored specialised training programmes for Fundamental Rights Monitors and ETIAS CU were delivered.
  - d. A total of 20 courses and the online pre-deployment training were provided for EBCG SC all categories.
  - e. Specialised training was delivered to 1,194 EBCG SC category 1; 511 category 2 and 950 category 3 officers. (Details provided in the tables below).
- IND-3. Achieved: individual training maps prepared and adjusted for all EBCG SC cat 1 and 2 trained in 2022.
- IND-4. Achieved: Out of 104 planned activities related to specialised training, 97 (93%) implemented in 2022.
- IND-5. Achieved: Trainees' satisfaction rate with extended basic training and basic training was as follows: batch 5: 90.3%, batch 6: 91.5%, batch 8: 95.9% and trainees' satisfaction rate with specialised training in 2022 was 4.6 out of 5.

#### Additional information

##### A - Courses for SC category 1 officers:

Course	Attendees
A01. Course for Border Guard Officer (BGO)	61
A02. Course for Information Officer (IO)	16
A03. Course for Debriefing Officer (DO)	43
A04. Course for Advanced Level Document Officer (ALDO)	4
A05. Course for Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer (CBCDO)	29
A05. Behaviour Analysis TtT	13
A05. Proactive Threat Detection	6
A06. Course for Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer (MVCDO)	11
A08. Course for Frontex Tactical Support Officer (FTSO)	94
A09. Course for Forced Return Escort and Support Officer (FRESO)	13
A11. Course for European Coast Guard Functions Officer	6
A16. Annual ongoing training on the use of force	556
A19. Course for Border Surveillance Officer – Air Crew Preparation for Joint Operations	1
A20. Course for Border Surveillance Officer – Maritime Operations	4
A21. Course for Escort Leaders in Forced Return Operations	1
A22. Course on Management and Leadership	40
A26. Course on Customs and Border Guard Cooperation (Advisers)	6
A35. Roadshow on Falsified Documents	15
A38. Course on Anti-trafficking	22
A18. Pre-deployment Induction (online self-paced)	71
Reporting Course (online self-paced)	182
<b>Total of SC category 1 trained</b>	<b>1,194</b>

Table 7. Courses for SC category 1.

##### B - Courses for SC categories 2 and 3 officers:

Course	SC Cat. 2	SC Cat. 3
A02. Course for Information Officer (IO)	3	
A03. Course for Debriefing Officer (DO)	35	62
A04. Course for Advanced Level Document Officer (ALDO)	11	
A05. Course for Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer (CBCDO)	18	
A06. Course for Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer (MVCDO)	7	
A08. Course for Frontex Tactical Support Officer (FTSO)	27	
A09. Course for Forced Return Escort and Support Officer (FRESO)	1	
A11. Course for European Coast Guard Functions Officer	5	
A19. Course for Border Surveillance Officer - Air Crew Preparation for Joint Operations	5	
A26. Course on Customs and Border Guard Cooperation (Advisers)	6	
A35. Roadshow on Falsified Documents	5	1

A38. Course on Anti-trafficking	6	
A18. Pre-deployment Induction (online self-paced)	167	523
E-learning course on use of force and incidents involving the use of force reporting (UFR/IFR)	82	309
Reporting Course (online self-paced)	133	55
<b>Total of SCcategories 2 and 3 trained</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>950</b>

Table 8. Courses for SC category 2 and 3.

#### C - Courses provided for MS/SAC/TC participants

Course	MS/ SAC	non- EU
A03. Course for Debriefing Officer (DO)	81	
A04. Course for Advanced Level Document Officer (ALDO)	23	
A05. Course for Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer (CBCDO)	3	
A05. Firearms Detection	16	16
A05. Course for Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer (CBCDO)/ Proactive Threat Detection	3	
A06. Course for Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer (MVCO)	17	
A07. Obedience and use of force training	3	
A07. Selection of dogs for border guard tasks	15	
A07. Course for dog handler	15	
A09. Course for Forced Return Escort and Support Officer (FRESO)	41	
A11. Course for European Coast Guard Functions Officer	32	
A13. Course for Pool of Forced Return Monitors (FRM)	6	
A17. Course on Fundamental Rights for Multipliers	89	
A19. Course for Border Surveillance Officer – Air Crew Preparation for Joint Operations	39	
A20. Course for Border Surveillance Officer – Maritime Operations	21	
A21. Course for Escort Leaders in Forced Return Operations	44	
A24. Course for Schengen Evaluator	87	
A26. Course on Customs and Border Guard Cooperation (Advisers)	25	
A27. Course on the Entry-Exit-System	220	
A28. Course on European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)	85	
A29. Course on CIRA (Risk Analysis)	111	14
A30. Course for NCC operators (EUROSUR)	60	
A31. Course on facial features for imposter detection	12	
A32. Course on False Document Detection – Consular Staff Training	41	2
A35. Roadshow on Falsified Documents		279
A38. Course on Anti-trafficking	15	
Interagency cooperation – joint training Frontex- EMSA -EFCA maritime surveillance/SAR	122	
Course on the Entry-Exit-System (self-paced)*	1,014	
Course on European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) (self-paced)	929	
Schengen Borders Code (self-paced)*	468	
Automated Border Control (ABC) Training (self-paced)*	71	
Schengen Information System (SIS) Training – pilot stage (self-paced)*	3	
Advance Information Training (self-paced)	58	
Learning resources on electronic component of the security documents (self-paced)*	214	
<b>Total of MS/SAC/ TC officers trained</b>	<b>3,983</b>	<b>311</b>

Table 9. Courses provided for MS/SAC/TC participants.

#### Key Activity 3.2.2. Pool, deliver and administrate capabilities.

##### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Implement the capability pooling process to meet the needs of the operational activities for the upcoming operational cycle.

##### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Annual Capability Planning 2022:
  - a. Capabilities met the operational needs
  - b. Several rounds of targeted calls for additional resources grounded on provisions of Article 57(8) of the Regulation were launched.
- RES-2. Annual Capability Planning 2023:

- a. Capability pools of technical equipment and human resources from the Agency and the Member States. There was an 84% coverage of human resources and a 54% coverage of major technical equipment from deployment period 1 to 13 for the operational year 2023.
- b. Adopted Management Board Decisions in accordance with Article 54(4) and Article 64(6).

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: the percentage of compliance with the deadlines of the Regulation relevant to the pooling process was 100%.
- IND-2. Achieved: all the milestones on the coverage of capability pools (in numbers) in accordance with the Regulation were achieved (Target: 90%), please refer to the tables below for operational year 2023 (detailed information on planning actual results for operational year 2022 displayed on Annex 2).

Deployments\* of major technical equipment vis-à-vis needs of Frontex for deployment periods 1 to 13 of operational year 2023 (25.01.2023 - 24.01.2024)\*\*\*

Operational Year 2023	Needs addressed to			Availability of resources			Coverage
Technical equipment (major)	Frontex	MS	Total	Frontex	MS	Total	
Offshore patrol vessel	-	28	28	-	6	6	21%
Coastal patrol vessel	-	95	95	-	39	39	41%
Coastal patrol boat	-	215	215	-	148	148	69%
Fixed-wing aircraft	91	91	182	88	40	128	70%
Helicopter	-	73	73	-	45	45	62%
Unmanned aerial vehicle	26	-	26	12	-	12	46%
Patrol car	3446	1934	5380	249	1342	1591	30%
Mobile surveillance system	221	169	390	69	167	236	61%
Vehicle for migration management	130	-	130	208	-	208	100%
Transportation vehicle	1261	-	1261	500	-	500	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5175</b>	<b>2605</b>	<b>7780</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>1787</b>	<b>2913</b>	<b>54%</b>

Table 10. Deployments of major technical equipment vis-à-vis needs of Frontex for deployment operational year 2023.

\*Planned deployments equal allocation of one asset per deployment period (number of deployments).

\*\*\*In addition, the Agency will be covering the needs for handheld equipment for border surveillance and border checks, deployable facilities and equipment for standing corps.

Deployments\* of standing corps vis-à-vis needs of Frontex for deployment periods 1 to 13 of operational year 2023 (25.01.2023 - 24.01.2024)\*\*

Operational Year 2023	Needs in 2023 addressed to			Availability of resources in 2023				Coverage
Human resources (profile)	Frontex	MS/SAC	Total	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Total	
Advanced Level Document Officer	2191	1473	3664	712	916	768	2396	65%
Border Guard Officer	8881	6027	14908	6301	2200	4802	13303	89%
Crew Member	-	-	-	-	-	369	369	-
Cross-Border Crime Detection Officer	560	261	821	381	194	179	754	92%
Debriefing Officer	1703	788	2491	1014	870	697	2581	100%
Dog Handler	-	597	597	-	-	200	200	34%
European Coast Guard Functions Officer	78	-	78	169	127	18	314	100%
Frontex Return Escort and Support Officer	1027	-	1027	656	307	223	1186	100%
Frontex Tactical Support Officer	1662	194	1856	1415	427	416	2258	100%
Information Officer	1547	130	1677	742	383	455	1580	94%
Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer	832	775	1607	533	299	327	1159	72%
Return Specialist	394	101	495	130	157	113	400	81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18875</b>	<b>10346</b>	<b>29221</b>	<b>12053</b>	<b>5880</b>	<b>8567</b>	<b>26500</b>	<b>84%</b>

Table 11. Deployments of standing corps vis-à-vis needs of Frontex for deployment operational year 2023.

\*Planned deployments equal allocation of one asset per deployment period (number of deployments)

\*\*Published 01/02/2023

### Key Activity 3.2.3. Enable safe, secure and healthy working conditions.

Ensure that deployed personnel can perform their tasks in a safe, secure and healthy manner.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The Agency ensured continuous reporting, and handling of safety security and health hazards identified through inspection visits on the operational field, assessment of field and officers' reports, analysis of serious incident reports, and surveys addressed to the standing corps officers.
- RES-2. The Agency continued its progress on the establishment of an OSH function and management system and implementation of the OSH framework towards the completion by 2024 in order to provide for the continuity, standardisation, and quality assurance of operational health and safety of staff performing operational activities.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Partially achieved: up to 89.5% of reported incidents on safety, security, and health hazards were timely managed, while actions are ongoing for the remaining part.
- IND-2. Partially achieved: on the establishment of an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) function and management system, an ED Decision No R-ED-2022-145 on operational Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for the European and Border Coast Guard Agency ('OSH Policy 2.0') was adopted in August 2022. Recruitment of an OSH officer is planned for the first quarter 2023.
- IND-3. Achieved: the Agency carries out a variety of actions to assure safety, security, and health on operational activities on an ongoing basis.

### Focus Area 3.3. Continue to develop and implement strategy for acquisition of own technical equipment and establish decentralised logistics system.

#### Key Activity 3.3.1. Acquisition

#### Specific objectives:

- OBJ-1. Translate the capability requirements into technical requirements considering identified determinants of efficient and effective acquisition and through-life support to software, equipment, and services.
- OBJ-2. Provide contracted specialist workforce - interpreters and cultural mediators based on operational needs.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Analysis of continuous coherence between the operational needs and the business constraints (legal, financial, fundamental rights, personal data protection, etc.) was completed through risk assessment and effective involvement of key decision-making actors.
- RES-2. Planning and execution of acquisition projects by using the draft multiannual strategy and the implementation plan was fully realised. Since the approved Annual Procurement Plan (APP) 2022, the evolution of the publication of tender dossiers was monitored as a key milestone during the year and through all the applicable APP amendments.
- RES-3. Management of products and contracts in accordance with the available procedures and processes was fully executed. This was achieved through an introduction of a systematic portfolio management analysis to assess relevant initiatives, followed by identification and implementation of the necessary adjustments.
- RES-4. Interpretation and cultural mediation service were fully provided according to operational needs. It was achieved through modelling the functions and building blocks that constitute the service management and control. That approach included the identification of business roles and their relationships, defining the horizontal layering and identifying generic functional entities that constitute the core of the service logic and its implementation. This was accomplished through continuous interaction with all the stakeholders, provision of clear tasking plan, ensuring transparency by providing stakeholders with access to contract details and tracking of the progress and performance via regular reviews in order to identify risks and issues, through the implementation of mitigation plans/actions and compliance with obligations related to personal data protection.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: the percentage of financial transactions subject to a record of exceptions was 1.9%, below the maximum ceiling envisaged ( $\leq 5\%$ ) for the overall number of acquisition procedures managed.
- IND-2. Achieved: timeline control with respect to the contractual baseline measuring milestones deviations, measurement the result was 60% above the minimum ceiling envisaged  $\geq 50\%$ .
- IND-3. Achieved: budget implementation in this area reached 99%, above the minimum ceiling envisaged  $\geq 95\%$ .
- IND-4. Achieved: the Agency successfully covered interpretation operational needs during the operational year of up to 89%, which is above the minimum ceiling envisaged of  $\geq 70\%$ .

#### **Key Activity 3.3.2. Systems engineering for technical equipment.**

##### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Standardise the management of projects and contract implementation.
- OBJ-2. Adopt monitoring and controlling tools to enhance transparency and accountability.
- OBJ-3. Consolidate risks management and continuously improve quality.
- OBJ-4. Adopt engineering analyses to ensure lower life-cycle cost and increase return on investment for the acquired products/services.
- OBJ-5. Apply the concepts of integrated logistics support to acquire systems/services.
- OBJ-6. Extending the reliability of availability of the acquired systems and services, identifying, and developing the support resource requirements.
- OBJ-7. Influencing the acquisition options early enough to enable a cost efficient and effective supportability during the overall project life cycle.

##### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. The Agency implemented a RASCI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) tool.
- RES-2. The Agency implemented processes for project/product/contract management based on systems engineering, quality control and risk management.
- RES-3. Frontex consolidated the implementation plan of the multiannual acquisition strategy through engineering analyses (life cycle cost, sensitivity, SWOT, etc.), introducing supportability analyses to achieve improved performance at an affordable cost when operating in multiple and dynamic environments.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: Up to 84% of the published tender dossiers included a specific section for integrated logistics support requirements (reliability, availability, maintainability, safety, obsolescence, reparability, etc.)

#### **Key Activity 3.3.3. Model agreement.**

Originally envisaged activity not applicable (underlying processes phased out).

#### **Key Activity 3.3.4. Joint procurement for EBCG capabilities.**

##### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Foster development of common and cost-effective EBCG capabilities through joint procurement with MS/SAC in line with capability development plans.

##### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Cost-effectiveness and economies of scale were ensured.

##### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND- 1. Achieved: the Agency completed in Q4 of 2022 a review the acquisition planning to identify potential joint procurement needs that would bring an improved cost-effectiveness and economies of scale.

### Focus Area 3.4. Research, technology development and innovation to effectively support capability development of the EBCG

#### Key Activity 3.4.1. Research, technology, and innovation for EBCG capabilities.

##### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Foster research and innovation in EBCG community through a Border Management Research and Innovation Platform.
- OBJ-2. Steer border management related EU funded research.
- OBJ-3. Research priorities and innovation deriving from research are integrated into national capability development plans and the capability roadmap.
- OBJ-4. Support EBCG capability development through conducting Frontex own research and piloting technological solutions, research findings.
- OBJ-5. Foster interoperability and harmonised performance through technical standards and performance assessment.

##### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. Through the general and thematic calls to industry, Frontex scouted the market for innovative solutions relevant to border management and informed the market on specific Frontex needs. Transparent publication of the calls and ensuing industry days reports allow all commercial operators to obtain insights into Frontex needs on technological solutions.
- RES-2. In 2022, Frontex prioritised support to MS in their preparations for the EES. Along 2022, the evaluations of the pilot projects on the EES at land borders in Spain and Bulgaria were completed and the results were presented to the MS. The implementation of a new pilot project on conditions of entry web questionnaire in support of EES was launched in the second semester 2022 at the port of Saint Malo in France where in December a showcase was organised. To continue supporting MS in the area of biometric solutions supporting EES implementation, a study was launched on remote and mobile biometric solutions. In the area of border surveillance, a pilot project on the VTOL RPAS for multidomain border surveillance was launched consisting of two trials: VTOL RPAS up to 25 kg MTOW (maximum take-off weight) and VTOL RPAS up to 100 kg MTOW. The contract for the technical solution for testing VTOL RPAS up to 25 kg was signed in 2022 while the tender for RPAS 40-100 kg will be relaunched in 2023.
- RES-3. In the reporting period, Frontex continued the development of the research and innovation structure: regular consultations with expert fora were undertaken (innovation cells on border checks, border surveillance, and law enforcement, technical expert groups on common minimum standards) and the required documentation was provided towards the establishment of an innovation lab.
- RES-4. Frontex used the outcomes of past research activities and results of the survey on future research needs to inform the research activities and to provide input on EBCG needs to the EU funded research programmes.
- RES-5. In 2022, Frontex collaborated and launched collaboration on specific activities with Eurojust, eu-LISA, EUAA, Europol, ENISA, JRC. The Agency contributed to the activities of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, regularly participated in meetings and consulted its research activities with the Hub.
- RES-6. In October 2022 Frontex organised the conference on the entry/exit system in the maritime domain, hosted by the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee in Rotterdam. The conference gathered over 250 attendees representing Member States, industry and port authorities engaged in solutions for EES, carriers and carriers associations as well as third country representatives.
- RES-7. All border security related project proposals within Horizon Europe were evaluated by Frontex.
- RES-8. In total Frontex undertook 23 actions in its senior user role for Horizon border management research projects, related to the projects iMars, AI-ARC, Tresspass, Meticos, IT Flows, D4FLY, Entrance, Effector, SHOTPROS, Medea, BorderSense, BorderUAS, Nestor. In order to facilitate access to results of projects relevant for border security a workshop on EU Funded projects was organised in June 2022. The achievements of Meticos and Medea were presented to the Innovation Cell Border Checks in December 2022. Information on the projects monitored and related Frontex activities was regularly available on Frontex website.
- RES-9. In 2022, Frontex published its research studies on the Green Deal and the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and the Technology Foresight on Biometrics for the Future of Travel. The Agency also launched new research activities on 'Key Enabling Technologies and Privacy Enhancement', 'High Altitude Pseudo Satellites' and 'Technology Horizon Scanning'.

- RES-10. In 2022, through consultation with NFPOCs, Frontex launched and completed the maintenance process for the technical standards adopted by the Management Board in 2021. Following the adoption of the methodology, the preparation for the second iteration of technical standards was launched including the development of a taxonomy. Following the work initiated in 2021, Frontex continued the support to the development of 'Common Minimum Surveillance Standards for Land Borders', with the resulting document presented to the Member States for comments at the end of 2022. In the second phase of this initiative, in 2022 Frontex launched the support to the development of 'Common Minimum Surveillance Standards for Maritime Borders'.
- RES-11. In 2022, Frontex continued the development of 'Methodology for Performance Assessment of Document Inspection Systems' launched in 2021 and finalised towards the end of 2022. In addition, at the beginning of 2022 Frontex launched a support package to support Member States' preparations for the EES. The package consists of several actions and in 2022 it included inter alia:
- a. The compilation of an EES toolkit for BCPs. The toolkit was developed on the basis of the results of various activities on EES as well as discussions with Member States on use cases, structured in six workshops organised by Frontex in 2022. The first components of the toolkit were presented for the views of Member States in December 2022.
  - b. Support on BCP processes simulation and reorganisation for the EES, delivered to Belgium, Germany, Malta and Sweden. The lessons learned in 2022 and earlier and guidelines were compiled in reports on simulations findings and typical use cases. The generic models were gathered in handbooks on operational research for EES explaining the use of the models (finalised in 2022)
  - c. Tailored advice on BCP processes, delivered on request to airports in Slovakia, Italy and Greece, as well as tailored advice on national EES processes, delivered on request to land BCP and airport BCP in Finland, and airport BCPs in Austria.
  - d. Organisation of a study visit on EES to the Netherlands
- RES-12. Following extensive internal preparations, in December 2022 the first call for proposals for research grants was published on Frontex website. It is planned that the proposals will be evaluated, and grants will be awarded in 2023.
- RES-13. Following extensive internal preparations, in December 2022 the first ever prize contest was launched by Frontex. The theme of the contest was dedicated to the detection of low flying objects. In line with the consultations on the financial set-up, the budget for the awards was committed in 2022 while prizes will be awarded throughout 2023.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: 'Research and innovation activities' C1 budget commitment implemented at 100%; C8 payments at 100%.
- IND-2. Achieved: in 2022 thirteen individual surveys were conducted on the satisfaction with the research and innovation events and other activities. The results of each survey show that between 93% to 100% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the activity in which they participated.
- IND-3. Achieved: in total 7 industry days were organised: 2 general i-days and 5 thematic i-days organised in response to Frontex needs and requests: i-days on technologies for law enforcement, on vehicle rental, on warehousing and transportation services, on counter-drone adversarial testing and evaluation services and on high altitude pseudo satellites and maritime search and rescue.
- IND-4. Achieved: the innovation cells provide a forum for discussion on technologies to be tested and solutions to be piloted that are of relevance to Member States. The aspiration is to transform the forum to discuss operational challenges and the way technology solutions can address them. Innovation cells were the forum where all the technology innovation initiatives were launched in 2022: pilot project on conditions of entry web questionnaire in support of EES, pilot project on vertical take-off and landing remotely piloted aircraft system, and prize contest on the detection of low flying objects.
- IND-5. Achieved: the relevant documentation on the Frontex Innovation Centre was delivered, including a business case and an explanatory note to the Management Board.
- IND-6. Partially achieved: Up to 12 Member States participated in the activities (meting and survey) of the Research for Innovation Network (40% of all MS).
- IND-7. Achieved: Frontex held biannual meetings with JRC discussing the agreed collaboration projects on taxonomy, analysis of emerging technologies in the field of border security, and performance assessment. Frontex participated in the biweekly meetings of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, offered to conduct two research activities in the framework of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, and following relevant consultations, launched these research activities incorporating the Hub members who indicated interest to join.
- IND-8. Achieved: 100% of respondents in the satisfaction survey rated the conference on EES for maritime domain as exceptional, excellent or good.

- IND-9. Achieved: launched in 2021, the questionnaire on future research needs was finalised in 2022. The results were disseminated to Member States, used for Frontex research activities in 2022, and for EBCG input on research priorities to Horizon programme.
- IND-10. Achieved: all border security project proposals under Horizon Europe Programme were evaluated. Due to the delay in the call and corresponding evaluation timeline, some of the evaluations were extended to 2023.
- IND-11. Achieved: the Agency monitored all 13 ongoing border security projects within Horizon.
- IND-12. Achieved: 'Research Study on the Technology Foresight on Biometrics for the Future of Borders' was published. Finalisation and publication of the research study on the Green Deal and the EBCG.
- IND-13. Achieved: the pilot project conditions of entry web questionnaire in support of EES was launched and operational deployment phase started in 2022. The pilot project VTOL RPAS was launched and one of the lots was contracted in 2022.
- IND-14. Achieved: in 2022, methodology for the development of technical standards was adopted through MB Decision 36/2022.
- IND-15. Achieved: the 'Report on the Performance Assessment Methodology for Document Inspection Systems' was completed in 2022 and it will be disseminated in 2023. The handbooks on operational research models for EES and reports on EES simulations findings and typical use cases were completed and disseminated in 2022. The study on the advance information at land borders was prepared as publication, to be disseminated in 2023.

<b>Key Activity 3.4.2. Research, technology and innovation meeting specific Frontex needs.</b>
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**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Develop and manage an internal dialogue on research and innovation.
- OBJ-2. Research feeds priorities into the multiannual strategic policy on IBM and takes a direction to pursue innovation across all the components of IBM.
- OBJ-3. Establish an innovation system for the Agency.
- OBJ-4. Conduct and manage Frontex own research and technological pilots with the focus on Agency's own capabilities.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Within Frontex, Research and Innovation Unit (RIU) implements and leads on research and Innovation in the Agency. RIU strives to engage the operational units in the Agency in the innovation activities, from design to using their results: relevant operational entities are involved or consulted in the preparatory stages of innovation activities such as i-cells, i-days or pilot projects, contribute to evaluations and receive the final evaluation reports of innovation activities including recommendations on further operational use. With regards to the Horizon Programme, business units receive information on projects relevant to their activities and depending on resources, take part in project meetings to identify possible future operational use.
- RES-2. The documentation for the establishment of the roundtable was drafted, however, not finalised. Consultations with Frontex entities on research and innovation activities were conducted in bilateral meetings.
- RES-3. The five thematic i-days of 2022 were organised in cooperation with the requesting business units. The calls and meetings records were published on Frontex website in order to ensure transparency and allow all commercial operators access to this information. Positive feedback was received from both the requesting entities and the industry present in the days on the format, organisation and the possibility to engage in dialogue on demand for and availability of relevant solutions.
- RES-4. Throughout 2022, Frontex Research and Innovation Unit provided advice and guidance to Frontex entities on contacts with commercial operators outside of procurement procedures, advocating transparent and uniform approach, at the same time providing opportunities for dialogue, through the organisation of thematic Industry Days focused on the needs of the Agency.
- RES-5. In 2022, no dedicated research was requested by Frontex entities. In 2021 Frontex launched the collaboration with JRC on the topic of weak signal in technologies, relevant for decisions on future research activities. The resulting research study Weak Signals in Border Management and Surveillance Technologies was completed and published by JRC in 2022.
- RES-6. In 2022, Frontex launched the pilot project on VTOL RPAS in order to respond, inter alia to the challenges faced by coastguard functions in Frontex operational activities. In addition, Frontex launched the study on the methodology for evaluation of innovation pilot projects, with a view to facilitating uniform approach to evaluations of Frontex technology tests.
- RES-7. The technical standards are integrated in the technical equipment pool.

- RES-8. Frontex developed a proposal for a support package for MS preparations in relation to the implementation of EES, which was accepted by the Member States. Within EBCGA, RIU undertook the coordination role compiling the information on the development of each action and informing the relevant fora on the implementation of the support actions and findings.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Not achieved: no meetings of the Roundtable on Research and Innovation took place.
- IND-2. Achieved: although in general, the satisfaction surveys conducted after industry days are anonymous and do not allow for differentiation of results achieved from Frontex staff, MS experts or other participants like the Commission or EU Agencies. The thematic Industry Days overall received 100% satisfaction rate.
- IND-3. Achieved: Frontex provided input to the technical report by JRC Weak Signals in Border Management and Surveillance Technologies, to facilitate decisions on future research activities of the EBCG.
- IND-4. Achieved: In the second semester the pilot project on VTOL RPAS up to 25 kg MTOW (maximum take-off weight) was launched. The final evaluation report on the Pilot Project Aerostat II was distributed to Frontex entities, providing recommendations on further operational use and cost estimation for the potential use of an Aerostat service in Frontex operational activities.
- IND-5. Achieved: in 2022, all requests for support in capacity building activities were considered. Support was provided to the delivery of training on EES, development of technical assistance project on border security (IPA III) with regards to its action on standardisation.
- IND-6. Achieved: all information provided by Frontex entities was included in the Industry Catalogue.

## 1.4. Horizontal Objective 1

### Implement and support European Integrated Border Management to ensure safe and well managed EU external borders

In 2022, the Agency planned the revision of the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management strategy (TO EUIBM). The finalisation of the revision of the TO EUIBM will be achieved only when the Multiannual Strategic Policy cycle will be established by the European Commission. The Agency provided support and will continue to provide support in establishing the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle.

A two-day conference ‘Managing the European External Borders Between War and Peace’ was organised on 13-14 December in Almada at the premises of the Portuguese Naval Academy. The speakers gave different perspectives on what is needed to maximise the impact of European integrated border management today and in the future in the context of both protecting the European area of freedom, security and justice against external challenges and threats as well as connecting it with the wider world for mutual benefit.

#### Focus Area 4.1. Establish and develop mechanisms for operational cooperation to implement the concept of the European integrated border management

##### Key Activity 4.1.1. Support the establishment of the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle.

###### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Provide the general annual risk analyses.
- OBJ-2. Preparatory works for the next Strategic Risk Analysis to be delivered in 2022.
- OBJ-3. Provide lessons learned from the implementation of the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy.
- OBJ-4. Provide technical support to the establishment of the multiannual policy cycle.

###### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The Agency released 2022 Strategic Risk Analysis in July 2022.
- RES-2. The Agency, through the Capability Programming Office, supported the European Commission in accordance with their needs in establishing the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle.

##### Key Activity 4.1.2. Translate strategic steer provided by the Commission into Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management strategy achieving the coordination with the concept of integrated planning.

###### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

Revise the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy in line with the Multiannual Policy for IBM.

###### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. The plan for the revision of the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy through the Management Board Working Group was established. The finalisation of the revision will be completed following the adoption of the ‘Communication establishing the multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management’ this is an ongoing process where the Commission tabled in May 2022 policy document setting out the multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management <sup>(27)</sup> seeking its consultation with the European Parliament and the Council.
- RES-2. A two-day conference titled ‘Managing the European External Borders Between War and Peace’ organised by the Agency took place in Almada in December 2022 at the premises of the Portuguese Naval Academy.

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(27) COM(2022) 303 final, dated 24.5.2022.

- a. The first day focused on the vision of the European external borders in the current dynamic era of pandemics, hybrid threats and, not least, the war in Ukraine. The day concluded with the graduation ceremony of the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps officers.
- b. The discussions of the second day centred around education and training. Drawing on the twenty-years success of the Common Core Curriculum, the invited experts looked at the latest trends in education and training, as well as new set of skills which are needed to enable the staff of the European Border and Coast Guard to adapt to the era of digitalisation.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

Partially achieved: Although progress was done in 2022, the delays on the adoption of the communication establishing the multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management drives the need to extend the time of delivery of the revised the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy to 2023 (6 months after the Commission's Communication).

**Key Activity 4.1.3. Facilitate and foster the implementation of Technical and Operational strategy for European Integrated Border Management (TO EIBM) across the EBCG.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Implement the Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy at the European level.
- OBJ-2. Support implementation of Integrated Border Management at the national level.
- OBJ-3. Promote the concept and best practices of European integrated border management in third countries.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

A Management Board Working Group was established to facilitate and foster the implementation of TO EIBM.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

Achieved: Up to 80% of planned actions were implemented.

## 1.5. Horizontal Objective 2

**Horizontal Objective 2: Reinforce the external dimension aimed at multiplying Frontex operational impact through cooperation with the European Commission and EEAS, as well as through partnership with the Member States, EU entities, third countries and international organisations.**

**Focus Area 5.1. Strengthen resilience of priority non-EU countries and promote European IBM standards.**

**Key Activity 5.1.1. Enhance partnerships with priority third countries within the framework of the external action policy of the Union, in order to promote operational cooperation with EBCG, including through structured cooperation frameworks and deployment of Frontex liaison officers to non-EU countries.**

### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- Strengthen engagement with priority third countries in the key areas of the Agency's operational mandate.
- Develop and update structured cooperation frameworks with competent authorities of third countries.
- Further develop and maintain the network of FLOs in third countries, working in complementarity with the European network of immigration liaison officers.

The specific objectives are set in line with strategic objective 1 and strategic objective 2 of the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2023.

### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

**RES-1 to RES-2 Enhanced contacts with priority third countries.** Following the key priority areas outlined in the Frontex International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2023, the Agency continued to work together with third country authorities, strengthening dialogue and building trust, and where possible, developing structured cooperation frameworks for operational cooperation.

**Western Balkans:** remained as of utmost priority in the external dimension. The year 2022 was the fourth year in a row with the fully-fledged joint operations in the region with executive powers, in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. The signature of the Status Agreement with North Macedonia on October 2022 kicked-off preparations for a new Joint Operation in North Macedonia to start in 2023.

To support operational activities, Frontex also worked to strengthen institutional ties and frameworks for structured cooperation. Negotiations were launched with all Western Balkan partners to renew working arrangements with the Agency, making full use of Frontex's enhanced mandate.

The Agency also worked to ensure that effective complaint mechanisms underpin EU Status Agreement implementation with all three countries. To that end, Frontex initiated negotiations to conclude Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the respective Ministries and Ombudsmen in Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia. Frontex and Albania agreed on two complementary Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Interior and with the Ombudsman on the complaints mechanism. The MoU with the Ombudsman was signed in 2022 while the MoU with the Ministry will follow in 2023.

Capacity building projects continued to complement and support joint activities in the operational theatre, while bringing the Western Balkan partners closer to the EU IBM standards (see F.A. 5.2. on technical assistance projects).

**Eastern Partnership.** Engagement with the Eastern Partnership region was shaped by the outbreak of the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the fundamentally shifted security environment in the EU. In response to the unprecedented situation at the EU's borders with Ukraine and the immense challenges posed on the border management services of Moldova, Frontex concentrated its efforts to support counterparts in both countries (see highlights).

As an expression of solidarity with Ukraine and an example of the deepening cooperation between the EU and Moldova, on 28 June 2022, Frontex and Moldova held a conference 'Support measures in response to the crisis: experiences and first lessons learnt' in Chisinau, Moldova. Bringing together executive and senior level officials from the EU Member States and Moldova, as well as EU institutions and international community, the conference took stock of the first experiences of the JO Moldova and outlined the way forward for further operational cooperation.

To improve situational awareness and to increase reaction capability for the purpose of external border management, Frontex and Moldovan authorities initiated the first exchanges under the EUROSUR

integrated framework, with the perspective to enlarge this cooperation under the revised working arrangement in the future. The cooperation with Georgia continued via regular operational deployments in the framework of JO Coordination Points, as well as engagement on return and capacity building.

**Africa and Middle East.** Throughout 2022, the Agency continued its efforts to build dialogue and cooperation in Africa and the Middle East. In the framework of the Commission-funded EU4BorderSecurity project, Frontex continued its engagement with authorities in the Southern Neighbourhood through a set of familiarisation and capacity building activities. Bilateral cooperation was particularly strengthened with Morocco. Following a preparatory visit to Frontex in June, Frontex' Executive Director and the Director of Migration and Border Surveillance of Morocco's Ministry of Interior convened the third meeting of the Frontex-Morocco *Comité Mixte* in October. Both sides committed to preparations for the deployment of a Frontex Liaison Officer to Morocco, and to initiate dialogue on a working arrangement and to further strengthen the exchange in several areas of mutual interest, as outlined in a joint roadmap for 2023.

The Agency also pursued cooperation with other priority third countries in Africa, particularly focusing on West Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Joint Commission-Frontex missions to Mauritania, Niger and Senegal embarked on strengthening cooperation on operational level and helped to advance negotiations, resulting in an agreed working arrangement text with Niger (adoption process will continue once the Agency received the EDPS' prior authorisation) and progress made with Mauritania and Senegal. A working arrangement has also been signed with EUCAP Sahel Niger, which will help Frontex and EUCAP to join efforts more effectively in the country, particularly in the areas of risk analysis and capacity building on IBM (see F.A. 5.2 for more information). Frontex also advanced on negotiations with Senegal and Mauritania. Bilateral engagements also continued with Senegal and Niger through the Frontex Liaison Officers deployed to both countries.

**Silk Routes countries.** In this area, the Agency continued to provide systematic support to countries neighbouring Afghanistan in the context of the 10<sup>th</sup> phase of the project Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA), thereby aiding the further development of the capacities of Central Asian countries for effective border management. Frontex also contributed to the project 'IBM in the Silk Route Countries', funded by DG INTPA (International Partnerships) and implemented by International centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and maintained multilateral dialogue through participation in the Budapest and the Prague Processes.

On bilateral level, the Agency supported the upcoming deployment of a EURLO to Iraq and sought further dialogue with the Pakistani authorities, including on the potential deployment of an FLO to Pakistan, preparing for a Senior level visit to Pakistan in February 2023.

**Strategic partners.** The Agency continued to strengthen collaboration with strategic partners through the exchange of expertise and good practices in areas such as ETIAS, fundamental rights, operational response and law enforcement. Following the start of the war in Ukraine, Frontex built regular exchanges with strategic partners such as the United States to share relevant situational updates where in April, Frontex met in Warsaw a delegation of representatives of the United States Department for Homeland Security/Customs and Border Protection mission and the Director of the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) programme to exchange experience in the context of Frontex work on ETIAS.

**Latin America.** The Agency also continued exploring dialogue and exchange with law enforcement counterparts in that area, particularly in view of strengthening cooperation on cross-border crime, namely drug smuggling. To that end, Frontex continued to engage with relevant authorities through several Commission funded projects in the region, such as EUROFRONT and SEACOP.

RES-3 Dialogue among international border and coast guard authorities. The Agency hosted the International Border Police Conference (see highlights) and several regional events with partners in Moldova, Ukraine, and the Western Balkans.

RES-4 Frontex continued to support the Commission in multiple negotiation rounds to conclude new Status Agreements, namely with Moldova and North Macedonia, advising on the aspects essential for the operational implementation of the Status Agreements.

RES-5 Following the adoption by the Commission of a model for working arrangements in December 2021 and the model provisions allowing for the exchange of information in the framework of EUROSUR, Frontex initiated negotiations with three third countries (Niger, Senegal and Mauritania) and pursued to update existing working arrangements with another seven (six Western Balkan partners and Moldova). Negotiations were in principle

concluded with Niger, Moldova and Kosovo <sup>(28)</sup>, pending further clarifications from the European Commission and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) on the necessary provisions on personal data exchange.

RES-6 In 2022, The Agency initiated negotiations with four non-EU countries (Albania, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia), which are expected to be concluded in the course of 2023. The negotiated MoUs are being drafted in a futureproof way not to be affected by any possible future Status Agreement renewals.

RES-7 to RES-8 Frontex Liaison Officers. The Agency continued to further consolidate and expand the network of Frontex Liaison Officers (FLOs) in third countries, which in 2022 reached six FLOs covering 14 third countries. The FLOs in third countries continued to support the operationalisation of Status Agreements, implementation of working arrangements or the negotiation of new ones and contributed to the ILO Networks established at local and regional levels. They also proactively contributed to developing the pre-frontier situational picture, in close coordination with the networks of liaison officers deployed by the Member States and the Commission.

RES-9 To ensure a coherent approach and enhance better coordination among all European immigration liaison officers, the Agency actively contributed to the ILO Steering Board chaired by the Commission and supported the coordination of actions performed by Member States and the Agency. In their places of deployment, the FLOs regularly contributed to regional ILO meetings and other activities.

RES-10 The Agency maintained and further fine-tuned the FLO back-office function responsible for monitoring, guiding, supporting FLOs, and facilitating interaction with internal and external stakeholders. The back-office continued to support the functioning of the FLO network and ensuring the necessary coordination with the main internal and external stakeholders. It also organised regular meetings with the FLOs to keep them informed on the latest developments that could affect their activities, among them two gatherings of the entire FLO network – one in person and one virtually.

RES-11 The Office Hosting Agreement (OHA) for the colocation of the FLO in the premises of the EU Delegation in Chisinau was concluded and further contacts with the EEAS for the progressive conclusion of the remaining OHAs maintained. Further work aimed at allowing the necessary delegation of powers from Frontex Executive Director to the High Representative in connection with the colocations was launched.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. Percentage of partners considering cooperation activities as useful/relevant: satisfaction level between was above 70%.
- IND-2. Achieved. Number of third-country participants in dedicated major events i.e. International Border Police Conference attended by over 260 participants; other events reached the participation level of over 60%.
- IND-3. Achieved. Balanced coverage of key priority regions: activities covered more than 70% of priority regions indicated by the international cooperation strategy.
- IND-4. Not achieved. Number of structured cooperation instruments concluded or reviewed – completion level of ongoing negotiations at least 20%. The Office Hosting Agreement (OHA) for the colocation of the FLO in the premises of the EU Delegation in Chisinau was concluded. No working arrangements with third countries could be concluded due to ongoing dialogue between the Commission and EDPS to clarify the necessary data protection provisions for the model working arrangement.
- IND-5. Achieved. Number of FLOs deployed: deployments prepared/finalised for one additional FLO in third countries, i.e. FLO to Eastern Partnership countries deployed to Chisinau, Moldova.
- IND-6. Achieved. The Liaison Officers Network Unit back office attended the meetings convened by the ILO Steering Board in 2022. The FLOs posted in third countries attended local ILO meetings hosted by European Migration Liaison Officers (EMLOs) and in some cases organised or participated in initial meetings at local level amounting approximately 10.

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*(28) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

**Key Activity 5.1.2. Strengthen capacities of priority third countries to effectively deal with migration and cross-border crime through technical assistance and capacity building activities, in close coordination with the European Commission and the EEAS.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Promote the European IBM through Frontex funded capacity building activities in third countries.
- OBJ-2. Promote the European IBM through educational standards and specialised training programmes.
- OBJ-3. Develop and implement EU Commission funded technical assistance projects.

The specific objectives are set in line with strategic objective 3 of the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2023.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

Technical assistance activities in priority regions, as defined in the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2023:

**Western Balkans.** In 2022, together with EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), IOM and UNHCR, Frontex initiated phase III of the project ‘EU Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Systems in the Western Balkans’. The project focuses on three priority areas: capacity to identify and register mixed migration flows, integrated return managements systems, and contingency planning and crisis response. With the activities starting in 2023. The project will be implemented until 2025.

In December 2022, Frontex signed a Contribution Agreement with DG NEAR to implement a project ‘Strengthening Western Balkans’ Border Security Capacities’. The project will run from 2023 to 2026 and will support the implementation of EU Status Agreements, strengthening the overall IBM architecture in the region and building capacities to work together in the EUROSUR framework, via a network of National Coordination Centres compatible with EUROSUR standards.

**Eastern Partnership region.** In 2022, Frontex gave clear priority to EU pre-accession countries, particularly Moldova and Ukraine, helping them to address challenges caused by the Russian aggression.

In response to the urgent needs in Ukraine, in 2022 Frontex initiated preparations for a technical assistance project to support the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine in view of challenges they face ensuring business continuity at the Ukraine’s western borders, amid the Russian aggression. A grant agreement worth EUR 12 million eventually signed in January 2023 and will be implemented throughout the year. The grant covers a list of equipment, such as warm winter uniforms for border guards, electric generators, portable power stations, field kitchens, patrol vehicles and pumps.

Contributing to the EU Support Hub for internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, Frontex actively engaged those authorities in different technical assistance activities, including JO Moldova as well as:

- In August, the organisation of an operational meeting with Moldovan authorities to exchange on the possible Frontex support in the field of firearms trafficking counteraction, involving all relevant authorities, among them border police, customs, police, prosecutor’s office, forensic experts. As a result, both sides agreed to strengthen collaboration within various EMPACT fora and identified several training and awareness raising opportunities.
- In October 2022, a technical visit by experts from the Situational Awareness and Monitoring Division was carried out to assess the situation in the field and to map next steps in building the relevant capabilities of the Moldovan Border Police and its Operational Management General Directorate in view of cooperation within the framework of EUROSUR.
- In November 2022, Frontex implemented a firearms detection course dedicated for Moldovan authorities in the Centre of Excellence in Border Security of Border Police in Ungheni. The course was supported by experts of EU Member States and aimed to increase the participants’ understanding of the methods of illicit weapons trafficking, boosting weapons detection capabilities through enhanced awareness, the use of technical equipment as well as assessment of risk indicators linked to potential traffickers and better understanding of the necessary steps following the detection. The course was intended to train the representatives from Moldovan border police, customs, and the prosecutors office; and it was implemented under the EMPACT firearms.

**North Africa and the Levant.** In the EU's Southern Neighbourhood Frontex continued to provide tailored technical assistance through the EU4BorderSecurity project, including a set of familiarisation and capacity building activities:

- Frontex supported Lebanese authorities in charge of border management with three tactical emergency casualty care training events held in Germany and in Lebanon and it organised a visit to Hamburg Airport for Lebanese border officials to share experience and state-of-the art technology for border control.
- In July 2022, the Agency conducted the second iteration of the series of courses in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Aqaba targeting border authorities of neighbouring countries to enhance cross border cooperation in this critical area. Trainees were selected from among Jordanian border officials from the Border Residence Department, General Intelligence Directorate and Customs as well as Palestinian border officers from the General Administration of Border Control.
- In July 2022, a technical meeting with the Palestinian General Administration for Borders and Crossings (GABC) and EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah was organised in Aqaba, Jordan, to exchange on the latest developments.
- In September 2022, together with the Arab Interior Minister's Council (AIMC), the Agency organised a workshop on human rights at the borders at the Police Academy in Cairo. Representatives of the Arab League, Frontex Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) and the President of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen exchanges practices and discussed oversight mechanisms to monitor human rights at the borders. With Egypt's Ministry of Interior chaired the meeting that brought together representatives from Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Arab League Secretariat, CT-Just, EU Delegation, AIMC, Naif University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) as well as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- In September 2022, Frontex organised a training for consular staff of the EU Member States, based in the embassies and consulates in Tunis. The activity followed the EU harmonised training for document examiners, underpinning document examination method to be followed when examining documents.
- In October 2022, a high-level delegation from the different border management and security agencies in Lebanon visited Frontex headquarters to get acquainted with the agency work. The visit followed two technical meetings in Beirut in April and October.
- In November 2022, a Joint Frontex-NAUSS (Naif University for Security Sciences) Regional Workshop on Document Fraud at the Border: Trends, Threats, Vulnerabilities, and Countermeasures – Arab and European perspectives took place in Warsaw. The event gathered representatives from the League of Arab States (LAS), the EU Member States, experts from the relevant international organisations and Frontex for a technical dialogue and exchange of practices on document fraud and security.
- In December, the Human Rights Department of the League of Arab States visited Frontex headquarters, with an aim to get familiar with the Frontex Fundamental Rights Office.

**Silk Routes countries and Central Asia.** Frontex supported the capacities of countries in Central Asia via the EU funded BOMCA project, with the following activities carried out in 2022:

- National train-the-trainer course on document security, carried out by Frontex Centre of Excellence on Document fraud on February in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek);
- Regional workshop on implementation of the e-learning methodology in border guard training and educational institutions in Central Asia, carried out by Frontex Training unit in April 2022;
- A workshop on human rights, gender, eliminating sexual harassment, on gender sensitivity was carried out by Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer in May 2022.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved and exceeded. In terms of outreach of capacity building activities and their geographic coverage, the Agency managed the EU4 Border Security project which entered in its fourth year of implementation, with thirteen main project activities successfully implemented in 2022, matching the targets set. Overall, across these events, the average attendance level was 98% of entities invited with absolute majority of participants expressing their satisfaction with the event. Project implementation levels against the set targets (to be reported on an annual basis against indicators in the project log frame). Target: implementation level at 80%.
- IND-2. Achieved. In terms of project implementation levels, the EU4 Border Security during its fourth year of implementation had all project activities foreseen for 2022 successfully implemented.

IND-3. Partially achieved. IPA III related projects experienced administrative delays linked to the new cycle of IPA III programming in the second part of 2022.

**Focus Area 5.2. Develop the architecture for an effective inter-agency cooperation on IBM at the EU level, ensuring the most efficient use of resources and complementary implementation of mandates.**

**Key Activity 5.2.1. Establish and maintain appropriate frameworks for cooperation within the EU and with international organisations, in order to make full use of the EBCG mandate.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Enhance cooperation and mutual coordination with EU institutions, offices, bodies, and agencies.
- OBJ-2. Maximise synergies with relevant international organisations and provide operational and technical expertise of the European Border and Coast Guard Community in selected international fora.
- OBJ-3. Support further development of the EBCG capabilities, situational awareness, and operational response through strategic and ever closer relations with competent national authorities, supported by FLOs in EU MS/SAC, liaison officers deployed by the Member States to the Agency, as well as an exchange of LOs with other EU entities.

The specific objectives are set in line with all four strategic objectives of the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2023.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

RES-1 to RES-3 **Cooperation with EU partners and international organisations.** In 2022, the Agency, through its Institutional Partnership Unit, ensured effective inter-agency cooperation in key areas relevant for Frontex' mandate and continued developing and negotiating numerous working arrangements with EU institutional partners, essential for the implementation of the Agency's mandate.

- In March 2022, Frontex concluded a Working Arrangement with European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and in July 2022 – a Working Arrangement with the EUCAP Sahel Niger – the first such an arrangement with a civilian CSDP mission.
- Frontex also initiated negotiations with several institutional partners and continued ongoing dialogues with others. Frontex started working arrangement negotiations with the EU Fundamental Rights Agency as well as with UNHCR and advanced in talks to conclude arrangements with EUAM Ukraine and eu-LISA.
- The Agency also hosted several working-level visits from EU partners, such as EEAS (Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability – CPCC, EU Intelligence and Situation Centre – EU INCEN), EUAM Ukraine and eu-LISA. These meetings contributed to raising awareness about Frontex activities and enabled bilateral discussions between experts. The meetings were especially appreciated after many months of COVID-19 restrictions, where face-to-face meetings were not possible.
- The visit of the new Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) led to the start of negotiations for updated SLAs that needs to reflect changes on data protection, finances, and legal basis. To facilitate the negotiations, Frontex and EFCA discussed the possibility of establishing a working group with an objective to work on merging and updating the two existing SLAs into one, considering ongoing cooperation and the areas covered by the Tripartite Working Arrangement between Frontex, EFCA and EMSA.
- Frontex continued the WA negotiations with the EU's Satellite Centre (SatCen). The operational cooperation with SatCen is currently taking place within the framework of an SLA concluded between Frontex and SatCen in 2015, which has been extended a number of times, most recently in 2022.
- Frontex continued WA negotiations with Eurojust and launched talks on updating a WA with Europol. In 2022, the negotiations reached very advanced stage with Eurojust, but in both cases of Eurojust and Europol they could not be finalised due to Frontex decision to revise its implementing rules on operational personal data, following an opinion of EDPS. Once the implementing rules are in place, the negotiations for the new WA will be resumed.
- In July 2022, a study visit of 10 Frontex staff members was arranged at the Europol HQ in the Hague. The visit was a follow-up to the first staff exchange that took place in October 2019, when Frontex hosted nine Europol experts. The aim of the programme was to familiarise Frontex staff with Europol's operations and internal procedures, participating in the daily work of relevant Europol units.

- Frontex maintained regular working-level dialogue with JRC and identified new areas of potential collaboration in the area of document fraud, radiological and nuclear issues at the border, research on new emerging technologies and others.

**RES-4 Inter-agency cooperation in multilateral fora.** In 2022, Frontex continued being an active member of the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network (JHAAN) and provided regular support to the Network's activities and meetings. In the face of Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the Network demonstrated its joint commitment in contributing to EU's solidarity measures. Under the CEPOL Presidency, the Network released a joint statement on Ukraine, which was followed by a joint paper on how the nine JHA Agencies support the EU and Member States in response to the war in Ukraine.

Frontex actively participated in numerous meetings organised in scope of the JHAAN, namely the contact points meetings, working groups on data protection, communication, ICT and cybersecurity and external relations. Additionally, Frontex Situation Centre organised a Seminar on Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) enabling participants to share their experience on OSINT capabilities and providing an opportunity to deepen their OSINT knowledge and skills. Frontex also contributed to thematic events on EU training initiatives in the field of environmental crime and the event on green policies in JHA Agencies' administration.

**RES 5 to RES-7 Synergies and structured cooperation with international organisations.** In 2022, Frontex maintained a continuous dialogue with UN entities to tackle administrative and legal hurdles in the establishment of working arrangements with IOM and ICAO, making significant progresses. Additionally, Frontex and ICRC exchanged expertise regarding the use of force and the management of dead bodies.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, Frontex facilitated numerous working level contacts for crisis information exchange with several UN entities including UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, and UN OCHA as well as with INTERPOL.

Frontex contributed extensively to the work of the INTERPOL Dialogue on an effective multilateral policing architecture against global threats, both within the established working groups and in the annual session, in close synergies with Commission and Europol. INTERPOL benefited also of a visit to ETIAS which contributed to the ongoing negotiations of the EU-INTERPOL Cooperation Agreement.

Frontex continued its working engagement with the World Customs Organization by participating in the annual meetings of RILOs (Regional Liaison Offices – Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe). Frontex contributed to the debate on the future of the Customs Union by participating in the Wise Persons Group on Challenges Facing the Customs Union (WPG) and continued to work together with the Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team (CELBET).

**RES-8 to RES-12 Liaison Officers networks in the EU.** Eleven FLOs continued to support the implementation of the priority activities of the Agency in the Member States and Schengen Associated countries. With COVID-19 restrictions easing, in 2022 the FLOs increased their missions and visits to the main interlocutors in their respective clusters, refreshing in-person contacts. They have also extensively supported Frontex Senior and Executive Management by visiting the Member States and providing local familiarisation and guidance to the first-time deployed Frontex Fundamental Rights Monitors.

The FLOs continued to provide dedicated briefings to national border management authorities to promote the activities of the Agency and worked together with the national counterparts in the framework of the vulnerability assessment, supporting Frontex analysts as well as following-up on the measures adopted/implemented by the national authorities.

The back-office continued to support the implementation and coordination of the activities of the network including in connection with the Member States' liaison officers deployed to the Agency. The evaluation of the pilot phase led to the revision of the MB Decision 24/2021 on the rules and conditions of the deployment of liaison officers from the Member States to Frontex and the support to be provided by the Agency to be adopted in 2023.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. The overall level of satisfaction level of partners participating in activities and meetings on this domain was high. The partners considered cooperation activities useful and relevant.
- IND-2. Achieved. The attendance level of external meetings, missions attended and the number of partners invited remained with overall attendance level of around 90%.
- IND-3. Achieved. In its engagement with institutional partners at EU, the Member States and international levels the Agency maintained a balanced approach, adjusting the level of intensity to the operational relevance and priority of partners. The activities covered at least 70% of all priority partners.

- IND-4. Achieved. Work on revision, conclusion of structured cooperation instruments along 2022 progress as envisaged. In March 2022, Frontex concluded a Working Arrangement with EASA and in July 2022 Working with the first civilian CSDP mission EUCAP Sahel Niger Frontex concluded a Working Arrangement with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The above represents over 25% of negotiations concluded, compared to those initiated in 2021.
- IND-5. Achieved. All FLOs contributed to the course of the year to the implementation of the annual cycle linked to the Vulnerability Assessment.
- IND-6. Achieved. The network of FLOs in MS was composed of 10 staff members at the end of the year. The FLO in charge of the cluster Spain-Portugal took temporarily care of FRA after FLO FRA changed positions within the Agency.
- IND-7. Achieved. The Agency accepted the deployment of all LOs suggested by MS/SAC in 2022. The Agency continued to host a LO from another EU Agency in 2022, namely EUAA. For the time being the exchange of liaison officers between Frontex and Europol could not materialise due to the lack of staff on both sides.

**Key Activity 5.2.2. Further develop cooperation with other EU entities in the external dimension, thereby facilitating a coherent implementation of IBM standards and synergies with Frontex operational activities.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Assume the role of the EU centre of expertise for promoting European IBM standards in the external dimension.
- OBJ-2. Facilitate coherence and coordinated approach in third-country cooperation within the framework of the European Border and Coast Guard.
- OBJ-3. Contribute to ensuring coherence in the Agency's engagement with EU and external partners.

The specific objectives are set in line with strategic objective 4 of the International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2023

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. **Facilitating dialogue and exchange within the European Border and Coast Guard.** With an aim to coordinate its efforts in the external dimension within the EBCG family, Frontex established an informal EBCG expert group on technical assistance to third countries (EXT-TA) composed of representatives of international cooperation entities of border management authorities of Member States. The overall goal of the EXT-TA is to contribute to strengthen an EBCG-wide coherent, effective, and efficient programming and implementation of border management technical assistance and capacity-building interventions in priority non-EU countries in close coordination and cooperation with other EU-wide policy and funding initiatives. The work is organised around three objectives: 1) to improve information sharing and coordination; 2) to enhance the capacity of the EBCG to program and implement effective technical assistance; 3) to insure coherence with EIBM standards.

To improve information sharing and coordination, within the framework of EX-TA Frontex organised regional roundtables. In August 2022, a meeting of the regional roundtable on the Eastern Partnership was organised to share updates on the situation and initiatives towards the region.

To enhance the capacity of the EBCG to programme and implement technical assistance interventions, in November 2022 Frontex organised a 5-days training on project cycle management for 15 experts and representatives of Member States.

To ensure coherence with EIBM standards, in June 2022 work was launched to develop a Reference Tool on IBM for external partners (EXT-EIBM). The tool should contain structured and detailed information on key principles, processes, and practices against which coherence of external technical assistance intervention can be assessed and promoted. Work towards the EXT-EIBM is linked and embedded in other EBCG-wide processes related to the development of a EIBM strategy/strategies as part of the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle for EIBM.

- RES-2. **To promote a coherent approach to the European IBM,** the Agency continued supporting the European Commission in programming and implementing IBM related interventions in third countries. In this context, Frontex provided advice and expertise to several European Commission-funded technical assistance projects in Africa and Middle East (EUROMED police, EUROMED Justice, CT-MENA, INTERPOL Sharaka Project, A-TIPSOM – Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria), the Silk Routes countries (IBM project), the Eastern Partnership region (IBM support in Ukraine) as well as in Latin America (EUROFRONT, SEACOP).

- RES-3. **Synergies with EU partners in the external dimension.** Frontex international cooperation is set in the overall framework of the EU's external action and therefore implemented in close coordination with EU institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies, as well as the EU Member States. In that spirit, the Agency continued to coordinate its work in third countries with respective EU Delegations, and where available, CSDP missions. Following the decision of the Management Board, the Agency prioritised cooperation with EUBAM Libya, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUAM Ukraine, with a working arrangement concluded with EUCAP Sahel Niger and others on the way.

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: The Agency furnished contributions to more than 10 projects in the external dimension including participating in their Steering and Advisory Committees.
- IND-2. Partially achieved: The Agency envisaged to organise two regional roundtables along 2022, however, only one (on Eastern Partnership countries) was hosted in 2022, whereas the roundtable on Africa and the Middle was postponed to the beginning of 2023. Cooperation with Western Balkan partners was discussed in other fora, including the new operational platform for activities under Status Agreements.
- IND-3. Partially achieved: Although the Agency developed internal tools to track the implementation of the International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2023, some elements related to the International and European Cooperation Roundtable were put on hold awaiting the revised Frontex Internal Rules of Procedure.

## 1.6. Horizontal Objective 3

**Develop upgraded management system aimed at ensuring accountability, regularity and legality of all Frontex activities**

**Focus Area 6.1. Provide management framework for sound administration of resources.**

**Key Activity 6.1.1. Design and implement a comprehensive system for programming, monitoring, and evaluating the Agency's activities and underlying expenditures through establishing a set of processes that are integrated and adaptable to evolving risk universe.**

### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Adapt Frontex programming and assurance setup and processes to be fit for the mandate under the new Regulation.
- OBJ-2. Activity-based budgeting is aligned with Frontex strategic objectives.
- OBJ-3. Programming and monitoring of resources, their effectiveness and efficiency enhanced.

### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. In order to deepen the knowledge of all financial actors in the Agency and to ensure compliance with the Financial Regulation, FIN organised ABAC training sessions for Financial Initiators and Authorising Officers supplemented with individual Authorizing Officers' training, when required. The process - supported by HR - will regularly continue in 2023 and onwards. This is an important step to upskill the internal knowledge about financial rules, procedures and processes and allowing for:
  - Support was provided to all financial actors as well as towards assurance that all transactions are performed according to the applicable financial regulatory framework;
  - Reduced burden of one-to-one training by the financial actors in their respective entities, increasing the knowledge and expertise that not only benefits the Agency but also the individuals who are performing these tasks in ABAC.
- RES-2. Budget aligned with strategy notably on title 3 where the appropriations are broken down per activities. This is supported by continuous reporting on budget implementation, particularly:
  - all Agency's entities are informed on the up-to-date state of the budget implementation internally twice per month (state of play at the beginning of the month and mid-month);
  - monthly reports on the budget implementation are submitted for information to the Management Board;
  - KPIs on the budget implementation are monitored and presented in quarterly reports on the achievement of the KPIs established.
- RES-3. Concerning the internal control of delegations and sub-delegation for authorizing officers and for the several finance actors in the agency Enterprise Resource Planning (ABAC), a new procedure was created, which intends to reinforce the internal control. For the financial delegations of budget implementation powers and consequent ABAC rights application process, a new ED Decision 2022-166 was approved, and the procedure now includes the use of electronic means to control and monitor its correct implementation. The procedure is performed electronically in ARES. Authorisation to grant AO ABAC rights has to be preceded by a signed AO declaration in ARES. If the procedure is not followed, then any existing AO rights will be suspended. The new procedure also allows to update the delegations' framework, in view of organisational changes and in order to provide clarity on deputization arrangements in line with FISRoP.

### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Budget implementation rate: 99.4%.
- IND-2. All 16 authorising officers by delegation and 76 out of 78 authorising officers by sub-delegation signed the authorising officers' declarations in ARES.
- IND-3. Financial reporting:
  - Weekly reporting on all open transactions during the end-of-the-year period;
  - Monthly reporting on all open transactions throughout 2022;
  - Quarterly ABAC rights statistical reports.
- IND-4. Most of the Agency's financial actors (authorising officers, financial initiating agents, and financial verifying agents) attended the ABAC training organised by the Finance Unit.
- IND-5. All transactions were processed at the end of the year in a context of exponential growth of number of transactions.

**Key Activity 6.1.2. Develop human resources management system aimed at building strong human capital through a set of modern HR policies allowing the Agency to deliver its mission.**

**Specific objectives**

- OBJ-1. Develop and maintain an integrated managers-led system of HR policies, tools and processes designed to empower and contribute to achieving Frontex mission and stakeholders' expectations.
- OBJ-2. Increase Frontex attractiveness as an employer and engage and retain the best, diverse and geographically balanced talents whose competencies are further developed through diverse learning and career opportunities and effective performance assessment.
- OBJ-3. Deliver qualitative and service-oriented HR support to maximise an effective performance-oriented culture in partnership between HR professionals and managers in the context of a distributed workforce operating from various locations and adapted to the law enforcement characteristic of the operational component of the standing corps.

**Results, main outputs/actions, key deliverables**

- RES-1. The Agency, through its managers and together with HR professionals, aimed at building on and actively develop talents under their responsibility by using HR policies, processes, and tools. The concept and programme of the future leadership and management development programme for Frontex managers at all levels was developed within the frame of the HR.2.0 and beyond project launched by the Agency. The role of managers in the processes related to training and other modes of skills development was defined within the Policy for Learning and Development adopted by Executive Director Decision on 25 November 2022. Frontex managers actively benefited from the courses developing managerial skills with a record number of 164 training slots used in 2022.
- RES-2. Extensive efforts were completed on attracting, selecting, and engaging staff as proven by the net increase of positions filled.
- RES-3. The Agency's commitment towards building a pool of competent HR experts and effective HR systems was addressed in the reporting period through the introduction of technological improvements including an automated time registration system, integration with SYSPER time management module, roll out of SYSPER flexi-time module to Frontex staff, implementation of SYSPER reporting module. HR workflows were automated using Frontex SharePoint technology: digitalisation of training requests with its sub-processes: 1) standard individual training requests; 2) group training request; 3) language training request; 4) training on person's own initiative (cost reimbursement and/or special leave); 5) digitalisation of request for a team event. Finally, the work was initiated on automation of standby workflow with the finalisation of it planned in 2023.

**Indicators: targets and baseline**

In line with the timeline of Regulation, the implementation roadmap, and the requirements:

- IND-1. Achieved - HR drafted and had adopted several internal rules and policies for improving the functioning of the Agency notably:
  - a. Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2022-17 Recruitment and selection of temporary staff under Article 2(f) of Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) of 28/01/2022;
  - b. Management Board Decision 23/2022 of 17 March 2022 adopting general rules for the assessment of the performance of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Directors, the Fundamental Rights Officer and the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer;
  - c. Management Board Decision 35/2022 25 June 2022 amending Management Board Decision 18/2020 of 29 July 2020 laying down implementing rules on temporary occupation of management posts;
  - d. Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2022-162 on Standby duty of 04/10/2022;
  - e. Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2022-190 on establishing rules on shift work of ETIAS Central Unit staff of 24/11/2022;
  - f. Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2022-192 on Frontex Policy for Learning and Development of 25/11/2022;
  - g. Management Board Decision 68/2022 of 20 December 2022 on the appointment of the Executive Director.

Furthermore, the following decisions were adopted with organisational impact:

- h. Management Board Decision 46/2022 of 13 August 2022 amending Management Board Decision 43/2020 on the Agency's amended organisational structure;
  - i. Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2022-145 on operational Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ('OSH Policy 2.0') of 22/08/2022;
  - j. The Decision of the Executive Director No R-ED-2023-4 on the sub-delegation of appointing authority powers with respect to temporary staff and contract staff and on the delegation of powers with respect to Seconded National Experts, trainees and interim agents was prepared was prepared and drafted in 2022 but approved in January 2023.
- IND-2. Not achieved: the training for managers in change and leadership skills, in line with the learning standards applicable to different management levels couldn't be carried out due the backlog in the European School of Administration caused by temporary suspension of training in 2020 and 2021. However, the Directors of Divisions appointed in 2021 have been enrolled to the training courses in 2023. As for the courses set by default for newly appointed Heads of Units, managers participated in the courses with slight delays including rescheduling some slots for courses in 2023.
- IND-3. Achieved. Up to 83% of non-Standing Corps staff took part at least once in a training activity in 2022. The online mode of delivery of training had a positive impact on the accessibility of training activities. On top of the continued delivery of the most frequently requested courses (PM2, language courses), the training portfolio had been extended with new courses responding to the needs identified during the needs analysis (IT literacy, writing skills, support for the resilience and well-being). The Agency provided 33 in-house language courses during 2022.
- IND-4. Achieved. New HR digital tools were made available, i.a. SYSPER Time management module was fully rolled out together with a complimentary solution on Time Management automated registration, the electronic request for language courses was completed and the works on the digitalisation of request for other training courses have been developed at 80% and its completion is expected in Q1 2023.
- IND-5. Not achieved: HR to staff ratio at the end of the year the ratio was 2.7% (56 vs. 2063 staff) where the desirable ratio should be at 4.5%. Although during the year HR Unit has increased by 10 staff, considering the overall Agency growth the ratio worsened by 0.2 points, proving the continuous effort performed by the available staff.
- IND-6. Achieved: with regard to new selection procedures (outside standing corps 'executive power' staff) launched in 2022, the Agency completed 97% of those, i.e. 451 posts and positions were published for recruitment compared to 465 vacancies as of 1/1/2022.
- IND-7. Not achieved: average length of selection procedures for specific posts from publication to an appointment decision in 2022 reached 17.7 weeks (18 % longer than targeted (15 weeks) excluding two outlier procedures <sup>(29)</sup>, <sup>(30)</sup> with duration of more than 250 days).
- IND-8. Achieved partially: financial entitlements are timely paid, personnel files are kept in electronic format as targeted, however as a result of COVID-19, certain hardcopy original documents or certified copies are still lacking due to the fact that initial batches of Standing Corps started their contracts during the lockdown period, being on long term deployments, some of these staff members have not been present at the Headquarters ever since,. HR is progressively carrying out the verification of these files with a target to finalise this exercise by the end of 2023.
- IND-9. Achieved. The ratio of HR staff updating their skills to face new challenges In 2022 reached 94% of HR vs. the original target of at least 75% although part of those part of those training was of short duration (up to 4 hours).
- IND-10. Not achieved: the tender for medical services was delayed due to need for a clear definition of the scope of the services including services for staff abroad and staff carrying weapons, as mentioned above workload in HR and lack of staff impacted this endeavour, the revised target is to finalise by Q3-2023.

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<sup>(29)</sup> Shift Manager in ETIAS (AD8); published on 23/06/2021; 164 applications; 254 days - due to overall delay of ETIAS project.

<sup>(30)</sup> Data Protection Information Technologies Specialist (AD6); published on 25/11/2019; 28 applications; 1075 days - due to COVID-19 restrictions and a wish to carry out interviews in person and not remotely.

**Focus Area 6.2. Provide scalable, efficient and secure infrastructure for the Agency's developing requirements, including partial decentralisation of functions.**

**Key Activity 6.2.1. Develop and maintain permanent physical infrastructure providing for the Agency's growing functions.**

**Specific objectives**

- OBJ-1. Provide in a timely manner the physical infrastructure to ensure efficient and effective data collection and exchange (SO1), sufficient space for steering and meetings (SO2), support decentralised and additional premises to develop a well-functioning border and coast guard (SO3).
- OBJ-2. Deliver innovative facility services with clear KPIs, Service Level Agreement and service desk.

**Results, main outputs/actions, key deliverables**

- RES-1. With regard to the management and monitoring the offices on the current premises and planning for a transfer to the new permanent premises:
- The Agency prepared the contract notice in line with the EU taxonomy and in collaboration with the EIB. The Request for participation for a design and construction contract was launched;
  - Prior to the move to the new permanent premises, currently anticipated in Q3 2027, the demand for additional office space in the Agency resulting from the Agency's growth is addressed by a hybrid facility strategy, two tenders for office space were concluded with additional office space being secured in the building adjacent to the Frontex HQ property, including office space for the ETIAS CU that will also function as Alternative Office Facility (AOF) for critical functions in the Warsaw HQ should this facility be temporarily unavailable. The lack of current meeting/conference and office space in the HQ will be relieved when the larger meeting/conference facilities in the ETIAS CU that can be used as AOF will also be able to function as training rooms.
- RES-2. The work related to analysing and performing cost-effective adjustments that are minor in nature, considering business needs and specific requirements was carried out, notably:
- Meeting rooms in the headquarters were continued to be made available for operational use by the Frontex Situation Centre (FSC) and the Frontex Operational Coordination Centre (FOCC). Adaptations of more minor nature were undertaken to adjust local associated areas and furnishings to the changed usage of space, e.g. by installing lockers for local staff who are hot-desking or by improving the kitchen area. Smaller works were also undertaken to adapt the executive floor including a corporate video studio as well as training needs;
  - Health and safety measures to enhance sanitary protocols were continued assuring a safe working environment, including provision of personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, individual sanitisers etc), an ad-hoc disinfection scheme, continuous provision of hand sanitisers, body temperature measurement equipment, plexiglass protections in close contact areas, sanitary regime in the testing rooms, in the meeting rooms, online interpretation platforms for hybrid and fully online meetings, reimbursement of costs of taxi for transfers to the office, flu vaccination and COVID-19 diagnostic tests as well as the maintenance of a flexible car parking scheme allowing staff the possibility to use individual transport options;
  - Around 100 sqm of additional basement storage space was made available to DMD supporting their logistic functions located in the HQ;
  - Administrative and logistical support was delivered to 17 FLOs, as well as facility management services to Brussels Office, EURTF Catania and Piraeus;
  - The necessary repair and maintenance programs of all fixtures, fittings and furniture in both HQ buildings were ensured.
- RES-3. A significant effort was done in 2022 by corporate services to improve overall service delivery by increasing processes efficiency, deploying tools, signing new contracts, and assuring the availability of online instructions and guidelines. These are some achievements resulting from that effort:
- An electronic room booking system optimises the organisation of meetings in the context of growing cooperation and exchange with external stakeholders. A project has been initiated to implement a new system meeting the increased needs of the Agency, also incorporating flexible booking of car parking spaces and potentially office workstations;
  - To streamline the process of registering guests visiting the Agency's premises an online register of visitors was improved. The tool enables to easily add and manage visitors' data, monitor the visitors' badges and quickly check-in and check-out incoming guests. A total number of 5,903 incoming guests were registered in 2022.

- Installation of a 'Collectomate' for the internal use by the Agency. It is a self-service drop off/pick up storing machine that allows our employees to pass to each other documents, parcels, and other items in a safe, secure manner;
- 785 claims were submitted by 609 employees via the new digital reimbursement tool covering public transport and sport reimbursement;
- Flexible parking arrangements were sustained, resulting in significantly increased utilisation of the car park in the HQ and wider availability of the service;
- A new FWC on organisation of events outside of Poland was put in place covering the provision of services and supplies required for meetings, conferences and other events organised by Frontex all over the world;
- A project for the development of an IT tool supporting the service delivery of the corporate services was initiated. The incident and service management tool for corporate services is expected to allow the end users to log requests online or via a mobile phone in an automated, predefined manner and allows a quick access to instructions, guides, request status etc.

#### **Indicators: targets and baseline**

- IND-1. Achieved. Sufficient suitable office premises were available throughout 2022, while the necessary contracts were signed in order to continue to assure such availability in the bridging period prior to the move to the new permanent premises. The lease of the secondary HQ premises at Wronia 31 was extended for another two years until the end of 2026 and flexible renewal options were incorporated into the contract.
- IND-2. Achieved. Facilities on the premises were increasingly made available and effectively managed to enable the Agency to respond to growing needs resulting from the implementation of the new mandate and the build-up phase of the standing corps.
- IND-3. Achieved. The number of payments within this key activity reached more than EUR 15 million, where 94.19% of the payments were processed on time. Satisfaction rate with the services provided was rated as very high, with only 3.2% of dissatisfaction with services such as reimbursements related to sport activities and public transport.

#### **Key Activity 6.2.2. Develop sound and integrated ICT systems' structure supporting the European Border and Coast Guard functions.**

##### **Specific objectives**

- OBJ-1. Integrate ICT infrastructure based on two operating models: to support the operational activities and the horizontal ones.
- OBJ-2. The new EUROSUR Communication Network (ECN 2.0) is designed to support operational activities in the perimeter defined in the Regulation including the standing corps. Contingent upon the availability of resources, the current ECN 1.0 is upgraded.
- OBJ-3. The unclassified network transformed following the modern digitalisation concept using cloud technologies and services.

##### **Expected results, main outputs/actions, key deliverables**

- RES-1. The ICT Strategy 2022–2027 was approved with a roadmap for deployment of cloud technologies as a core part of the digital services used to deliver expected business functionalities to authorised business stakeholders.
- RES-2. The construction of the ECN 2.0 network accredited up to the EU confidential level has been postponed until Frontex has new premises with a new data centre that will meet the requirements for this level of classification.
- RES-3. In 2022, DIG completed 'Retrofit' project focused on upgrade of all ECN 1.0 infrastructure covering its modernisation in accordance with the lifecycle of its components.
- RES-4. Progress was made on the ongoing development of the unclassified operating model 'Cloud Implementation Plan 2020–2025' in full respect of EUDPR (European Union Data Protection Regulation) and Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.
- RES-5. The ongoing ICT special projects within Title III of the budget were managed to improve budget planning, technical coherence/standard, and achievement of synergies.

#### Indicators: targets and baseline

- IND-1. Achieved. DIG implemented 99% of the planned budget which means it met the declared target (95%) for both budget areas (IT maintenance and IT special projects).
- IND-2. Achieved: The three strategies created in 2020 (ICT Strategy 20220-2025, Cloud Strategy 2020-2025, Cybersecurity Strategy 2020-2025) were replaced by the single unified document: ICT Strategy 2022-2027 which was approved by MB as MB Decision 55/2022.

<b>Key Activity 6.2.3. Ensure a secure working environment for Agency's staff, including ICT security challenges.</b>
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#### Specific objectives

- OBJ-1. Establish cybersecurity as one of the pillars of a global security approach.
- OBJ-2. Implement physical security of Frontex premises, both for current premises inside and outside the host state, including ETIAS, new Headquarters to ensure the security of staff, visitors and assets based on qualitative security risk analysis following recognised and established security risk analysis models.
- OBJ-3. Implement personnel security for all staff, including standing corps, by timely initiating vetting procedures and efficient follow-up on the outcome.
- OBJ-4. Ensure correct handling of European Union Classified Information, including classified Communication and Information Systems, maintain the related required roles in line with the Frontex Security rules based on Commission's Decisions 2015/444 and 2017/46.
- OBJ-5. Ensure specialised security training for all categories of staff.
- OBJ-6. Maintain and follow up of the security accreditation of Frontex classified communication and information systems.
- OBJ-7. Establishment of Frontex field security as part of Security Sector and Technical sweeping team as part of Security Sector.

#### Results, main outputs/actions, key deliverables

- RES-1. Maintenance and update of Frontex internal security framework, considering the requirements of the Regulation, including the specific roadmap. Frontex security rules were approved by the Management Board.
- RES-2. Physical security risk assessments and travel advice were timely delivered; maintained and updated while coherent, integrated security approach was applied, providing appropriate levels of protection for persons, assets, and information commensurate with identified risks.
- RES-3. Clearance and vetting processes for all staff were managed in compliance with the relevant security framework and in liaison with relevant managers.
- RES-4. Timely review and security re-accreditation of Frontex classified communication and information systems. A scalable and interoperable secure digital and physical environment to support operational and administrative Regulation was operated, maintained, and improved.
- RES-5. EUROSUR Security Accreditation Board was fully operational within Frontex with EUROSUR security rules delivered and its secretary appointed.
- RES-6. Field security element was established as part of security sector.
- RES-7. Conceptual phase for technical sweeping was performed, studying potential synergies with the European Commission.

#### Indicators: targets and baseline

- IND-1. Achieved: development of Frontex security legal framework. Roadmap established and approved. Compliance with training as per roadmap.
- IND-2. Achieved: establishment of Frontex field security as part of Security Sector.

**Focus Area 6.3. Ensure accountability, regularity and legality of all Frontex activities through a comprehensive inspection and control system to guarantee the effectiveness of internal business processes.**

**Key Activity 6.3.1. Develop and implement strategic planning mechanism in line with the applicable legal framework.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Continue enhancing planning, monitoring, and reporting activities at the corporate level.
- OBJ-2. Ensure regular monitoring activities at the corporate level.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Planning and reporting function worked during 2022 in line with the objectives pursued, developing three different and more mature versions of the Single Programming Document in line with planning cycle as well the Consolidated Annual Activity Report reporting on the Agency's activities carried out in 2021. Objectives, scope, and internal processes with regard to these activities were mainstreamed through five training sessions in the period as well as through dedicated Q&A sessions organised for every major request for contributions across the entities.
- RES-2. As envisaged monitoring activities were performed and its different outcomes e.g. progress reports were submitted contributing to better informed managerial decisions.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: Annual benchmarking to improve current methodology was timely performed and improvements identified were integrated into the Agency's internal processes.
- IND-2. Achieved: Monitoring activities were timely performed including, mid-year review of the implementation of AWP 2022 and quarterly monitoring reports were timely elaborated and submitted to stakeholders.

**Key Activity 6.3.2. Develop and implement a comprehensive system for internal control, inspection and audit functions.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Contribute to the overall assurance framework from the perspective of audit liaising function.
- OBJ-2. Ensure Internal Control Framework is in place and it functions as intended, including the effective risk management process.
- OBJ-3. Continuously improve through timely completed actions following audit observations and recommendations.
- OBJ-4. Corporate anti-fraud strategy 2022–2024 is in place and updated regularly. The implementation of strategic objectives and related actions are monitored and reported.
- OBJ-5. Monitoring of the use of force performed by the standing corps officers to comply with fundamental rights and professional requirements (as depicted in Annex V - Regulation (EU) 2019/1896).
- OBJ-6. Develop Frontex policy for conducting field visits, controls and inspections of the standing corps and supporting services.
- OBJ-7. Support the field visits, controls and inspections of the standing corps and supporting services.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. During 2022, all internal and external audit engagements conducted in Frontex were supported and followed up in a comprehensive and timely manner. The efficient implementation of all audit liaison function activities maintained the mutual-respect and the professional relationship of the Agency with the auditing institutions. Since August 2022 the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) of the Agency was created, enabling auditors to conduct all scheduled activities to provide the overall assurance on the functioning of the Agency's operations and on the legality and regularity of its transactions. As a result, the audit liaison function contributed into the improvement of the Agency's internal control framework. IAC took over these responsibilities, prepared, organised, coordinated, and provided follow-up of five (5) audit engagements and one (1) follow-up audit. The works performed included: preparation of audit

- visits on-the spot and of the remote/online audit engagements, collection of documents prior, during and after the engagement, making the documents available to the auditors, scheduling interviews, follow-up of any outstanding issues, coordinating collection of comments, replies and inputs into draft and final audit reports, clearing letters, preliminary observations, questionnaires and surveys, coordination of adversarial procedures, providing accurate and constructive feedback on draft audit reports and adversarial procedures, developing feasible and targeted management action plans to address audit recommendations, translation of Agency's official relies into all official EU languages.
- RES-2. Internal control functions were carried out, delivering quarterly and annual internal control assessments including an up-to-date log of corporate risks and register of exceptions. In performing risk monitoring, this ongoing activity engaged all entities as owners of the underlying processes, its periodical outcomes were summarised and submitted to Agency's management. With regard to the register of exceptions, its daily management was ensured leading to regular reporting along the period.
- RES-3. Implementation of audit observations and recommendations were monitored, the improvement log and IAS issue track were timely updated on regular basis in order to report and support the review of the different auditing bodies. Implementation of audit recommendations has been efficiently performed. In 2022 during the IAS follow up audits, 10 recommendations from different audits have been closed. ICO has as well coordinated the implementation of those actions, ensuring it was implemented on time
- RES-4. The implementation of the actions identified in the anti-fraud strategy 2022-2024 and its action plan were monitored through the whole year 2022, leading to the annual report timely delivered. Enhanced awareness of staff regarding the meaning, causes and consequences of fraud was mainstreamed by means of dedicated actions, i.e., awareness session, training and dissemination of materials targeting all staff from headquarters to standing corps as well as part of the induction training for newcomers.
- RES-5. With regard to inspections, preliminary assessments were conducted to verify and validate the allegations and identify any evidence (prima facie) that substantiate but might also that derail the allegations. The assessments were concluded with the recommendation to either follow up the case (initiate an administrative inquiry) or close the case with/without recommendations.
- RES-6. Although not envisaged at planning level, based on an IAS recommendation the establishment of a PMO and the implementation of the uniform PM methodology was entrusted to ICO. PMO implementation began in Q2 of 2022 with requirements and stakeholder definition. A high-level plan was created with the support of CoEPM<sup>2</sup> for a consultation on tailoring PM<sup>2</sup> for addressing Frontex needs. In October 2022, the PM and PMO implementation project was kicked off with the participation of all Frontex entities. The benefits, objectives, activities, and expected outcomes of the PMO were communicated, and internal stakeholders were informed about the plan and their role with a series of dedicated workshops to establish the agency's project portfolio, to collect their needs related to the project management and identify PMO service requirements. Based on those a project Guide (practical implementation of the PM<sup>2</sup> methodology for Frontex) was drafted and is in process of consultation and adoption.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: four quarterly updates to the executive management on state-of-play of the various audit engagements in Frontex were developed and communicated appropriately.
- IND-2. Not achieved: In 2022, with total amount of payments EUR 558,962,416 versus the exceptional payments of EUR 21,324,274, this indicator is at the end of the year at 3.81%, above the original target set at 2%.
- IND-3. Partially achieved: in total for all recommendations, 94 actions were identified in the action plans. During 2022, up to 59 of those actions have been implemented resulting in an implementation rate of 63%. The Agency continues working towards closing pending ones in the first half of 2023.
- IND-4. Achieved: out of 11 actions identified in the Anti-Fraud Strategy action plan with the deadline end of 2022, 10 have been implemented and one is still in progress. It makes the implementation rate 91%.
- IND-5. Achieved: Use of force control activities were maintained with 35 reports issued in 2022 while there were no incidents involving the use of force in the reporting period. With regard to the fact-finding missions, the following results were achieved:
- Administrative inquiries: 2 conducted in 2022 (vs. 3 in 2021). Both from 2022 were closed within the reporting period;
  - Due to the lack of staff during the major part of the period only one (1) field inspection took place in 2022 (vs. 11 conducted in 2021), to redress this issue two standing corps were temporarily assigned to ICO to support inspection of operational activities from December 2022.
  - Overall 29 cases were dealt with within the period resulting in the proposal to open three administrative inquiries, 10 recommendations issued and 16 cases deemed as out of scope of the process.
- IND-6. Partially achieved: Although PMO is gradually being established from Q2-2022 to Q2-2023, the PMO was already providing support to project managers including i.a. the initiation of five significant projects and programmes.

**Key Activity 6.3.3. Develop and implement the system for monitoring and evaluating the EBCG's operational deliverables to support sound operational decision-making processes.****Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Contribute to the overall assurance framework from the perspective of ex-post controls.
- OBJ-2. Ensure protection of staff members' dignity in line with the legal framework.
- OBJ-3. Contribute to the assurance of good administration in line with the legal framework.
- OBJ-4. Ensure transparency as regards lobbying by means of a transparency register.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Ex-post control activities were carried out in 2022. In line with the ex-post controls plan 2021/2022, they were performed in five MS i.e. Germany, Netherlands, Greece, Czechia, Spain. While with regard to the ex-post controls plan 2022/2023 they were being performed in three MS: Luxembourg, Hungary and Denmark. Other reports prepared by Inspection and Control Office in 2022:
  - Report related to *"Ex-post performance control of the appraisal process in Frontex"* - issued and closed in 2022.
  - Report related to *"Control of the reservation process, invoicing and cooperation with e-Travel Agency"* - Draft and Revised reports issued in 2022. Until the moment of reporting to CAAR 2022 (February 2023), ICO has not further progressed on this report in view of the expected release of OLAF report on the case.
  - Report related to ABAC Security check - Periodic validation of user access rights granted in ABAC.
- RES-2. Frontex is committed to be a place of work where every member of its staff feels safe and respected, both at and outside of its headquarters. To achieve this goal:
  - among all EU Agencies, Frontex appointed the highest number of Confidential Counsellors - in total 17 CCs (nine female and eight male - with six CCs are from Frontex Standing Corps). The aim was to ensure a positive, safe and inclusive working environment in Frontex where there is no room for harassment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour;
  - Four dedicated awareness raising sessions were organised for the executive, senior, middle managers and team leaders, conducted by an external trainer and four dedicated awareness sessions were given by CCs and their Central Service to all staff members (in English and Polish);
  - The agency concluded a framework contract with an external expert to carry out group (or individual) mediation sessions addressing any possible issues Frontex staff is encountering within their team, sector or unit. In order for the reported cases to be thoroughly investigated, the investigative capabilities of Frontex's mandated entity - Inspection and Control Office (ICO) - were strengthened.
- RES-3. The Agency successfully met the envisaged objective of processing the requests received from both the European Ombudsman and OLAF within the respective deadlines given. At the same time, ICO has managed to provide support and coordinate the inquiries in compliance with the applicable legal framework.
- RES-4. The transparency register is a fully functioning tool serves the purpose to prevent potential conflicts of interests. Inclusion of all meetings and contacts between third-party stakeholders and the executive director, deputy executive directors and heads of division in matters concerning procurements and tenders for services, equipment or outsourced projects and studies are ensured in a timely manner

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: ex-post controls covered EUR 18.2 m which constitutes 9.5% vs. original target 10% of the average total payments for Grants awarded in 2021-2022. The gap towards the target (0.5%) is due to the actual FTE's available in the period where 1.5 FTE (25% of the manpower) were either on extended sick leaves or performing tasks in other entities (internal mobility programme).
- IND-2. Achieved: a new e-learning course on 'Prevention of Harassment' with the support of an organizational psychologist was developed consisting of 5 module-course covering information on the legal framework, different procedures in place, roles and responsibilities, tools and techniques that might come in handy to prevent and address any type of (sexual and psychological) harassing behaviour. Each module concluding with a set of questions to test the knowledge gained. Given the

crucial importance of the topic the accomplishment of the 5 modules is part of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) pertaining to the appraisal exercise.

- IND-3. Achieved: extensive work was performed handling inquiries related to European Ombudsman and OLAF investigations as follows:

NUMBER OF CASES HANDLED IN 2022		
	OLAF	European Ombudsman
Ongoing from previous years	7	9
Opened	16	14
Closed	7	14
Recommendation issued	1	6
Maladministration	N/A	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 12. Summary of files related to OLAF and EO handled in 2022.

- IND-4. Achieved. the transparency log registered three meetings between third-party stakeholders and senior members of the Agency during 2022. No meetings took place with the participation of the executive management.

**Key Activity 6.3.4. Develop and implement the system aimed at preserving legal conformity of all Frontex activities with applicable legal framework.**

**Specific objectives**

- OBJ-1. Anticipate, identify and mitigate significant legal risks inherent in Frontex activities, including legal risks associated with the operational activities of the standing corps (such as the use of executive powers by category 1 standing corps through the legal services sector (LEG) governance and operational legal support.
- OBJ-2. Provide legal assurance concerning the operational activities of category 1 standing corps and other relevant participants in Frontex operations.
- OBJ-3. Help ensure legal assurance in drafting and verifying decisions and providing legal advice on governance issues.
- OBJ-4. Further streamline the effective and efficient processing of public access to documents (PAD) applications considering the continuous increase of applications, including risk mitigation to avert European Ombudsman and Court of Justice of the EU cases.
- OBJ-5. Advice and support provided to business units in complying with the applicable regulatory framework related to procurement procedures and in implementing the approved Annual Procurement Plan.
- OBJ-6. Ensure the functioning of the Central Contract Management Team (CCMT) to monitor and make sure that the contract management framework in Frontex is effective, efficient, and compliant with the applicable rules.
- OBJ-7. Digitalisation and automation of procurement workflows.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. LPU successfully met the envisaged objective of providing a legal helpdesk service for internal stakeholders for both operational (e.g. in elaborating the concept of Frontex organised return operations) and governance matters (e.g. in relation to the new security framework of the Agency or in relation to putting in place the Agency's new complaints mechanism). LPU provided quality control of Frontex decision-making processes, e.g. related to setting up Frontex internal audit capability, while anticipating new/evolving legal risks by constantly monitoring the Agency's core activities, e.g. operationalisation of the SA between the EU and the Republic of Moldova and its provisional application and by developing risk-minimisation strategies e.g. advising on recruitment processes during their development stage. Finally, LPU provided legal solutions ensuring the continuous delivery of the Agency's activities in compliance with the applicable legal framework. At the same time, LPU managed to minimise the legal risks while successfully handling litigation cases filed against the Agency always within the respective deadlines given.
- RES-2. As regards the handling of public access to documents (PAD), in 2022 the Agency continuously worked towards improving IT solutions to enhance functionalities for applicants and to further advance the automation of workflows. Furthermore, the Agency actively raised awareness on the good practices in

the area of PAD through the organisation and delivery of cross-cutting comprehensive PAD training on the intra- and inter- Agency levels.

- RES-3. Timely conclusion of procurement procedures and signature of contracts, in full compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework was ensured. LPU was duly monitoring and implementing the approved Annual Procurement Plan 2022, launching accordingly the procedures submitted during the year, while simultaneously - recording any necessary changes to the said plan in terms of new entries, cancellations, and modifications - producing the relevant biannual amendment responding to the ongoing business needs.
- RES-4. The contract management function, which was previously split between different entities, was allocated to PROC in 2022, without prejudice to the ultimate responsibility of contract managers within all business units and their hierarchy/delegated AO. In LPU, steps were taken to centralise the issuance of best practices. Further efforts remain subject to upcoming recruitments.
- RES-5. With regard to digitalisation and automation of procurement workflows in 2022, on one hand LPU further fostered the optimal use of the available and already accessible IT solutions, i.e., ABAC Legal Commitments. On the other hand, the introduction of new electronic tools facilitating the procurement processes for all actors involved, i.e. Public Procurement Management Tool (PPMT) which secured efficient and fully digitalised management of procurement procedures from early planning to contract signature. Frontex' PPMT on-boarding was completed in Q4 2022. In this respect, the first procurement procedures with the use of PPMT have already been launched within Q1 2023.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: the targets were met by responding during 2022 to approximately 967 requests in a timely manner, providing client-oriented solutions that effectively manage the legal risks, with the overall objective of mitigating legal risks for the Agency. The catalogue of services provided included *i.a.* Management Board Decisions, Executive Director Decisions, legal advice on a variety of operational matters, legal guidance on governance issues, legal guidance on human resources (e.g., staff cases and recruitment, new HR policies), successfully defending the Agency in pre-litigation (e.g. Article 24 and 90(1) requests, Article 90(2) Staff Regulations' complaints) litigation cases (e.g. on General Court).
- IND-2. Achieved: all relevant cases were provided with appropriate legal assistance including instances where standing corps deployed required legal support from the Agency. While a comprehensive framework, which would pro-actively steer such assistance, would be useful and could support in a more systemised and more coherent ways, all related cases that occurred in 2022 were handled successfully on an ad-hoc basis.
- IND-3. Achieved: advice and support were timely provided to business units, as well as to the management, in the interpretation of the applicable procurement framework and in the conduct of procurement procedures in a service-oriented approach, identifying potential non-compliance events with the applicable regulatory framework related to public procurement and assessing, as well as mitigating relevant risks. The satisfaction of Procurement Sector's clients with the support received for year N (i.e., 2022) is to be measured *inter alia* by means of an anonymised survey to be conducted in Q1 of year N+1 (i.e., 2023), targeting a satisfaction rate of  $\geq 80\%$ , as it was the case with the feedback received under the same exercise conducted the year before.
- IND-4. Achieved. The annual procurement plan, including the two amendments to it adopted through Management Board Decisions, was duly monitored and implemented through subsequent launch of procurement procedures timely submitted by business units to the Procurement Sector within 2022, achieving the set target ( $\geq 80\%$ ).
- IND-5. Achieved: in the contract management function, steps were taken to centralise the issuance of best practices. Further efforts remain subject to upcoming recruitments. Two administrative notices on contract management were issued in Q3 2022, i.e., "Administrative Notice No R-AN-2022-8 of 08/08/2022 on the Contract Management Framework" and "Administrative Notice No R-AN-2022-9 of 08/08/2022 on Professional Standards for Contract Managers". The notices were followed by the creation within LPU/PROC of a dedicated small team (i.e., Contract Management and Legal Assessment Team) in December 2022 to prepare a comprehensive implementation plan. Moreover, two training sessions were delivered within 2022 touching upon contract management-related matters: 'Contract Amendments' training session and 'FWCs and their implementation' training session held in Q3 and Q4 2022 respectively.
- IND-6. Achieved. During 2022 the transparency office, an integral part of LPU/LEG responsible for processing applications for public access to documents continued accomplishing a 100% rate of timely replies to initial and confirmatory applications, as well as - in support to ICO - proceedings at the European Ombudsman and the General Court.

#### Focus Area 6.4. Provide management framework designed to uphold EU values

**Key Activity 6.4.1. Ensure comprehensive fundamental rights framework throughout all Frontex activities, with strong focus on implementing the additional fundamental rights elements under the Regulation, including partial decentralisation of functions in the context of the fundamental rights monitors.**

##### Specific objectives in AWP 2022

- OBJ-1. Support and advisory capacity to ensure IBM activities compliance with Fundamental Rights.
- OBJ-2. Strengthened fundamental rights monitoring system in all of Agency's activities.
- OBJ-3. Fundamental rights impact assessment and follow up procedures implemented.
- OBJ-4. Elaborate key performance indicators with strong fundamental rights dimension.
- OBJ-5. Establish a follow-up mechanism for advice from the Fundamental Rights Officer to the Executive Director and the Management Board.

##### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. During the reporting period, FRO actively supported the Agency in the coordination of the implementation and monitoring of the progress of the respective units. FRO also proactively implemented or initiated actions towards the implementation of the objectives and activities where FRO was in the lead or co-lead. Out of the 87 activities foreseen by the action plan in order to mainstream fundamental rights across all activities of the Agency, eight have been fully implemented; fifty-six have been implemented and were ongoing (are implemented on a systematic manner and a rolling-basis); seventeen were partially implemented; and two were delayed
- RES-2. Additional 22 Fundamental Rights Monitors (FROMs) were externally recruited <sup>(31)</sup> to fulfil the obligation of 40 FROMs required by Article 110(6) of the Regulation. At the end of 2022, the Fundamental Rights Office nearly reached its full enhanced capacity with 44 FROMs in service (30 at AD level, and 14 at AST level). In parallel, the newly appointed Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer took up his duties on 1 March 2022.
- RES-3. FRO provided inputs to the wide range of Frontex processes, from operational plans to evaluations and working arrangements as well as opinions, providing comments to more than 145 dossiers during 2022, including all operational plans and evaluations of joint operations.
- RES-4. All fundamental rights pieces of advice issued by FRO, including the contribution to the Agency's documents, were timely delivered and internally tracked. FRO followed up on his recommendations and opinions to business entities as part of consultations on the development of Agency's documents. FRO ensuring the monitoring of their implementation.
- RES-5. During 2022, FRO Serious incident report and complaint mechanism were fully operational. All cases (72 serious incident reports and 69 complaints mechanism) were timely and properly handled despite their significant increase during the reporting period.
- RES-6. FRO ensured full cooperation between the Agency and the Consultative Forum (CF). CF representatives provided their experience and expertise for the VEGA deployments at several BCPs, FPs and airports. During the 29<sup>th</sup> Consultative Forum the CF members discussed together with the Executive Director, the Management Board Chair and the Fundamental Rights Officer various pending fundamental rights issues, including in relation to Article 46 of the EBCG Regulation.

##### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved: 2021 FRO Annual Report was published in June 2022. As scheduled, four quarterly FRO reports to the Frontex Management Board were delivered.
- IND-2. Achieved: all documents issued by the Agency and shared with FRO for advice on Fundamental rights, did include fundamental rights-relevant content.
- IND-3. Achieved: the Fundamental Rights Office is at its full capacity with 44 operative FROMs who were able to promptly and timely follow up on all matters and cases including six FROMs assigned to monitor return operations. Reports submitted by FRO to other business entities and national authorities, were included into the FRO reporting to the MB and in the annual report.
- IND-4. Achieved: 100% of the SIRs and complaints were properly followed up and completed.

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<sup>(31)</sup> And additional 16 FROMs were re-hired in a higher function group/grade.

- IND-5. Achieved: during the 2022 Consultative Forum (CF) three meetings were held with the Fundamental Rights Officer and his Deputy ensuring the necessary “Exchange between FRO and CF”. All FRO quarterly reports to the management Board were also shared with the CF.

**Key Activity 6.4.2. Design and implement the framework for legitimate personal data collection and processing throughout all Frontex activities.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. To raise awareness of data controllers on their obligations imposed by the legal framework.
- OBJ-2. To embed data protection compliance from the offset of the projects that require interference with data protection or privacy.
- OBJ-3. To provide advice on the necessity to perform data protection impact assessments and review the assumption of risks on rights and freedoms of the data subjects assumed by the data controllers.
- OBJ-4. Define, implement, monitor annual DPO related activities including the annual activity report.

**Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. Frontex DPO raised several opinions in order to enhance awareness of the Data Controller on its data protection obligations. Particularly relevant are the Transfer Impact Assessment Guidelines, and the DPO Guide for the organisation of meetings or events. Equally important, and not only as a tool to raise awareness but also to ensure that the principle of privacy by design and by default is embedded since the offset of the planning of a processing activity, the DPO created the DPO webpage on MyFX as a practical guidance which helps Frontex staff to understand the legal framework and data protection obligations. The intention of creating the DPO ‘webpage’ was to give all Frontex staff an easy access to data protection concepts, to explain in a simple manner data protection related matters, to make staff familiar with compliance with data protection obligations and to make people aware of individual’s rights as data subject.
- RES-2. The DPO delivered nine induction training iterations to newcomers, provided two iterations of specialised training for information officers, and delivered three ad-hoc awareness sessions for managers at Corporate Services, for the ETIAS CU and organised a workshop with MS representatives on Data Processing Agreements.
- RES-3. The DPO provided advice on two Data Protection Impact Assessments (IRMA and Cloud). The DPIA on IRMA DPIA and its prior consultation with the EDPS was closed. Equally, the DPO provided advice for the redrafting of the Cloud DPIA, which had been mandated as an outcome of an EDPS investigation opened against the Agency in 2021. The provided advice on the need to have a DPIA for the MID project, as well as for A2SISII, and continued working on the DPIA for logging and monitoring.
- RES-4. The DPO presented the 2021 Annual Activity and Compliance report to the Management Board in March 2022.

**Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved: two data protection impact assessments including the Data Protection Officer (DPO) opinion on the risks envisaged and the assumption of those risks by the data controller delivered.
- IND-2. Achieved: one specialised training on data protection was provided.
- IND-3. Partially achieved: the first draft on the DPO implementing rules was finalised and sent to the EDPS for formal consultation, as well as an implementation plan to address the EDPS recommendations on the Management Board Decisions on Data Protection was drafted and agreed with the ED.

**Focus Area 6.5. Establish a sound mechanism to interrelate all Frontex strategic functions and to ensure consistency of Frontex exchanges with external stakeholders**

**Key Activity 6.5.1. Develop and implement a model for organising and harmonizing the delivery of all Frontex functions at strategic and executive level, including Frontex relations with external stakeholders.**

**Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

- OBJ-1. Ensure cross-divisional coordination of Agency’s tasks, including operational coordination, protocol function, document management and Executive Management support functions, including an executive advisory function to the Executive Management.
- OBJ-2. Ensure smooth functioning of the Frontex Management Board and its supporting functions.

- OBJ-3. Provide for coordination with and timely reporting to the EU institutions and other relevant EU bodies based in Brussels.

#### Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- RES-1. In early 2022, two new Deputy Executive Directors took up their duties. To strengthen the strategic steer of the Agency and to provide an adequate level of support to the Executive Management, the organisational structure of the Agency was amended, and a new Unit, the Executive Management Bureau (EMB) was established, consisting of five sectors: Executive Support Office, Process Management and Accountability Office, Media and Public Relations Office, Brussels Liaison Office and Document Management Office. Communication and cooperation between business entities was fostered through regular cross-divisional meetings at different levels, ARES (Advanced Records Management System) was successfully introduced replacing former document management systems (Correspondence Management System, Document Management System and Records Management System), while collaborative tools available through MyFX platform were extensively used while the centralised approach towards the task distribution provided an opportunity to involve relevant entities and ensure cross-divisional cooperation. All workflows were fully maintained in paperless form. All internal and external meetings were organised in a hybrid format.
- RES-2. As regards the meetings of the Frontex Management Board and its supporting bodies, namely the Executive Board and the Working Group on Budget and Accounts, the Management Board Secretariat supported the coordination and preparation of their activities. Their supportive tasks were enhanced in 2022 and re-defined to facilitate and support the Management Board's decision-making processes.
- RES-3. EMB (BRU) provided for timely reporting on political and legal developments relevant to the Agency. The year 2022 was primarily marked by the war in Ukraine and EU policy and legislative work reflected this. BRU ensured Agency presence in the negotiations between the Commission and Moldova on the Status Agreement to allow for the urgently needed Frontex operational support in the country. BRU also provided reporting on the Commission's EIBM policy document, State of Schengen Report 2022, EU action plans, and legislative proposals for the API and revised Trafficking in Human Beings Directive, to name a few. BRU continued to analyse developments in the European Migration and Asylum Pact negotiations as they emerged.
- RES-4. The Agency provided for regular coordination with other EU Agencies' Liaison Offices in Brussels (Europol, EUAA, CEPOL, INTERPOL, eu-LISA) on positions related to technical files, explaining the Agency's operational mandate (i.e., new framework of different interoperability components (EES, ETIAS, SIS, MID), law-enforcement cooperation, Innovation Hub, Future Group, JHA-CSDP cooperation, migration flows, border management and returns). At the same time, Frontex interacted with the counterparts in the European Migration Network and the European External Action Service. While regular meetings with the international organisations (e.g. UNHCR or IOM Brussels office) took place and provided for further coordination on matters of inter-Agency cooperation or the provisions of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum.

#### Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged

- IND-1. Achieved. Implementation of the horizontal functions was ensured through the regular Executive Management Briefing meetings organised every week with the engagement of the Fundamental Rights Officer and the inclusion of updates on developments in the media and in the EU institutions in the agenda.
- IND-2. Achieved. As regards the Frontex Management Board meetings, three meetings took place in hybrid format. One extraordinary meeting was organised exclusively via videoconferencing system. The remaining three were held physically – two regular meetings in Paris and Prague and one extraordinary meeting in Warsaw at the Frontex headquarters. The Executive Board reduced the number of its regular meetings to four, however, three additional Executive Board Experts meetings took place in 2022. The Working Group on Budget and Accounts met throughout the year holding seven regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting devoted to the Frontex Permanent Premises project.
- IND-3. Achieved. In 2022, the Agency continued to ensure the accurate and swift reporting from relevant meetings within the European Parliament structures (primarily EP Plenary sessions, LIBE, FSWG, BUDG, CONT, and more technical-level meetings). The EMB (BRU) provided for timely reporting and attendance of Working Parties in the Council of the European Union [SCIFA, Frontiers, IMEX, COSI (SG), IXIM, MOCADDEM, EMWP, LEWP (Police and Customs), TWP], supported the attendance of senior management in the Justice and Home Affairs Council. In constant cooperation with the European Commission, the Agency provided for timely reporting and attendance in the expert groups and thematic discussions organised by DG HOME, DG JUST, SecGen and Commissioners' Cabinets.
- IND-4. Achieved. On average, almost 25 meetings per month were organised by EMB (BRU) during the entire year, adding to up to approximately 300 meetings attended and reported on in 2022.

**Key Activity 6.5.2. Design and implement a comprehensive and consistent communication model <sup>(32)</sup> involving internal and external communication functions and providing for partial decentralisation of the Agency's functions.**

#### **Specific objectives in AWP 2022**

Ensure that all communication content across all channels is in line with the Agency's key strategic objectives.

#### **Results achieved in 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- RES-1. In 2022, the internal communication team was strengthened and the 'WeAll' intranet became even more active as an institutional communication platform, providing staff with news, practical announcements, photo gallery and discussion forums. Intranet has been receiving very positive feedback from the staff – the change in approach to internal communication championed by the Executive Management improved the quality, relevance, transparency, and timeliness of Frontex's communication, resulting in historically high readership and staff engagement.
- RES-2. Operational activities continued to be the main focus of communication activities, and regular updates were published from all Frontex operations. In particular, the Agency informed the public regularly about the support provided to the Member States and Moldova, which were affected by the record number of refugees fleeing Ukraine following Russia's invasion.
- RES-3. To promote the successful build-up of the standing corps, 10 videos explaining the work of the Frontex standing corps officers were developed and shared on the Agency's communication channels and presented at the international conferences (International Border Police Conference). Recruitment notices were also shared on social media to attract wider pool of candidates.
- RES-4. EMB (MPR) provided coherent, relevant and timely information on the Agency's work and maintained regular contacts with a number of European and international media outlets and researchers. To increase transparency and constituting a major achievement in 2022 was also the launch of the Public Register of Documents, where about 1,900 key Agency documents were uploaded by the end of the year. While in order to reach wider audiences and increase Agency's visibility the EMB (MPR) used different communication channels, including the website and social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube). The social media presence was significantly strengthened in 2022 with more than 167 000 followers in total (21% increase compared with 2021).

#### **Results on indicators for 2022 vs. those initially envisaged**

- IND-1. Achieved. Intranet site 'WeAll' received very positive feedback from the staff. In 2022 a total of 170 articles were published, the number of likes increased to 1,510, 179% more when compared to 2021; the number of comments increased by 161%, with a total of 321 comments; and the number of visits was in total 118,747, representing an increase of 105%.
- IND-2. Achieved. In 2022, the media production team received 90 publication requests from across the Agency for leaflets, brochures, handbooks, banners, roll-ups and graphics etc. which were produced either internally or with support of the external contractors. In addition, the team prepared internally dozens of visuals and graphics for social media posts, conferences, events and workshops. EMB (MPR) delivered all 90 requested materials, while the number of videos and animations produced for communication purposes and shared on Frontex communication channels reached 32.
- IND-3. Partially achieved. In the reporting period, EMB (MPR) produced 105 press releases which were amplified through social media posts. It regularly produced new content for social media (an average of 3–4 posts per day) and press releases with updates on the Agency's work. Among the press releases, monthly analysis of the migratory situation at Europe's borders were delivered where the Agency responded to questions from media and researchers, an average of 10 questions per day. Due to the resignation of Frontex's ED in April 2022, the number of planned interviews and press briefings with the ED could not have been reached.
- IND-4. Achieved. In 2022, Frontex's social media accounts continued gaining new audience with more than 60,000 followers on Twitter (a 16% increase compared to 2021) and 43,200 on Facebook, 12.5% more followers compared to 2021. LinkedIn is the leading Frontex' social media channel with 64,000 followers, with an increase of 32% compared to 2021. The number of page views on the Frontex website reached 3,105,118 (3,161,111 in 2021).

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(32) The communication office of the Agency performs its duties in coordination with its peers within the EC and other EU institutions, in particular JHA agencies. The office strives in delivering coherent, relevant, and timely information related to scope of Regulation.

## Part II - Management

### 2.1. Management Board

In 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges to the working methods of the Management Board. However, thanks to the experience accumulated in previous years and to the adopted adjustments, the Management Board was able to address these challenges and to ensure the continued oversight of the functioning of the Agency.

In line with the annual planning for 2022, five Management Board meetings took place. In addition, eight extraordinary meetings were organised: in February, in March (two meetings), in April, May, July, October and December 2022. Those extraordinary meetings were dedicated to the follow-up by the Management Board on the European Anti-Fraud Office's investigations against three staff members of Frontex, to the provision of support to the Executive Director *ad interim* during the interim phase until the appointment of the new Executive Director, to the amendment of the Agency's organisational structure and its internal and external communication strategy, to strategic decisions regarding the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps and compliance with data protection, and to the appointment of the new Executive Director.

The 88<sup>th</sup>, 89<sup>th</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> Management Board meetings were held in a hybrid format, with some participants physically present and some connected via videoconferencing, while the Extraordinary MB meetings were held via videoconferencing, except the MB meeting of 20 December 2022, which was held in Warsaw. The sanitary measures implemented by the Agency and the technological upgrade of the Management Board Conference room also played an important role in allowing for hybrid meetings. The 90<sup>th</sup> and the 92<sup>nd</sup> Management Board meetings were organised by the Agency and the corresponding Presidencies of the Council of the EU in Paris, France, and in Prague, Czech Republic, respectively.

After its establishment in 2020, the Executive Board continued to convene and to assist the Management Board and the Executive Director with the preparation of the agendas and decisions to be adopted during the Management Board meetings with a view to improving the Agency's efficiency and transparency. In light of the extraordinary growth of the Agency's competences, staff numbers and financial resources, the Working Group on Budget and Accounts continued to assist the Management Board in discussion of files and decision-making in budgetary and financial matters. In particular, following the European Parliament's decision to withhold the approval of the discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agency for the financial year 2020, the Working Group on Budget and Accounts devoted special attention to the implementation of the Agency's budget 2022 and to the improvement of the Agency's absorption capacity. Moreover, the Management Board, via its Working Group on Budget and Accounts, closely supervised the progress made regarding the implementation of the roadmap on the New Frontex permanent premises.

In 2022, a new Management Board Working Group was set up to establish the technical and operational strategy for European integrated border management as provided for in Article 8(5) of the Regulation.<sup>84</sup>

Following up on the work conducted in 2021, the Management Board continued to hold discussions and to take the necessary steps for the update of the legal framework related to the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps officers, their deployment and operationalisation. Among others, the following Management Board Decisions were taken in 2022:

- on establishing specific rules to facilitate the storage of weapons, including firearms and non-lethal weapons, ammunition and other equipment owned by the Agency in secured facilities and their transportation,
- on adopting the profiles to be made available to the EBCG standing corps and their annual planning for 2023,
- on adopting the European border and coast guard standing corps annual planning for 2023 and indicative multiannual planning of profiles,
- on authorising the Executive Director to consult the Commission on the draft Management Board Decision adopting the rules on financing deployments of operational staff, category 3 and category 4, of the European border and coast guard standing corps.

The operational activities of the Agency, including return operations, were extensively discussed during most of the meetings of the Management Board. The developments and challenges resulting from the war in Ukraine and the increased migratory flows along the Western Balkan Route were closely overseen. Against this background, following a meeting of the Chair of the Management Board with Frontex's Executive Director and some MB Members in Vienna-Schwechat, Frontex's staff and technology were deployed to Serbia. Furthermore, the Management Board monitored the progressive entry into operation of the Entry Exit System and the Agency's support in this regard.

In 2022, the Management Board also adopted the Methodology for Development of Technical Standards for the equipment to be deployed in Frontex activities relevant for the acquisition of the Agency's own technical equipment and the development of common standards across the European Border and Coast Guard.

Other major milestones achieved in 2022 were the appointment of the Security Officer, which was accompanied by the adoption of the security rules of the Agency on protecting EU classified information and sensitive non-classified information; as well as the approval of the Frontex Internal Audit Charter and the adoption of Frontex Information Management Framework and of the ICT Strategy.

The Fundamental Rights Officer regularly reports to the Management Board about development in the area of fundamental rights. The Management Board further strengthened the framework for the protection of fundamental rights in the Agency's activities and monitored the implementation of the Fundamental Rights Strategy action plan. In January 2022, the Management Board appointed the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer. In March, the Management Board adopted special rules on the complaints mechanism and on general implementing provisions on the conduct of administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings. In July 2022, the Management Board adopted the rules for the Agency to inform the Consultative Forum of the follow-up to its recommendations and to ensure that action is taken with regard to recommendations of the Fundamental Rights Officer, which represents a major step to ensure that concerns regarding the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights are properly, timely and effectively followed up by the Agency and the Management Board. Finally, the Management Board closely oversaw the recruitment of the fundamental rights monitors, as provided for in Article 110(6) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.

Following the European Data Protection Supervisor's opinions on Management Board Decisions 68/2021 and 69/2021, the Management Board supervised and encouraged the swift revision by the Frontex Data Protection Officer of the framework for processing personal data in the Agency's activities to ensure compliance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 <sup>(33)</sup>. Therefore, the adoption of i) the implementing rules on the tasks, duties and powers of the Data Protection Officer; and the adoption ii) of the rules concerning Designated Controllers in Frontex, the rules on processing personal data and the rules on processing operational personal data by the Agency is currently expected by Q1 and Q2 of 2023 respectively. These decisions represent a key step in aligning the Agency's data processing framework with relevant Union regulations and a necessary update in light of the growth of the Agency in terms of mandate, personnel, and activities.

Throughout 2022, in order to ensure the follow up to the recommendations received by the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG) of the Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE) of the European Parliament, as well as those included in reports and audits from the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) and in decisions of the European Ombudsman (EO), the Frontex Management Board conducted a regular monitoring of their implementation by the Agency.

## 2.2. Major developments

The 2022 was a year of profound challenges for Frontex and the European Border and Coast Guard community. The escalation in the use of irregular migration as a hybrid threat, the war in Ukraine and the record number of refugees fleeing the country after Russia's attack on Ukraine have put the EU Integrated Border Management under pressure and underlined the need for European-level support to protect the EU's external borders while assuring the respect for fundamental rights and protection of vulnerable persons at the borders.

The establishment and gradual development of the standing corps, the substantial increase of the Agency's own equipment and enhanced analytical activities allowed Frontex to step up its operational support. Immediately after the start of the war in Ukraine, additional officers and technical equipment were deployed to Romania, Slovakia and Estonia. Already in March 2022, the operationalisation of the EU Status Agreement with Moldova led to the launch of a new joint operation JO Moldova 2022. The Agency also activated a crisis response mechanism and a dedicated crisis response team operating 24/7. Through this mechanism, Frontex provided regular updates to the Member States and the EU institutions on the situation at border crossing points and monitored refugee flows to support border control activities.

Exceptionally, the Agency also implemented 'humanitarian voluntary returns' to support Member States in returning non-Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war in Ukraine and willing to reach their home countries.

On the organisational level, the Agency underwent major changes in its executive management in 2022. In the first quarter of the year, two new Deputy Executive Directors (one for Returns and Operations and the other for

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(33) Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 of 23 October 2018 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 295, 23.10.2018, p. 39).

Information Management and Processes) took up their responsibilities, joining the Deputy Executive Director for Standing Corps Management who was appointed and took up her duties a year earlier in mid-November 2021.

Following the outcome of the investigation of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) regarding potential misconduct and irregularities related to Frontex's possible involvement in illegal pushbacks, the former Executive Director resigned on 28 April 2022. Business continuity was ensured by the Deputy Executive Director for Standing Corps Management as she was immediately assigned by the Frontex Management Board to deputise, and to act as the Executive Director ad interim as of 1 July. Directly after that the selection process for the new executive director was commenced and the new Executive Director was appointed by the Management Board in December 2022.

During the transition period, preventive and corrective measures were put in place in the Agency to improve the management culture, enhance oversight and accountability, and regain stakeholders' trust. The decision-making processes have been decentralised and several actions were taken to improve staff engagement and strengthen the anti-harassment framework. The internal oversight in the Agency was reinforced with the establishment of the Internal Audit Capability (IAC), the adoption of the Internal Audit Charter, and the reinforcement of the Inspection and Control Office.

## 2.3. Budgetary and financial management

### 2.3.1. Implementation of appropriations

Fund source	Budget (EUR)	Total commitments (EUR)	Ratio	Total Payments (EUR)	Ratio
	A	B	C = B/A	D	E=D/A
C1 Regular budget	693,122,859	688,963,776	99%	348,316,959	50%
C2 Non-automatic carry-over	806,293	806,293	100%	806,293	100%
C4 Internal assigned revenue	950,123	631,633	66%	86,452	9%
C5 Internal assigned revenue carry-over	654,024	570,247	87%	401,226	61%
C8 Automatic carry-over	240,415,980	201,128,660	84%	201,054,127	84%
Sub-total:	935,949,279	892,100,609	95%	550,665,057	59%
R0 Earmarked expenditure	20,118,447	11,844,134	59%	8,274,875	41%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>956,067,726</b>	<b>903,944,743</b>		<b>558,939,932</b>	

Table 13. Summary overview of 2021 implementation per fund source.

The initially adopted budget of EUR 754.3 million was amended twice during the year, resulting in the final budget of EUR 693.1 million. In 2022, 99% of the final C1 appropriations were committed and 50.5% of those committed were paid. The financially committed but not yet paid appropriations of EUR 340.6 million from the 2022 budget were carried forward to the budget of 2023 (49.5%) as C8. These commitments will be paid during 2023 upon the final delivery of the goods or services and the completion of operational activities.

A significant amount of the funds carried forward to 2023 i.e., EUR 314.4 million (92%) are related to title 3 of the budget, 'Operational Expenditure' with EUR 128.7 million for the deployment and training of standing corps and financial support to the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries (MS/SAC), EUR 101.3 million for the Acquisition and Leasing of Technical Equipment, EUR 23.3 million for Digitalisation, EUR 21 million for Return Operations, EUR 15.8 million for Strengthening Capabilities, EUR 15 million Horizontal Operational Support, EUR 8.2 million for Situational Awareness Monitoring, EUR 618,000 for Fundamental Rights Activities and EUR 527,000 for ETIAS.

EUR 21.9 million (6%) of the funds that were carried forward concern title 2 'administrative expenditure' and EUR 4.8 million (1%) of the funds concern title 1 'staff expenditure'.

The funds automatically carried over from 2021 to 2022 amounted to EUR 240.4 million. At the end of December 2022, the payment level of the carried over from 2021 funds reached 84%, with the remaining amount of EUR 39.3 million not being paid which had to be released. A total of 85% of the released of C8 funds came from title 3: EUR 13.4 million from acquisition and leasing of technical equipment, EUR 9.2 million from deployment of standing corps, training and financial support to MS/SAC, EUR 5.8 million from return activities, EUR 2.7 million from digitalisation, EUR 1.9 million from horizontal support, EUR 218,000 from strengthening capabilities, EUR 122,000 from situational awareness and monitoring and EUR 24K from fundamental rights activities.

Internal assigned revenue concerns the amounts reimbursed from the funds used from Frontex regular budget (C1) – voted by the budgetary authority. Internal assigned revenue amounted to EUR 950,000 (C4), 66% was committed and the rest was carried over as C5 funds. Recovery orders which were carried over from 2021 (C5) amounted to EUR 654,000, 87% was committed and 13% was cancelled.

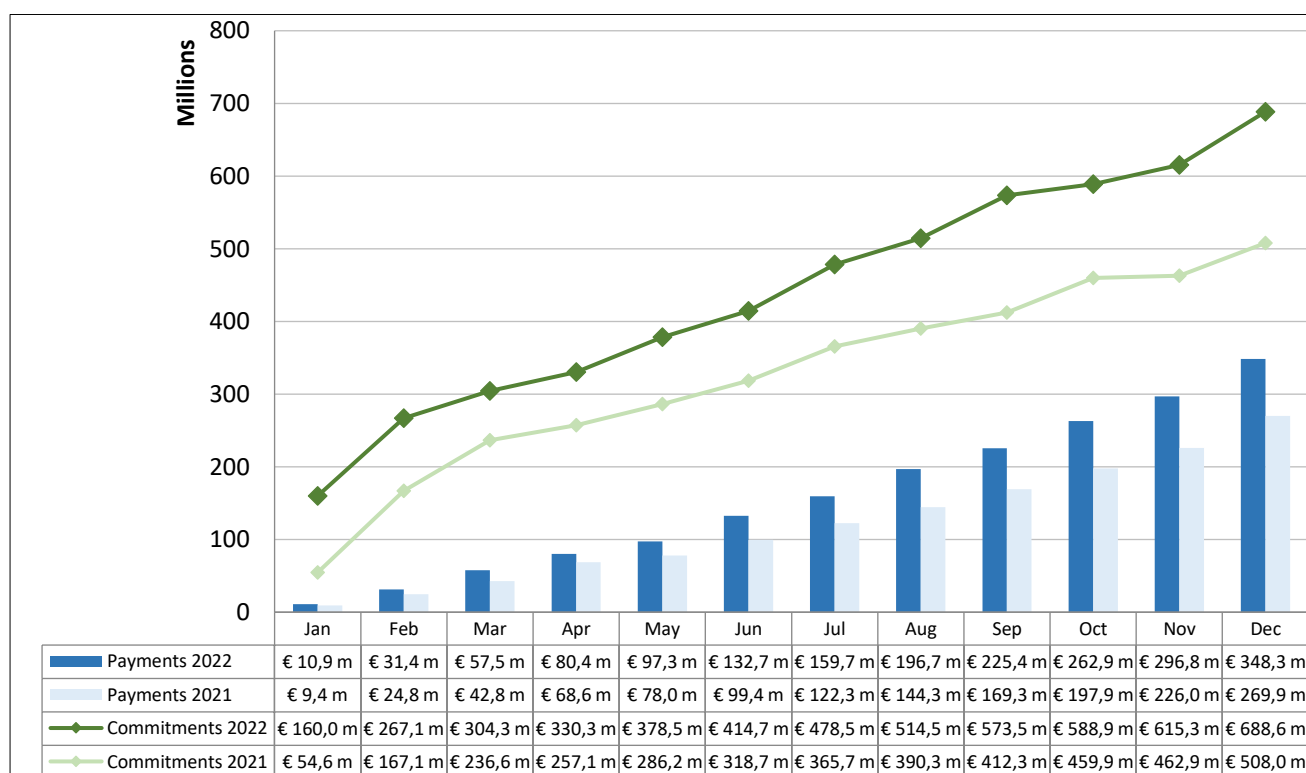
Fund source	Budget (EUR)	Total commitments (EUR)		Total Payments (EUR)	
	A	B	C = B/A	D	E=D/A
A - 1 Staff	152,836,895	151,897,456	99%	147,094,036	96%
A - 2 Other administrative expenditure	45,933,027	43,999,637	96%	22,034,345	48%
A - 3 Operational activities	494,352,937	493,066,683	100%	179,188,578	36%
	<b>693,122,859</b>	<b>688,963,776</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>348,316,959</b>	<b>50%</b>

Table 14. Regular budget (C1) implementation per budgetary title.

	2022	2021
Commitments C1	99%	95%
Payments C1	50.5%	50%
Funds carried forward to the following year	49.5%	47%
Funds cancelled	1%	5%

Table 15. Performance comparison of the budgetary year 2021 versus 2020.

The overall percentage level of commitments in 2022 reached 99% which is higher than in 2021 by 4% and as for the payments being at 50.5%, this was at the same level as in 2021. The percentage of funds carried forward from 2022 to 2023 is 49.5%, and 1% of the budget appropriations had to be cancelled.



Graph 1. Comparison of C1 funds (commitments and payments) in 2022 and 2021 in EUR million.

### 2.3.2. Information on transfers and budget amendments

The initial budget of the Agency for 2022 was of EUR 754,375,142. Two budget amendments were made during the year, and final budget of the Agency for the year 2022 was EUR 693,122,859.

1. On 14 September 2022 the Management Board took the decision (No. 50/2022) to adopt amendment N1 to the Single Programming Document 2022-2024 (in particular the annual budget 2022 and the annual work programme 2022). This first amendment released part of the Agency's appropriation to the EU general budget in the context of the Global Transfer Exercise. The process was done with the agreement of the European Commission. The release to the EU general budget was of EUR 41,718,283. The transfer consisted of appropriations from all Titles. The release of funds required a proportionate decrease in the financial contribution from the Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) to the Agency's budget 2022 of EUR 2,928,000.
2. On 8 December 2022 the Management Board took the decision (No. 65/2022) to adopt amendment N2 to the Single Programming Document 2022-2024 (in particular the annual budget 2022 and the annual work programme 2022). This was the second budget 2022 amendment, and it released part of the Agency's appropriation to the EU general budget. The release, in agreement with the European Commission, was of EUR 15,500,000. The amendment required a proportionate decrease in the financial contribution from the Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) to the Agency's budget 2022 of EUR 1,106,000.

Eleven budget transfers were adopted by the Executive Director in 2022:

- 1) On 5 May 2022 in order to ensure the financing:
  - basic and specialised training for standing corps categories 1, 2 and 3. Due to operational needs additional training such as courses for advanced level document officer and weapons familiarization needed to be organized, EUR 985,000 was added to training of standing corps,
  - additional training for return specialists was requested by the Member States, EUR 153,000 was added to training for MS,
  - operational missions, due to the easing of pandemic-related restrictions. EUR 100,000 was added to operational missions,
  - consultancy services related to situation and monitoring activities and operational response activities, EUR 925,000 was added to consultancy services,
  - third countries and increased deployments of Member States human resources and light technical equipment in view of the dynamic situation at the borders and Ukraine crisis, EUR 4.2 million has been added for deployments of Member States human resources and light technical equipment.
- 2) On 25 May 2022, in order to ensure the financing annual travel expenses allowance for the staff and their family members, EUR 800,000 was transferred within Title 1.
- 3) On 2 August 2022, to ensure the financing of the:
  - re-deployments of standing corps category 1, 2 and 3. EUR 33.4 million was added to the budget lines for deployments of the standing corps,
  - and for operational missions. The forecast for the budgetary needs was higher than initially estimated, due to easing of pandemic related restrictions. EUR 39,000 was added to the operational missions.
- 4) On 30 August 2022, to ensure the financing of the experiential learning phase training for the group of 172 standing corps category 1 EUR 1.4 million was added to the operational missions.
- 5) On 3 November 2022, to ensure the financing of the:
  - re-deployments of standing corps category 3, including possible ad-hoc deployments for return operations, EUR 3 million was added to the budget lines for deployments of the standing corps,
  - deployments of heavy technical equipment – due to the part of the deployments being more expensive than estimated and additional deployments being requested i.e. JO Terra, EUR 3 million was added,
  - increased number of flights and higher prices of charters service, EUR 3 million was moved to the budget lines for return activities,
  - running costs of focal points, coordination points and operational deployments of Host Member States human resources and light technical equipment. Due to additional needs than anticipated, EUR 1.38 million was moved to the budget line for miscellaneous operational activities.
- 6) On 10 November 2022, to ensure the financing of:
  - a. unanticipated additional needs for participant costs for ECRET meetings, EUR 20,000 was added,
  - b. organisation of the International Conference: 'Building Resilient Capabilities via Education and Training. 20 Years of Common Core Curricula for Border & Coast Guard Training in the EU' organised by Capability Programming Unit scheduled for 13-14 December 2022 in Portugal, EUR 140,000 was added,

- c. logistics of events to be contracted in 2022 by logistics, other meetings and planned activities requiring external venues due to lack of meeting rooms at Frontex headquarters, EUR 74,000,
  - d. organisation of the International Border Police Conference led by the International Cooperation Unit and the Evaluation of Frontex Liaison Officers Network to be conducted between January – October 2023 within inter-institutional FWC, EUR 217,000.
- 7) On 28 November 2022, to ensure the financing of additional than initially anticipated needs was as follows:
- a. For acquisition and leasing of technical equipment and services, EUR 20.6 million was added for:
    - i. Frontex Surveillance Aircraft Systems for Border and Coast Guard Functions Lot 3 SC 8 to guarantee the sufficient number of assets during the period of the year (March–October 2022) when an increase on illegal activities in the Central Mediterranean was occurring,
    - ii. Frontex Surveillance Aircraft Systems for Border and Coast Guard Functions Lot 3 SC 9: for longer deployment of the aircraft and to guarantee supporting the decision making of Frontex and the potential Host Member States in the Central Mediterranean,
    - iii. New order of Mobile Surveillance Systems vehicles (MS) Lot 1 and Lot 3,
    - iv. interpretation and cultural mediator services in return operations.
  - b. Information Fusion Centre: EUR 5.1 million.
    - i. Additional needs to cover the Specific Agreements under the SLA with the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen),
  - c. Border management research and technology innovation: EUR 1.3 million was added to cover the cost of additional research and innovation activities to be committed in 2022 including:
    - i. Research Service on Technology Horizon Scanning Services supporting the development of operational research capability for MS,
    - ii. the elaboration and test applications of methodology for the evaluation of innovation pilot projects.
    - iii. cost of the contracts for the VTOL RPAS pilot project.
  - d. Consultancies/studies/Data sources: EUR 180,000 for the advanced payment of Frontex-INTERPOL Maintenance Agreement.
- 8) On 7 December 2022, to ensure the financing of additional than initially anticipated needs as follows:
- a. For deployments of MS/SAC heavy technical equipment, EUR 2.4 million was added,
  - b. For technical and operational assistance to third countries, EUR 12 million was added to finance the grant ‘Technical assistance to the state border guard service of Ukraine to enhance border security, particularly at the country’s western borders’.
- 9) On 5 December 2022, to ensure the financing of additional than initially anticipated needs as follows:
- a. For category 3 – short-term deployments EUR 1.8 million was added, and
  - b. For category 3 – subsidy and training compensation (Art. 61) EUR 1.1 million was added.
- The additional budget was required to secure the amendments of the human resources and light technical equipment grants with the Member States. Analogically, the additional budget was required for amendments of the grants for the financial support to the MS under the Article 61.
- 10) On 15 December 2022, to ensure the financing of additional than initially anticipated needs:
- a. For acquisition and leasing of technical equipment and services, EUR 4 million was added for financing payments related to Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Specific Order 3 (location Tympaki),
  - b. For operational automation and information processing, EUR 3.7 million was added. The additional budget was required for financing of the procurement of:
    - i. SINA (secure inter-network architecture) laptops,
    - ii. EUROSUR-Jora integration with Gateway,
    - iii. ICT equipment, spare parts, accessories,
    - iv. increase of commitments related to the ongoing contracts which will continue in 2023.
- 11) On 20 December 2022, to ensure the financing of additional than initially anticipated needs for the operational automation and information processing, EUR 3.1 million was added. Additional budget was required for financing of the:
- a. purchase of computer storage for Disaster Recovery Site (HPE Primera A 670);
  - b. the contract SC22 under the FWC OP/300 for software development services for the development of the identification missions module of IRMA 2.0.

#	Description	Transaction number	Date	Title 1 - staff expenditure (EUR)	Title 2 - other administrative expenditure (EUR)	Title 3 - operational expenditure (EUR)
1	Transfer Decision N1	FRO.28832	02.05.2022	-3,203,308	149,075	3,054,233
2	Transfer Decision N2	FRO.28874	25.05.2022	0	0	0
3	Transfer Decision N3	FRO.28908	02.08.2022	-1,050,670	-1,395,957	2,446,627
4	Transfer Decision N4	FRO.28962	30.08.2022	0	0	0
5	Transfer Decision N5	FRO.29040	03.11.2022	0	0	0
6	Transfer Decision N6	FRO.29058	10.11.2022	0	1,263,000	-1,263,000
7	Transfer Decision N7	FRO.29089	28.11.2022	0	0	0
8	Transfer Decision N8	FRO.29104	07.12.2022	-17,939	-4,455,043	4,472,982
9	Transfer Decision N9	FRO.29123	05.12.2022	0	0	0
10	Transfer Decision N10	FRO.29190	15.12.2022	-501,128	-73,744	574,871
11	Transfer Decision N11	FRO.29234	20.12.2022	-150,556	-32,760	183,316

Table 16. Budget transfers in 2022.

### 2.3.3. Implementation of appropriations from 2020 carried forward to 2021

The amount carried forward from 2021 to 2022 (C8 funds) amounted to EUR 240.4 million out of which 84% was paid. The remaining 16% (EUR 39.3 million) was cancelled.

Title		Budget	Commitments		Payments		Cancelled
		A	B	D = B/A	C	E = C/A	
A - 1	Staff	4,008,316	2,946,425	74%	2,946,425	74%	1,061,891
A - 2	Other administrative expenditure	16,734,391	12,026,634	72%	12,026,634	72%	4,707,757
A - 3	Operational activities	219,673,272	186,155,601	85%	186,081,069	85%	33,592,204
		<b>240,415,979</b>	<b>201,128,660</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>201,054,128</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>39,361,852</b>

Table 17. Implementation of appropriations carried from 2021 to 2022.

### 2.3.4. Procurement procedures

#### Milestones achieved in 2022:

- Launch of procedures and/or conclusion of several contracts related to the implementation of the EBCG Regulation either by using own procurement instruments of the Agency or by participating in inter-institutional tenders (e.g., aerial surveillance services, patrol vehicles, fuel cards and associated services, psychological services, mobile solutions and associated services, interpretation/cultural mediation services, training).
- Timely procurement support to tackle the increased and/or urgent needs of the Agency caused by the war in Ukraine and the subsequent highly volatile situation at the EU borders (i.e., urgent travel services for the deployment of standing corps to the EU-Ukrainian border; provision of mobile offices to three border crossing points in Romania; purchasing of bullet proof vests and ballistic helmets; establishing the capacity to deliver one-way only humanitarian voluntary return flights; short-term leasing of patrol cars).
- Strengthening of annual procurement planning and monitoring processes via formal exercises, consultation in the Management Board's Working Group of Budget and Accounts and submission of needs and cost and benefit analysis of projects entailing significant costs to the Agency, in line with the requirement set forth in Article 63(3) of the Regulation.
- Further digitalisation of all procurement processes within the Agency with the introduction and use of new dedicated electronic tools: in the fourth quarter of 2022 completion of the on-boarding process to the Public Procurement Management Tool (PPMT) forming part of the European Commission's new corporate e-procurement system and constituting the pre-award back-office application for planning and monitoring of procurement procedures.
- High number of inter-institutional and inter-agency procurement procedures in which Frontex participates, usually linked to ICT software equipment, management consultancy, HR-related services.
- Advice and support were timely provided to business units, as well as to the management, with regard to the interpretation of the applicable procurement framework and in reference to the conduct of

procurement procedures, identifying potential non-compliance events related to public procurement and assessing, as well as mitigating relevant risks. 2022 was the first year of Procurement Sector's involvement in the systematic contribution to better formulation of the records of exception and non-compliance records contributing to enhanced accuracy and transparency of the records.

- Contract management tasks were re-allocated to Legal and Procurement Unit and two Administrative Notices on the subject were prepared and adopted accordingly in 2022, i.e., Administrative Notice No R-AN-2022-8 on the Contract Management Framework of 08/08/2022 and Administrative Notice No R-AN-2022-9 on Professional Standards for Contract Managers of 08/08/2022.
- A new tool to record contract management disputes, i.e. Frontex' list of Liquidated Damages (LD) and Reduction in Price (RiP) cases, was established in February 2022. It contributes towards transparency of contract management issues and documents assisting role of Procurement Sector. Up to 36 cases were reported in the year 2022, out of which 33 of the cases (92%) were LD cases and 3 of them were RiP cases.

#### **Most important tenders conducted in 2022:**

In 2022, a significant number of tenders (in terms of complexity and/or budget) was finalised leading to the signature of a high number of the strategically important contracts listed below:

- Framework Contract (FWC) on Interpretation/Cultural Mediation services for operational activities (Lot 1) – contract value EUR 52 million;
- FWC for provision of interim staffing services to Frontex – contract value EUR 18 million;
- FWC for organisation of Events outside of Poland – contract value EUR 14 million;
- FWC for provision of psychological services for Frontex – contract value EUR 13 million;
- ETIAS Central Unit and Alternative Office Facility – contract value EUR 11.8 million;
- Lease of additional space for current Frontex headquarters – contract value of approximately EUR 8.31 million;
- FWC for provision of mobile solutions (office, storages and toilet containers) and associated services in Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Greece, Italy and France – contract value EUR 8 million;
- FWC for deliveries of ICT equipment, spare parts and accessories (Lot 1) – contract value EUR 8 million;
- FWC for provision of services related to EUROSUR business consultancy – contract value EUR 6 million;
- FWC for provision of fuel cards services and associated services for Frontex vehicles in European Union (excluding Malta and Cyprus), Montenegro, Serbia, Türkiye and Albania – contract value EUR 4.2 million;
- FWC for provision of insurance brokerage services – contract value approximately EUR 3.52 million;
- FWC for delivery and installation of furniture – contract value EUR 3.35 million;
- FWC for provision of services for geographical information system (GIS), geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) and (imagery intelligence) IMINT consultancy – contract value EUR 3 million;
- Contract to establish the capacity to deliver one-way only Humanitarian Voluntary Return/Repatriation (HVR) flights – contract value EUR 3 million.

Moreover, it should be noted that, during 2022, significant progress was made with critical procurement procedures of the Agency. Indicatively:

- Frontex Permanent Premises – estimated value EUR 140 million;
- Provision of travel agency services to Frontex consisting of provision of corporate travel services (Lot 1) and travel and related arrangements in support of the deployment of Frontex Standing Corps (Lot 2) – estimated value EUR 526 million;
- Provision of travel services related to returns by scheduled flights supported by Frontex – estimated value EUR 120 million;
- Restricted Communication Network consisting of infrastructure evolution and maintenance (Lot 1) and software development and maintenance (Lot 2) – estimated value EUR 32 million.

#### **Knowledge-sharing activities in 2022:**

A well-defined procurement training plan was implemented during 2022:

- Training sessions on specialised topics were delivered at both Agency-wide level and at entity level, upon request, i.e., training on security aspects of public procurement delivered to security staff, training on procurement basics delivered to GSC coordination staff;
- Specific procurement training sessions for newcomers were additionally delivered on regular basis;
- New articles and tutorials were published on Frontex intranet (MyFX);

- The procurement request template, constituting a pre-requisite for submission of any request to Procurement Sector, was duly updated in 2022 so as to reflect the importance of timely consultation of tender documentation with relevant internal actors (i.a., Data Protection Officer, Fundamental Rights Office, Security Sector, etc.);
- The procurement manual, developed to ensure a better understanding of the procurement procedures, rules and processes, as well as the existing articles on Frontex intranet, are living materials and, therefore, were regularly updated in 2022 so that colleagues gain a better insight into the procurement processes.

#### Inter-institutional and international cooperation and progress in implementation of EU policies in Procurement field in 2022:

- Visibility of Frontex procurement at inter-institutional fora was enhanced and the perception of Frontex as a reliable partner was strengthened through delivery of presentations, advice and active involvement in Network of Agencies' Procurement Officers (NAPO) and Inter-Agency Legal Network (IALN) working groups, and through conduct/participation in inter-institutional tenders.
- Special mention should be made to the study visit of the NAPO Contract Management Working Group to Frontex, as organised by Frontex Procurement Sector being in the lead of this Group, in September 2022.
- Contribution of Procurement Sector to the Agency's environmental strategy, as well as to its sustainable goals through green public procurement: inclusion of green, sustainable criteria and solutions in Frontex tenders has been persistently fostered via delivery of relevant presentations, provision of advice and use of the different services offered by the green public procurement helpdesk. In that respect, Frontex Procurement Sector was invited to share good practices and lessons learned with the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies (JHAA) in workshops held both in 2021 and 2022
- No procurement-related complaints were filed with the Court of Justice of EU in 2022. All issues with unsuccessful tenderers were solved without resorting to litigation via detailed letters of response while protecting the interests of the Agency.

#### Procedural statistics in 2022:

- The total value of procurement procedures finalised in 2022 amounted to EUR 348.5 million while the open tenders launched in 2022 amounted to EUR 504 million;
- Out of all 53 open tenders, which were ongoing in 2022, 20 have led to contacts' conclusion. This constitutes an increase in comparison to 2021 where 18 procedures were finalised. Their total value sums up to nearly EUR 140.5 million. There are still 25 ongoing procedures of estimated value of EUR 486.51 million to be finalised in 2023.
- 33 low and medium value procedures (negotiated with 3 and 5 candidates) of total value of 3.4 million EUR were handled in 2022. Out of the 33 procedures, 20 resulted in signed contracts in 2022 (of total value EUR 2.03 million), while 4 (of total value EUR 524 thousand) are still ongoing and shall be finalised in 2023;
- 228 very low-value procedures (negotiated with one candidate) of approximate total value EUR 1.62 million were handled by Procurement Sector in 2022;
- 1,116 procedures under existing framework contracts of total value EUR 188.9 million were handled in 2022. Out of the 1,116 procedures, 983 resulted in signed specific contracts or order forms in 2022 (of the total value EUR 153.4 million), while 32 of them (of total estimated value EUR 16.6 million) are still ongoing and shall be finalised within 2023.

Procurement procedures 2020-2021 overview (excluding amendments)	2021		2022		
	Number (excluding amendments)	Value in EUR*	Number (excluding amendments)	Value in EUR*	Change in no. of procedures in % vs. 2021
Open tenders	18	218,434,810.00	20	140,472,192.00	+11,11%
Orders and contracts issued under existing framework contracts	900	172,231,144.00	983	188,981,433.00	+9,22%
Negotiated procedures with min 3 and 5 candidates	23	2,011,268.08	20	2,033,458.62	-13,04%
Exceptional negotiated procedures	11	1,861,081.08	19	15,347,586.70	+72,8%
Negotiated procedures with min 1 candidate (< 15 000)	203	2,538,070.61	228	1,616,576.47	+12,32%

Table 18. Overview of procurement processes in 2022 in comparison to 2021. \*Estimated value of procedures as registered in procurement logs.

Overview of all procurement procedures 2022-2021	2021	2022
Value of all registered procedures (in million EUR)*	397.1	348.5
Number of all procurement procedures (including amendments)	1,619	1,651
Number of procedures processed per Procurement officer	135	150
Staffing	12	11

Table 19. Overview of all procurement procedures 2021–2022.

Accumulated values of different types of procedures 2022-2021	2021	Var. %	2022
Open and restricted tenders (above 140 000)	218,434,810	-35,7%	140,472,192
Negotiated procedures with min 1 candidate (below 15 000)	2,538,071	-36,3%	1,616,577
Negotiated procedures with min 3 and 5 candidates (15 000 - 140 000)	2,011,268	+1,1%	2,033,459
Negotiated procedure without publication of the contract notice (p.11 of Annex I of Financial Regulation)	1,861,081	+724,7%	15,347,586
Orders and contracts issued under existing framework contracts	172,231,144	+9,7%	188,981,433
TOTAL	EUR 397,076,374		EUR 348,451,248

Table 20. Accumulated values of different types of procedures 2021– 2022.

### Negotiated procedures - point 11 - Annex I to Financial Regulation

List of contracts awarded by Frontex in 2022 on the basis of point 11 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation - exceptional negotiated procedures Value in Euro					
Contract number	Subject	Supplies /services	Contractor	Signature date	Value in Euro
221 / 2022	Provision of urgent travel services for the deployments of SCs to the EU-Ukrainian border	services	Adria Congrex SRL Via Sassonia, 30 - 47922 Rimini, Italy	01/03/2022	350,000
243 / 2022	UKR crisis – Exceptional negotiated procedure for the provision of 3 mobile offices with associated services to rent for 6 months to be deployed in Romania (BCP Siret – BCP Sighetu Marmatiei – BCP Sculeni)	services	EKOTOI-Service LTD Tsar Peter Str. 17 fl. 2,8000 Burgas, Bulgaria	11/03/2022	63,270
282 / 2022	Satellite phones for Frontex staff deployed in third countries	supplies	TS2 Space Ul. Al. Jerozolimskie, 65/79 lok. 15.03 00-697 Warsaw, Poland	11/03/2022	343,300
284 / 2022	Purchase of bullet-proof vests and ballistic helmets	supplies	UAB Defensus Daugeliskio 32A, 09300 Vilnius, Lithuania	21/03/2022	216,900
368 / 2022	Establish the capacity to deliver one-way only humanitarian voluntary return/repatriation (HVR) flights	services	AS Aircontact Karenslyst Alle 49, 0279 Oslo, Norway	08/04/2022	3,000,000
483 / 2022	Provision of urgent car rentals for the deployments of SCs	services	INTER BEST 97 POLSKA Ul. Komitetu Obrony Robotników 48 02-146 Warsaw, Poland	28/04/2022	1,425,000
1252 / 2021	FWC – Rented mobile office-toilet container associated services in Spain – Canary Islands Ceuta Melilla	services	Algeco Construcciones Modulares SLU Camino De Las Bodegas, 4, CP 28140, Fuente El Saz De Jarama, Madrid	02/05/2022	1,000,000
527 / 2022	Provision of legal services supporting the defence in EU General Court case T– 205/22	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue De Cortenbergh 66/11, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium	23/05/2022	18,020
436 / 2022	Short-term leasing of patrol cars	services	CAR-MASTER 2 Sp. z o.o. Sp. K. Jasnogórska 97, 31-358 Cracow, Poland	09/06/2022	241,327
624 / 2022	Provision of legal services supporting the defence in EU General Court case T-136/22	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue De Cortenbergh 66/11, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium	09/06/2022	22,580
770 / 2022	Military and Security Assessments, Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, and Data analytics (Country Risk) – exceptional NP1 procedure	services	Janes Group UK Limited Sentinel House, 163 Brighton Road, Coulson, Surrey, CR5 2YH, United Kingdom	18/07/2022	139,999
51 / 2022	Lease of additional space for current Frontex headquarters	services	Ledenby Investments sp. z o.o. Towarowa 28, 00-839 Warsaw, Poland	29/07/2022	8,309,889
		services	AST Aeroservizi S.p.A.	16/09/2022	

999 / 2022	Event abroad – Negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice for ground handling services and related costs provided by Handling Company outside of the operational hours of Lampedusa Airport, Italy		C/da Cala Francese, Aeroporto Lampedusa, 9203 Lampedusa (AG), Italy		46,200
1083 / 2022	Provision of legal services for the preparation of the Agency's observations to the request for interim measures submitted in EU General Court case T-584/22 R	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue De Cortenbergh 66/11, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium	27/09/2022	5,500
1128 / 2022	Direct contract for the provision of legal services (litigation) supporting the defence in EU General Court case T-600/22	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue De Cortenbergh 66/11, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium	12/10/2022	21,380
1161 / 2022	Subscription to Economist Intelligence - global country risk briefing and country reports for 28 selected countries of origin and transit – exceptional NP1 procedure	services	The Economist Intelligence Unit 20 Cabot Sq., London, E14 4QW United Kingdom	24/10/2022	49,170
1155 / 2022	Database of passenger flow at air borders	services	OAG Aviation Worldwide Limited 1 Capability Green LU1 3LU Luton, United Kingdom	11/11/2022	65,350
1565 / 2022	Provision of legal services for the preparation of the Agency's observations to the request for interim measures submitted in EU General Court case T-595/22 R	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue De Cortenbergh 66/11, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgium	18/12/2022	4,540
1353 / 2022	Internet connection for Greece	services	Hellenic Telecommunications Organization S.A. - OTE S.A. 99 Kifissias Av 15124 Maroussi Athens, Greece	23/12/2022	25,162

Table 21. Summary of negotiated procurement processes in 2022.

### 2.3.5. Late payments – interest paid to suppliers

In 2022, the underlying amount in the transactions processed was higher when compared to previous year increasing to 411.4 million EUR from 317.99 million EUR in 2021. However, when compared to the previous year 2021, the amount of interest paid in 2022 was significantly higher i.e., EUR 107,336 in 2022 versus EUR 2,493 in 2021. The high interest paid was a direct result of the noteworthy 97% increase in number of transactions year-on-year without a proportional increase in staff capacity and consequentially the higher percentage of late payments in 2022 at 20%.

Year	Number of transactions	Amount of transactions in million EUR	Amount of late payments in million EUR	Percentage of late payments (in % of the amount paid late)
2021	14,967	317.99	39.73	12%
2022	29,505	411.40	84.08	20%

Table 22. Late payments in 2022.

Given the increasing scope and value of financial transactions it is inevitable for the indicator not to increase. Yet, the Agency is taking all necessary measures to redress this situation.

Annual interest paid	2020	2021	2022
	€ 4,032	€ 2,493	€ 107,336

Table 23. Annual interest paid 2022-2022.

The amount of interest paid in 2022 was higher than in previous years. However, it should be noted that the overall budget and the number of transactions made in 2022 was significantly higher than in previous years. Given the increasing scope and value of financial transactions it is inevitable for the indicator not to increase. Yet, the Agency takes all necessary precautions to avoid the indicator for further increase.

### 2.3.6. Ex-ante controls

All actors involved in the financial workflow are subject to the ED Decisions on financial management of the agency namely:

1. ED Decision No. R-ED-2020-192, amended by the ED Decision No. R-ED-2022-166 on delegating and sub-delegating the powers of budget implementation to the staff of the Agency.
2. ED Decision No. R-ED-2020-188 on the on the financial circuit in Frontex 2021.

Following the introduction of the paperless workflow for financial transactions in 2020, the Agency implemented a paperless financial initiator checklist, an operational actor's 'certified correct' form, and a written guidance for financial verification of payments and commitments for the financial verifiers. The checklists for all three actors provide additional assurance to the control mechanism in terms of an increased assurance to the Authorizing Officer in the financial workflow. All paperless checklists related for all the financial actors of the Agency are published on the portal of financial services.

A complimentary platform was created through the ex-ante policy adopted in 2020. ED Decision No. R-ED-2020-56 Art. 106(4)-(4) provides that ex-ante and ex-post controls should be regarded as complimentary in the process of mitigating risks related to the various categories of expenditure and revenue. In practical terms, a coordinated and consistent method for their management shall contribute towards compliance.

### 2.3.7. Ex-post controls

#### **Ex-post controls implemented by the Inspection and Control Office in 2022.**

In line with the ex-post controls plan 2021/2022, ex-post controls were performed in five Member States: Germany, Netherlands, Greece, Czechia, Spain and their respective institutions. Further to those and in line with the ex-post controls plan 2022/2023 ex-post controls were performed in three Member States: Luxembourg, Hungary and Denmark and their respective institutions. **Controls covered EUR 18.2 M which constitutes 9.5% of the average total payments for grant agreements 2021-2022.**

In terms of the ex-post controls plan 2022/2023, until the moment of reporting for the CAAR 2022 (February 2023), the controls of the following Member States were implemented as reported:

- draft, revised and final reports related to Denmark (human resources deployment) and Hungary were issued and closed in January and February 2023.
- draft, revised and final reports related to Denmark (heavy technical equipment) are planned to be issued and closed within Q2 of 2023.

Other reports prepared by Inspection and Control Office in 2022:

- Report related to 'Ex-post performance control of the appraisal process in Frontex' – issued and closed in 2022.
- Report related to 'Control of the reservation process, invoicing and cooperation with e-Travel Agency' – Draft and Revised reports issued in 2022. Until the moment of reporting for the CAAR 2022 (February 2023), ICO has not further progressed on this report in view of the expected release of OLAF report on the case.
- Report related to ABAC Security check – periodic validation of user access rights granted in ABAC.

### 2.3.8. Register of exceptions

Exceptions and non-compliance events are deviations which are not initially foreseen by the processes and procedures and therefore they require an individual follow-up, and they are categorised as follows:

- exceptions: control-overrides or deviations that are approved before the action is taken (ex-ante);
- non-compliances: control-overrides or deviations detected after they occurred (ex-post).

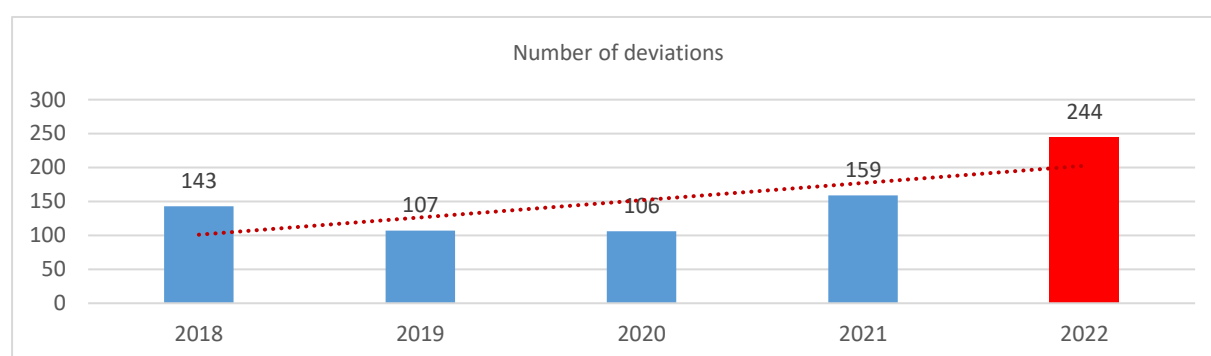
Exceptions and non-compliances are being recorded following the Procedure for the Management of Exceptions and Non-compliance Events adopted by ED decision No R-ED-2022-67 (Procedure), implementing the requirement to ensure that all instances of overriding controls and deviations from established processes and procedures are documented, justified and approved or acknowledged by the accountable manager.

As set out in Point 5.2. of the procedure, ‘On a quarterly basis, ICO evaluates and analyses the exceptions and non-compliance events recorded in the Register, including the following aspects:

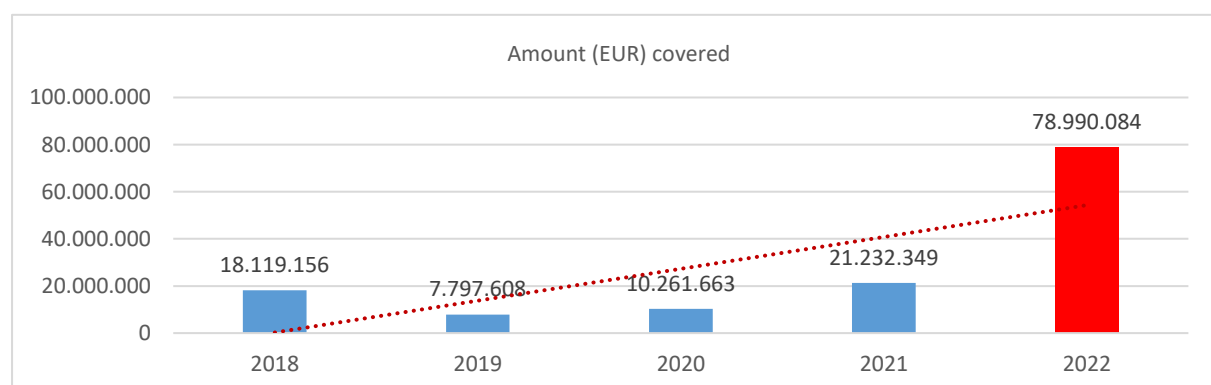
- statistics on the numbers registered, amounts, categories and units.
- conclusions on established control indicators and evolution of trends.
- recommendations for improvement actions, made based on the measures indicated for the exceptions and non-compliance events by business units and ICO assessment.’

### Overview of 2022 and presentation of trends

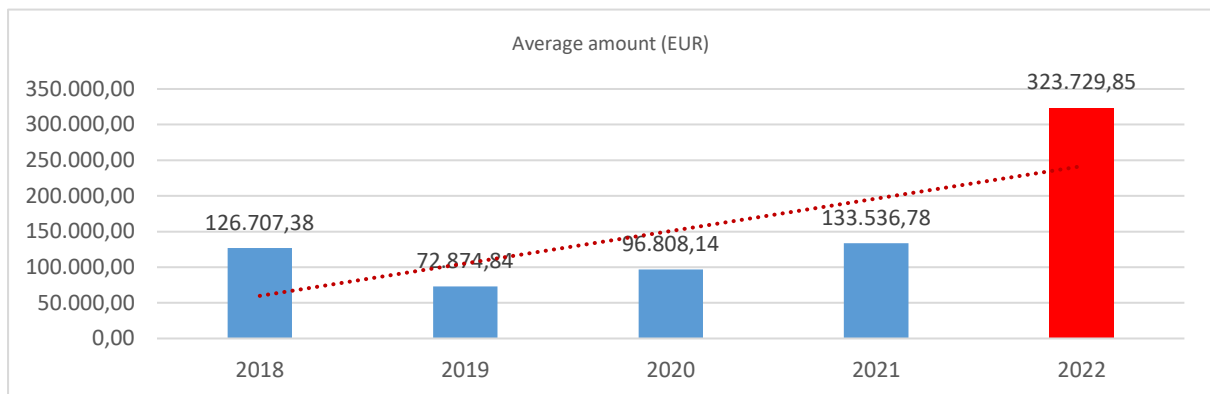
During 2022 in total 244 deviations were registered, which is the highest number per year since 2018 (graph 2). The total amount covered by the deviations is EUR 78,990,084. This amount is even three times higher than the amount for 2021 (graph 3). However, the value of the implemented budget 2022 (C1: funds 2022) grew only by 36% as compared to 2021 indicating the relevance of improvement in the area. Furthermore, the average amount per deviation saw an almost trifold increase compared to 2021 (graph 4).



Graph 2. The number of deviations registered in 2021 in comparison with period 2018 -2022.



Graph 3. The total amount (EUR) covered by deviations registered in 2021 in comparison with period 2018 -2022.



Graph 4. The average amount (EUR) covered by deviations registered in 2021 in comparison with period 2018–2022.

**Performance indicator** – Regarding the indicator used to measure performance a change was applied in 2022. In the previous years, the indicator was calculated as a ratio of total amount (in terms of materiality) of all deviations (exceptions and non-compliances) vs. the total amount of payments for the period. Since 2022 the performance indicator established for the procedure of registering of exceptions and non-compliance events has been calculated as the ratio of the total amount of exceptions registered for a certain period compared with the total amount of payments made for the same period, bearing in mind the fact the majority non-compliances registered triggered an additional exception for the same amount, thus distorting the real magnitude involved.

On this basis, in 2022 the total amount of payments sums up to EUR 558,962,416 and the amount of exceptional payments sum up to EUR 21,324,274. This gives a ratio 3.81%. The objective is to keep the ratio below 2%, and we have to conclude that for the 2022 this objective was not achieved.

Tendencies encountered during 2022, as regards the number of deviations, total amount, and the average amount of one deviation, showed all a significant increase in comparison to previous years. Special attention is to be given to deviations of high financial materiality (Table 24 below). In 2022, 10 deviations with an amount equal or higher than EUR 1 million were registered (3 exceptions and 7 non-compliance events). These deviations were related to grant management (4) and financial regulation (6).

In 2022, out of 169 events registered as exceptions, 74 were exceptions which were triggered by previous non-compliance events, and in 26 cases the non-compliance was on the beneficiary site (such as a delay to provide a request for payments).

Overview of high-amount (equal or more than 1 million EUR) deviations registered in 2022.

Id	Subject	Rule	Amount EUR
R-EX-2022-16	<p>The exception involves three grant agreements as they fall into the same description – submission of the request for the final payment after the deadline:</p> <p>GA 2021/212/FDU – Beneficiary: Guardia Civil, Spain. Deadline for submitting the request for final payment was 27/09/2021, the final claim was submitted on 09/02/2022. Amount of the final payment is 694,008.22 EUR.</p> <p>GA 2021/335/FOU – Beneficiary: Guardia Civil, Spain. Deadline for submitting the request for final payment was 22/11/2021, the final claim was submitted on 09/02/2022. Amount of the final payment is 181,287.48 EUR.</p> <p>GA 2021/229/FDU – Beneficiary: State Border Guard of Latvia. Deadline for submitting the request for final payment was 13/01/2022, the final claim was submitted on 25/01/2022. Amount of the final payment is 265,896.94 EUR.</p> <p>Spain and Latvia are big contributors to Frontex operations. The documents to be submitted to Frontex are very complex. Moreover, on the side of Guardia Civil, there is only one person dealing with payments, hence the delays.</p>	Grant management	1,141,192

R-NC-2022-7	AO signed the legal commitment of SC 2 of FWC/OP/888/2019/JL/CG with the date of 04 October 2021 while the budgetary commitment in ABAC was approved on 05 Oct 2021. It appears to be a clerical error on the legal commitment.	Financial regulation	12,342,000
R-NC-2022-26	The award decision letter for the new FWC for the provision of interim services, Frontex/2021/OP/1197/KM, for the value of 18,000,000, has been signed by an AO by Delegation – a Deputy Executive Director – whose maximum threshold was EUR 15,000,000.	Financial regulation	18,000,000
R-NC-2022-46	Following the signature of the R-ED-2022-125, which introduced limited thresholds for the Authorizing Officers in relation to payments, recovery orders and budgetary transfers, there have been delays in implementing the limits in ABAC by DIG as prescribed by Article 5(3) of R-ED-2020-192. The delays have resulted in AOs not being compliant with the limited thresholds assigned to their function. The resulting payment irregularities are non-compliant with internal rules (EDD 2022-125).	Financial regulation	10,719,980
R-NC-2022-37	Amendment No.6 to the lease agreement between Frontex and Ledenby Investments Wronia was signed by AO on 26/07/2022.  Three budgetary commitments (FRO.36300, FRO.34791 and FRO.34794) were circulated for approval together with Amendment No.6 but were not approved in ABAC due to a misunderstanding.	Financial regulation	2,966,263
R-EXC-2022-120	Initial GA 2021/79/FDU included 1% overheads of eligible direct costs related to deployed LOs (art.3(2)) however the amendment to the GA indicated 0%. Until 2020, Grant Agreements for TE Liaison Officers were issued with the use of REM sheet with 1% Overheads. In 2021, due to the limitation of Opera Evo, there was a need to merge them in the HR Total Estimated Budget and they were reported as the total Cost for TE Liaison Officers in the separate column under "Other Costs" with 1% Overheads included (Excel Estimated Budget, HR Tab). During the amendment of Grant Agreement, the 1% was omitted so approval is needed to reintroduce it.	Grant agreement	1,500,000
R-EXC-2022-152	Grant agreement (GA) 2022/60/DMD for German deployments in Frontex operational activities expired on 05 October 2022. An amendment covering deployments until 25 Jan 2023 and an increase of commitment by approximately EUR 2.8 million needs to be performed. Grant agreements for participating countries cover deployments for the entire operational year. Until now it is a common practice to issue grant agreements until August (covering deployments until that month) and proceed with an amendment to cover deployments until the end of the operational year. During the grant agreements amendment exercise it was discovered that the German deployments inserted in OPERA will exceed the foreseen overall budget for category 3 short deployments, hence it was decided to issue the grant amendment for German deployments until October only, with the intention to proceed with a second amendment after the September budget review. However, as this was a typical procedure and due to an increased workload, the deadline for the October amendment was overlooked, hence an exceptional approval for amendment and increase of commitment had to be requested.	Grant agreement	2,814,000
R-NC-2022-47	Grant agreement for financial support in relation to category 3 of the standing corps for Austria number 2022/233/DMD was signed on paper by Authorising Officer on 21.06.2022 and sent to the Member State. However, the commitment number FRO.36128 was not signed in ABAC on the same day.	Financial regulation	1,088,160
R-NC-2022-72	Frontex AO (DCBD) signed FWC - Frontex/OP/694/2020/JL/MS (Frontex Surveillance Aircrafts) Lot 3 SC 9 on 5.12.2022 (signature of the contract - legal commitment) before he would approve the financial commitment in ABAC (DCBD approved it on 13.12.2022).  As it was a reopening of competition PROC sent the signed contract to the awarded company on 5.12.2022. who signed and sent it back to Frontex on 6.12.2022.	Financial regulation	3,475,500
R-NC-2022-69	The amendment 2 to the GA 2021/44/FDU Italy was signed by a Member State with the delay on 1 day after the GA expired. GA duration 27/01/2021 - 26/01/2022, signature date: 27/01/2022. Frontex prepared necessary documentation for signature on time.	Grant agreement	1,604,302

Table 24. Deviations of high financial materiality registered in 2022.

## Conclusions

As regards the contract management function, due to the strengthening of controls in the contract administration process, in 2022, the contract management related deviations create only 12% of all deviations and in terms of materiality only 1% of total amount covered by deviations.

However, when looking at the results of 2022 we must state an increasing number of deviations related to the financial regulation, and here especially the high materiality of non-compliant events related to the signature of legal and financial commitments. The six non-compliant events with the highest financial materiality related to those circumstances (over EUR 1 million in Table 24 above) accounted for EUR 30,591.903 in materiality, which is 39% of the total amount of deviations registered in 2022.

Regarding grants management-related deviations, those are still one of the largest groups of deviations, however, some improvements are to be noticed in this area. In 2021 grants related deviations made for 40% in terms of numbers and 72% in amounts covered, while in 2022 those numbers are clearly lower – 30% in terms of numbers and 24% in terms of materiality.

There were 26 grant-related deviations (11% of total number), what were caused by non-compliances on the beneficiary side (e.g., outdated claims), accounting for EUR 6,420,623.92 in materiality (8% of total amount).

As noted previously, an increase of cases had been linked to the amendment of ‘Policy on Outdated Reimbursement Claims’ of June 2021. Since June 2021, outdated claims submitted by the Member States require issuing an exception. It is visible that the response time of MS to adapt to such changes of the legal/administrative framework is very high.

Grant agreements are a significant part of Frontex administrative and operational activities, and an important aspect of the Agency’s measure to implement its budget. Therefore, special attention must be given to improve the situation in the application of this tool.

We would like to stress the need for general awareness of the procedure for registration of exceptions and non-compliance events among the authorising officers, reminding also that exceptional reporting cannot be used to avoid or transfer responsibilities, and authorise breaches.

Regarding the implementation of the improvement actions identified for 2022, out of 8 actions identified, 4 have been implemented and 4 are continuous activities, to be implemented in 2023 (Table 25 below).

For the year 2023 we will continue with improvements in all main areas:

- Enhance controls in procurement, finance, HR, and contract management.
- To revise the policy on outdated claims.
- To continue increasing awareness of staff on the financial, procurement rules and procedures and well as awareness of managers on the internal controls.

Improvement action plan 2023:

No	Actions proposed	Responsible	Deadline
1	To enhance control activities: ex-ante check in procurement, finance, human resource, and contract management. Clear procedures establishing controls with clear roles and responsibilities for the control activities.	LPU FSU HRU ICO	Ongoing in 2023
2	To revise the policy on outdated claims (AN No. R-AN-2021-5), giving beneficiary MS more time to collect documents from high number of service providers.	CORD/FIN	Q2 2023
3	To increase awareness among operational colleagues and beneficiaries on the legal and financial aspects of the procedures applicable to grant management (preparing dedicated articles and guidelines; organising training for new colleagues at least once a year).	FIN/PROC	ongoing process in 2023
4	To increase general awareness on internal control, including the procedure for registration of exceptions and non-compliance events among the authorizing officers (to communicate new procedure; to prepare special guidelines; to share the important cases of deviations during the Executive Management Briefing).	ICO	ongoing process in 2023

5	To increase an awareness on the procedure for registration of exceptions and non-compliance events among the initiators.	ICO	ongoing process in 2023
6	To look for possible improvements in calculation of statistics for the procedure of registration of exceptions and non-compliance in general, and in particular improvements in calculation of the performance indicator.	ICO	Q1 2023

Table 25. Improvement action plan for 2023.

## 2.4. Delegations and sub-delegations

The system of delegations and deputising in Frontex respects the following principles:

1. The Executive Director as the Authorising Officer of the Agency is entitled to sign all transactions with unlimited thresholds on all budget lines.
2. The Deputy Executive Directors performing the role of the Authorizing Officers by delegation, are entitled to sign transactions for amounts up to EUR 15 million on all budget lines.

Delegations are granted by the Executive Director to the Directors of Divisions and the Heads of Entities outside of the Divisions. The delegation is in force when the AO declaration is countersigned by the Executive Director in ARES in line with Article 4 of the ED Decision 2020-192, amended by the ED Decision 2022-166.

The delegated Authorising Officers may propose to further sub-delegate to the Heads of Office/Units, Heads of Sectors and Team Leaders. If an Authorising Officer does not have a 'Team Leader' function in the job title, then such an Authorising Officer could serve exceptionally as the Authorising Officer by sub-delegation with the Team Leader threshold of EUR 200,000 upon the approval from the Director of Division responsible for the budget title heading in line with the provisions of FISRoP Title I, Section I, Paragraph 5 (b) (vii).

The sub-delegation is in force when the AO declaration is also countersigned by the Executive Director in ARES in line with Article 4 of the ED Decision 2020-192, amended by the ED Decision 2022-166.

3. Different financial thresholds on all transactions (commitments, payments, recovery orders and budgetary transfers) apply depending on the level of responsibility of the delegated or sub-delegated Authorising Officer (as a general rule: Director – EUR 10 million, Heads of Divisional Offices/Units – EUR 1 million, Heads of Sector – EUR 500,000 Team Leaders EUR 200,000).
4. Deputising: as a general rule, deputising is performed downwards; which means that the Heads of Units replace Directors and that Heads of Sectors replace Heads of Units; when Heads of Sectors are absent, they are replaced by Team Leaders.

## 2.5. Human resources management

### 2.5.1. Human resources developments

During 2022 a draft of updated HR strategy was initiated, and – in cooperation with the external contractor – the 'HR 2.0 and beyond' programme was launched, commensurate with the evolving organisation, its extended mandate and growth in workforce, as well as with stakeholders' expectations, aligning the strategic HR objectives with those of the organisation.

One of Frontex's most compelling HR priorities is the large-scale recruitment. In 2022, Frontex strengthened its position as the largest EU Agency in terms of the number of staff, recruiting 753 newcomers in 2022. Due to the internal turnover (152 staff members were appointed to a new position after having successfully participated in an external recruitment process) and the external turnover (92 staff members left the Agency) the net increase in staffing numbers was at 509 with 1,554 staff at the beginning of the year and 2,063 posts and positions filled at the end of the year (temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts). Upon the entry into force of the current mandate, in December 2019, the Agency staff grew from 749 to 2,063 by end of 2022.

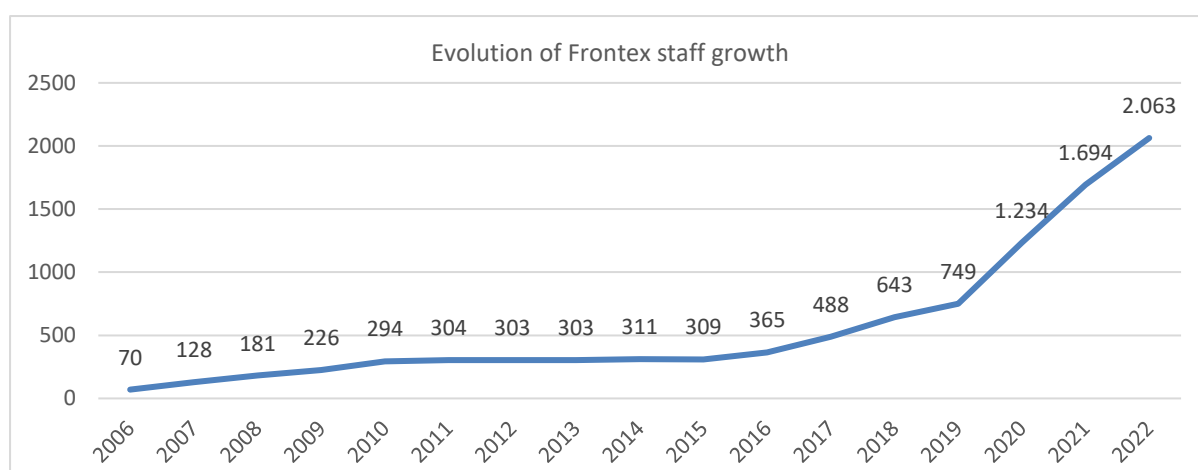
Such growth led to an additional and constant workload for HR services facing challenges both in terms of growth and diversification of staffing to serve i.e. the standing corps. In order to handle this change, HR statutory staff were supported by a significant number of interim staff. Further to this, HR also managed two additional external personnel programmes: the Blue Book traineeship programme which allowed 49 new trainees (and one unpaid

trainee) to get their first professional experience in the Agency and an interim workforce programme supporting Frontex entities with 102 average monthly FTEs of external employment agency workers.

In the area of digitalisation related to HR management, Frontex rolled out and finalised HR reporting module in SYSPER, facilitating statistical reporting to Frontex management and business entities. The rollout of the automated time registration solution and SYSPER flexi-time module was finalised in Q1 2022 with availability to all Frontex staff members. Furthermore, HR analysed the suitability of other SYSPER modules, such as Ethics, CCP, 65+, ATS. HR initiated the digitalisation of standby declaration process in Frontex. The solution has been developed internally and will be rolled out in 2023.

In line with the principles outlined by the Management Board Decision delegating powers of the appointing authority, a reviewed Executive Director Decision implementing the sub-delegation on the appointing authority powers to statutory staff was adopted. The decision was supplemented with the sub-delegation of powers regarding SNEs as well as trainees and interim agents. The Decision was adopted at the beginning of January 2023, reflecting the reinforced mandate and the new organisational structure of the Agency i.e. the presence of DEDs, and the decentralisation of the decision making processes and of certain powers in HR matters, empowering middle management as well as administrative decisions related to standing corps category 1 and 2 staff delegated to the Heads of Sector within the DMD.

## 2.5.2. Recruitment



Graph 5. Overview of the Frontex growth from inception. The overall positions filled as of 01/01/2023 was 2,063.

The total workforce on 31/12/2022 amounted to 2,063 staff broken down with 1,150 Temporary Agents (TA), 723 Contract Agents (CA) and 190 Seconded National Experts (SNE).

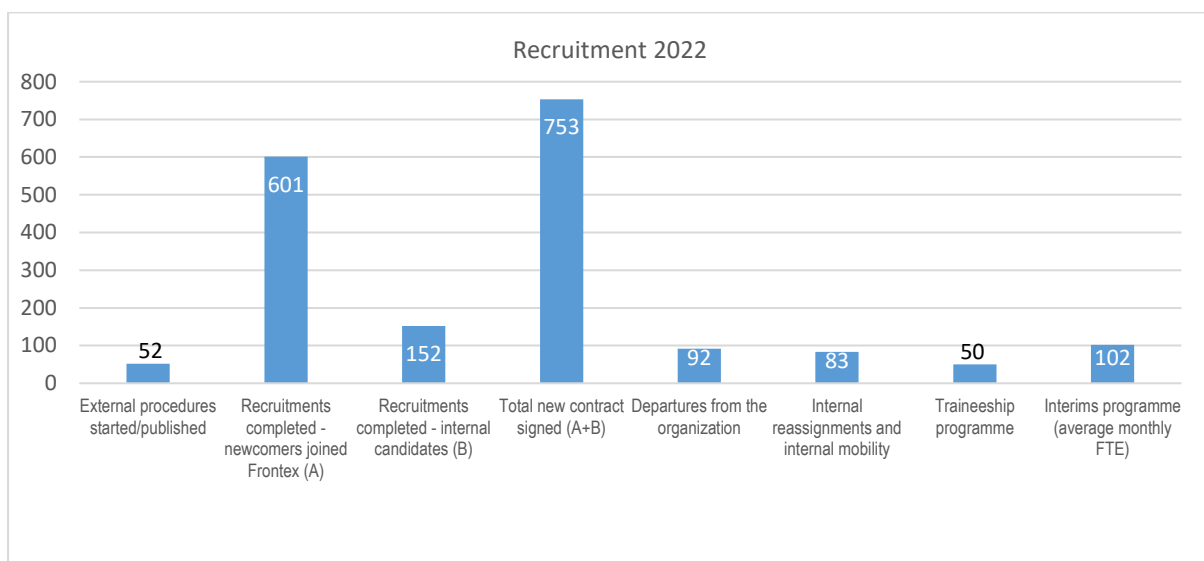
Recruitment activities in 2022 were focused on the following key areas:

- New Executive Director appointed in December 2022 (HR procedure run by the European Commission);
- Completion of onboarding of two Deputy Executive Directors in early 2022;
- Recruitment of new Fundamental Rights Monitors (22 externally recruited; overall 44 engaged/in service);
- Recruitment and onboarding of the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer;
- Recruitment and onboarding of the Security Officer;
- Recruitment and onboarding of the next two external and two internal batches of the European Border and Coast Guard Officers (409 newcomers);
- Recruitment and onboarding of ETIAS staff (65 posts and positions filled).

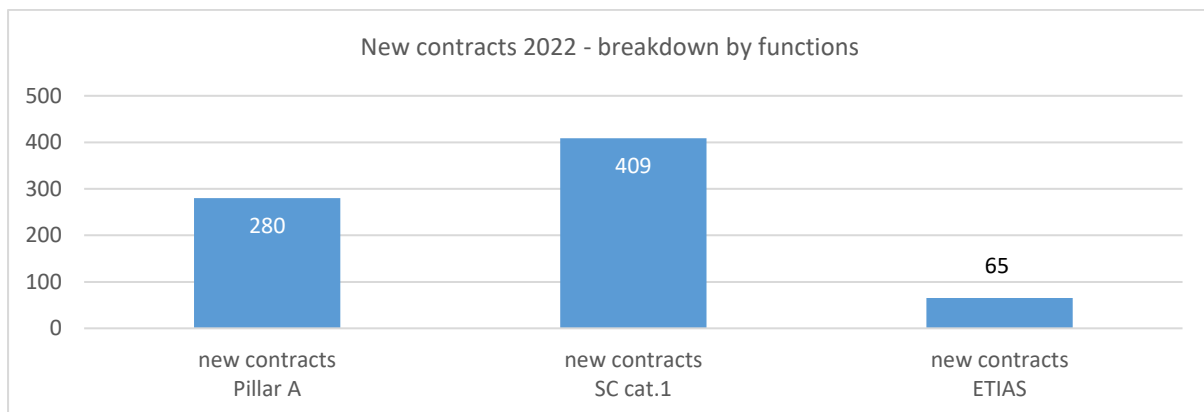
Process	2021	2022	Var% 2022 vs. 2021	Additional comments
New external procedures concluded in 2022	44	28	64%	Several procedures covered more than one post to be filled.
Recruitments completed – newcomers joined Frontex in 2022 (A)	156	192	123%	Figure refers to new non-standing corps staff members without former employment contract with Frontex.

Recruitment completed – change of contract and/or status in 2022 (B)	44	152	345%	Figure refers to Frontex non-standing corps staff members assigned to a new position after having successfully participated in a completed external recruitment process.
Recruitment completed – standing corps category 1 (C)	232	409	176%	Figure refers to the 6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> batches of newcomers of standing corps officers.
<b>TOTAL Recruitment completed (A+B+C)</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>174%</b>	
Departures	68	67	135%	Figure refers to non-standing corps staff members who left the Agency.
Departure in standing corps category 1	23	25	109%	Figure refers to standing corps staff members who left the Agency.
Internal reassignments and internal mobility	28	83	296%	-
Traineeship programme	49	50	102%	Positions filled during spring and autumn intake.
Interims programme (monthly average FTEs)	115	102	89%	Positions filled at the end of the year (on a rotation basis).

Table 26. Overview of recruitment processes in 2022 vs. 2021.



Graph 6. Recruitment 2022.



Graph 7. New contracts per function 2022.

### 2.5.3. Staff development and training

In line with the Management Board Decision 25/2021 delegating the powers of appointing authority, implementing provisions on the appraisal of performance of the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors, Fundamental Rights Officer and Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer were adopted in March 2022 upon obtaining the European Commission's agreement pursuant to Article 110 EU Staff Regulations.

In 2022, the number of annual appraisals grew by almost 45% due to the growth of the number of staff, while the number of probationary periods increased by 47% in comparison to the previous year. While the preparations for 2023 appraisal exercise were completed. The appraisal exercise 2023, related to 2022 performance, concerns approximately 1,600 staff members (standing and non-standing corps). This is a significant growth of over 50% of appraisals in comparison with the previous exercise.

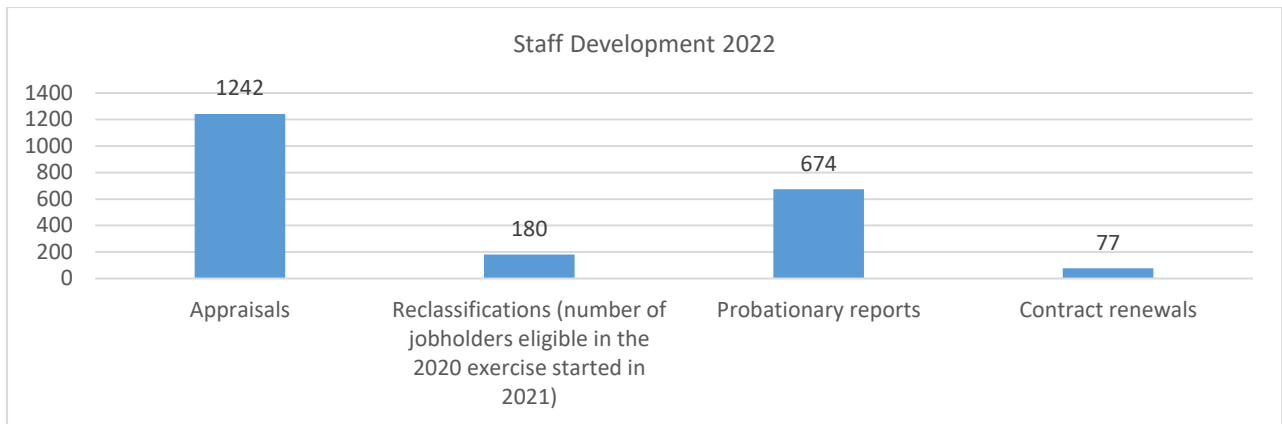
In the area of training, in line with the Management Board Decision 60/2021 on the Framework for Learning and Development, HR elaborated the decision of the Executive Director on the Policy for Learning and Development, which was adopted on November 2022 (R-ED-2022-192). The training activities organised in 2022 were focused on addressing the learning needs identified during the learning needs analysis (first exercise of this process was run in 2021) as well as on supporting the onboarding of growing number of newcomers (with customised versions of the induction training dedicated for non-standing corps staff, standing corps and ETIAS CU staff).

In 2022, Frontex staff benefited of wider options for training, from the in-house training to training offered by the European School of Administration and the European Commission DG HR. The training portfolio offered for Frontex staff was extended covering IT literacy, writing skills and courses supporting the well-being, resilience and performance.

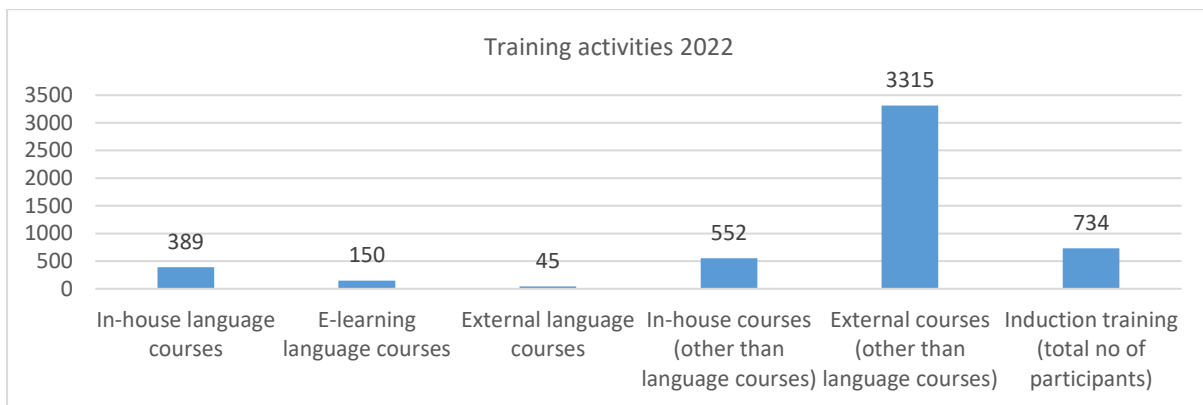
A total number of 33 in-house language course groups was run during both semesters. The enrolments for the language courses were for the first time organised in paperless approval workflows using a new tool prepared specially for this purpose. The offer, as regards the languages courses, will be further extended in order to address specific needs of the standing corps and ETIAS staff.

Process	Quantity	Additional comments
<b>Appraisal</b>	754 appraisal reports for non-standing corps and 488 appraisal reports for standing corps processed.	95% of appraisal processes were finalised by 9 December 2022 (formal closure of the 2022 Appraisal exercise).
	The number of reports increased by almost 45% in comparison to the previous year due to the increase in the number of staff.	No complaints under Article 90(2).  There were 5 appeals filed by the closing date (appeal within the appraisal procedure as per Article 7 of the appraisal rules).
<b>Reclassification</b>	180 jobholders (103 TAs and 77 CAs) were eligible for the 2020 reclassification exercise.	The 2020 reclassification exercise was finalised in November 2022.
<b>Probation</b>	288 probationary periods of non-standing corps staff started in 2022.	So far six contracts that were concluded in 2022 were not confirmed during or at the end of the probationary period (some probationary periods that started in 2022 are to be finalised in 2023).
	386 probationary periods started in 2022 for standing corps category 1.	Dismissals concerned members of standing corps category 1.
<b>Contract renewal</b>	77 contract renewal procedures for contracts ending in 2023 were launched in 2022.	A contract renewal process is launched several months prior to the end of a given contract of employment. Out of 77 processes started, 66 were completed in 2022. The remaining 11 processes were launched according to schedule at the end of 2022. They are pending the Appointing Authority's decision. No complaints under Article 90 (2).
	Induction training – 3 different programme's variation run for 734 participants in total	
	In-house courses (other than language courses) – 552 participants	
	External courses (other than language courses) - 3,315 participants	

Table 27. Overview of main activities performed related to staff development in 2022.



Graph 8. Staff development 2022.



Graph 9. Number of participants in training courses in 2022.

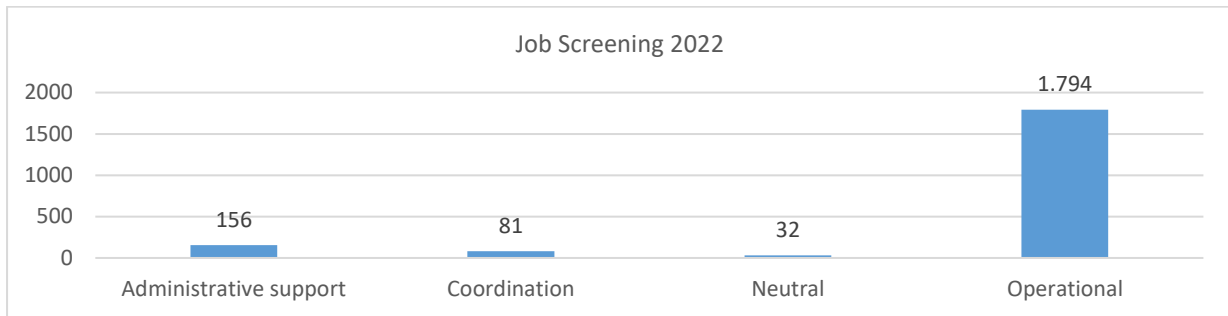
#### 2.5.4. Job screening

The standardised job screening exercise (classifications of posts into the roles of administrative support, coordination, neutral and operational) was done according to the guidelines defined by the EU Agencies Network and based on staff figures including temporary and contract staff as well as seconded national experts and existing posts with an open replacement on 31 December 2022. The outcome of the exercise is detailed both in numbers and in percentages in the table below.

TYPE/ROLE AND CATEGORY		Filled posts		Vacant posts		Total posts	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>6.23%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2.76%</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>8.99%</b>
	RES DIR/HOA	0	0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
	DOC	4	0.16%	2	0.08%	6	0.24%
	HR	58	2.32%	19	0.76%	77	3.08%
	IA	12	0.48%	14	0.56%	26	1.04%
	ICT	23	0.92%	16	0.64%	39	1.56%
	LOG	59	2.36%	17	0.68%	76	3.04%
<b>COORDINATION</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>3.24%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1.24%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>4.47%</b>
	GEN COORD	34	1.36%	10	0.40%	44	1.76%
	COMM	12	0.48%	8	0.32%	20	0.80%
	LEGAL	35	1.40%	13	0.52%	48	1.92%
<b>NEUTRAL</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>1.28%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.56%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1.84%</b>
	FIN/CONT	32	1.28%	14	0.56%	46	1.84%
	LING	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>OPERATIONAL</b>		<b>1794</b>	<b>71.67%</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>13.02%</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>84.70%</b>
	TOP COORD	17	0.68%	5	0.20%	22	0.88%
	EVAL	92	3.68%	19	0.76%	111	4.43%
	GEN OPER	1546	61.77%	265	10.59%	1811	72.35%
	PGM M/IMPL	138	5.51%	36	1.44%	174	6.95%

	GEN COORD	1	0.04%	1	0.04%	2	0.08%
		2063	82.42%	440	17.58%	2503	100%

Table 28. Job screening exercise 2022.



Graph 10. Job screening (posts filled) 2022.

## 2.6. Strategy for efficiency gains

In a context in which the Agency continues to grow at a fast pace, combined with the implementation of the significantly enhanced mandate received by Frontex, there is a need to continue the improvement of the management systems to ensure that the assurance framework is in line with the new risks.

The strategy for efficiency gains encompasses management activities in all entities within the Agency, and the processes shall be established, implemented and further developed in a gradual manner. The main areas of focus in relation to the strategy are:

- Use of synergies between the entities of the Agency and the external stakeholders (e.g., network of agencies) at all levels for the implementation of the budget, human resources development, establishment of policies and processes.
- Application of sound financial management principles, which allows for better and more efficient use of the funds available.
- Improvement of managerial methods through training.
- Staff knowledge and expertise improvement through training, mentoring and on-the-job training.
- Analysis and implementation of better processes in the operations of the Agency.

The activities already identified in the programming document for 2022–2024 included:

- Developing modern digital environment, including digitalization of business processes, leading towards the realisation of modern workplace principles and improving efficiency of staff-led processes and productivity of staff. This objective was translated into the implementation of additional paperless processes with regard to financial and corporate services activities, as well as to the one related to training extension of online (self-paced) learning opportunities for staff.
- Continuing the introduction of SYSPER modules, fully on-boarding the mission management system (MIPS). HR management benefited from improvements in this area in the reporting period as outlined in segment 2.5. Human resources management.
- Processing of public access to documents applications with a high degree of automation. This area was further developed – in view of the growing complex requests the Agency faced – as outlined in key activities 6.3.4. and 6.5.2. This development involved the maintenance of the Public Register of Document on the Agency external website, and it entailed the upload of 1 900 key Agency documents.
- Maintaining and improving IT tools developed by the procurement unit. This objective was met through the maintenance of ABAC legal commitments module and the introduction of Public Procurement Management Tool (PPMT) completed in Q4 2022 as outlined in key activity 6.3.4.
- Developing, improving and maintaining IT tools supporting facility management, management of office supplies, registration of visitors, requests for support, claims, including the use of IT tools outside Frontex headquarters. Within this remit, several initiatives were introduced and/or improved i.e. an online visitors' register facilitating the process of registration of guests visiting the Agency's premises (5 903 guests in 2022), an online booking system for meeting rooms and the installation of a "collectomate" for safe transmission of parcels between staff as detailed in key activity 6.2.1.
- Introducing changes to systems: automation or semi-automation or outsourcing of repetitive tasks leading to reduction in processing time. This objective was met through the creation of IT workflows in the signature of delegations through ARES system as described in detail in key activity 6.1.1.

- Sustaining the Agency's participation in the work performed at the EUAN and its working groups. This objective was addressed through active involvement in the Network of Heads of Resources, Agencies' Procurement Officers (NAPO), Inter-Agency Legal Network (IALN), Performance Development Network (PDN) and Greening Network (GN) working groups.

Further initiatives aiming at enhancing efficiency include a project for the development of an IT tool supporting the service delivery. The incident and service management tool for corporate services is expected to allow the end users to log requests online and by mobile phones in an automated, predefined manner and it allows quick access to instructions, guides, request status etc. It will also allow corporate services to monitor internal service level agreements and associated key performance indicators more accurately and effectively and to provide better reporting, while also giving the possibility to better monitor workload, to increase collaboration and speed up escalations. Furthermore, a project was initiated for a parking booking system enabling a more efficient use of Frontex car park as well as a pilot project will be run for desk booking. The visitors' register has been further streamlined to achieve higher capabilities of hosting and event management. A project was launched to improve and enhance the digital tool for processing reimbursement claims for public transport and sport activities based on the experience of one full usage cycle of the tool and considering the growing number of claims.

In view of the construction of the Frontex permanent premises and to limit investment in the current Frontex HQ leased properties, the strategy has been to maximise the utilisation of existing space. Additional space that must be taken on by the Agency in the interim period before the permanent premises are ready is fit out in accordance with an activity-based workplace concept. In contrast to the previous mainly closed office layouts, the concept allows for more occupation flexibility. For example, desk sharing is easily applied in offices, while additional workspaces can be provided by making use of common areas such as (shared) focus rooms, booths or other collaborative workspaces.

## 2.7. Assessment of audit results during the reporting year

### 2.7.1. Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In 2022, the Internal Audit Service (IAS) performed and/or completed the following audits, follow-up audits and exercises:

- **Audit on recruitment, training and deployment of standing corps** – launched in March 2022 and completed with the final audit report in December 2022.  
**Objective:** to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control systems put in place by Frontex to recruit, train and deploy the standing corps as provided for in the EBCG Regulation.  
**Outcome:** 7 recommendations issued, 4 of them with the priority status 'very important' and 3 with the priority status 'important'.
- **3 follow-up audits of outstanding recommendations from the past audits in Frontex**  
**Objective:** to assess the state of implementation of specific recommendations in the original audits.  
**Outcome:** the IAS closed 12 recommendations as follows: one from the audit on data validation and quality assurance for the risk analysis (2015), one recommendation from the audit on Human Resources Management (2015), one recommendation from the audit on human resources planning, allocation and recruitment (2019), seven recommendations from the audit on contract management (2019) and two recommendations from the audit on IT governance and project management (2019).

### 2.7.2. European Court of Auditors (ECA)

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is required to provide its final opinion on Frontex accounts 'no later than 1 June of the following year'. Therefore, the ECA's opinion on Frontex' accounts 2022 was not available at the time when the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022 was being prepared. The opinion of the ECA on Frontex' accounts for the year 2021 is provided below as this provides some light on the adequacy of the internal control system.

#### Opinion on the reliability of the accounts

In the Court's opinion, Frontex's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 present fairly, in all material respects, Frontex's financial position on 31 December 2021, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its financial regulation and with accounting

rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.

#### **Emphasis of matter**

The Court refers to Note 4.0.4 'Other important information regarding the budget implementation' on the carry-forward to 2021 of a budgetary commitment dated 21 December 2020 'Preparatory measures for 2021 deployments SC Cat 1 and 2' without the backing of a legal commitment before the end of 2020. The Court reported this issue in its 2020 specific annual report. The total payments in 2021 were at EUR 18.38 million. Frontex addressed this non-compliance by means of subsequent legal commitments throughout 2021.

The Court draws attention to Note 4.0.3 'The financing sources of the budget', which explains that contributions from non-EU Schengen area countries (SAC) and, in consequence, the balancing EU contribution are not correctly calculated. The EU contribution is overstated by EUR 2.6 million and the SAC contributions are understated by the same amount. As the EU contribution is a balancing contribution, and there is a surplus in 2021, there is no impact on the operating revenue of the statement of financial performance for the year 2021.

The Court draws attention to Note 1.3 'Certification of the accounts' where the Accounting Officer declares the lack of the necessary information for the validation of a new system laid down by the authorising officer and used for supplying accounting information.

#### **Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions (revenue and payments) underlying the accounts**

In the Court's opinion, the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 are legal and regular in all material respects.

#### **Emphasis of matter**

The Court notes that the emphasis of matter paragraph for reliability of the accounts described in the specific annual report 2021 in paragraph 3.30.6 also applies in full for the legality and regularity of payments.

#### **Observations on management and control systems**

In July 2021, Frontex launched a procurement procedure for a framework contract with a single contractor for maximum duration of four years, for the provision of travel services including the deployment of the standing corps. The contract was signed at the end of December 2021. We found the following:

(a) For the evaluation of technical and professional capacity, Frontex required bidders to provide an experienced team of at least 10 travel agents plus a team manager, without requiring a minimum size in terms of overall staff. Setting the technical and professional capacity requirement so low exposed Frontex to a risk that the contractor would not be able to deliver the contracted services at the minimum quality and on time.

(b) In order to assess the economic and financial capacity of bidders, Frontex based its work on the estimated value of the contract, which was EUR 15 million. However, this amount included only the fees paid to the contractor and not the underlying value of the contract covering planned mission costs, which were estimated at approximately EUR 240 million. Frontex required bidders to demonstrate an average annual turnover of at least EUR 2 million. Setting the financial capacity requirement so low exposed Frontex to a risk that the contract would not be performed correctly.

In February 2022, Frontex suspended the contract due to lack of performance that resulted in serious disruptions of business continuity. In May 2022, following the verifications, the contract was terminated.

Frontex's internal guidelines for recruitment procedures require selection committees to attempt to reach their conclusions by consensus. In two audited recruitment procedures, we found that the selection committees applied the arithmetical average of their members' individual assessments, instead of a consensual method. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear standards or instructions to selection committee members on how to assess the individual selection criteria. These design and implementation weaknesses undermine the principles of transparency and equal treatment of the candidates in recruitment procedures and may expose Frontex to reputational and legal risks.

The authorising officers (by delegation or sub-delegation) approving payments in 2021, as well as the related legal and budgetary commitments, had not formally accepted the conditions of the Executive Director's Decision of 22 December 2020 on delegations. Moreover, they have not formally declared their compliance with Article 4 of the decision on the declaration of the absence of conflicts of interest. This is a serious internal control weakness in Frontex's delegation process.

In May 2021, Frontex signed multiple interinstitutional framework contracts through the re-opening of competition for the provision of personal protective equipment and sanitary items. The contracts did not have

a standard price list but included a maximum gross margin percentage for every product ordered. When implementing the contracts, Frontex did not carry out systematic checks on the gross margin applied to some of the orders placed. This is not compliant with the Financial Regulation and constitutes an internal weakness in Frontex's ex-ante controls.

The Court also found the following internal control weaknesses in Frontex's procurement procedures:

- (a) For a framework contract comprising two lots, Frontex had published the award decision significantly later than the deadlines set by the Financial Regulation.
- (b) In another procurement procedure, in order to assess bidders' economic and financial capacity Frontex requested twice the average minimum annual turnover allowed by the Financial Regulation. Setting a higher threshold is only allowed in duly justified cases. However, there was no documented justification for using a higher threshold amount.

In the case of three audited grant agreements, the beneficiaries did not respect the 75-day deadline after the end of the agreements for requesting final payment. Frontex did not ensure that the processing and final monitoring of these grants was carried out at the right time. Furthermore, it did not make final payments within 60 days of receiving the corresponding requests for payment of the balance. These delays in the process are in breach of the grant agreement provisions and the Financial Regulation and constitute a systematic issue with Frontex's grant payment cycle.

Overall analysis of payments made in 2021 showed that:

- (a) out of 7,776 payment requests, 1 269 were settled late (16.3%, 2020: 23%);
- (b) out of the total value of payment requests (EUR 317,994,125), EUR 39,731,717 was paid late (12.5%, 2020: 12.1%);
- (c) of the 1,269 late payments, 1,205 had been legally required within 30 days (2020: 1,932 payments), and 62 within 60 days (2020: 38 payments).

These payment delays are a serious deficiency in Frontex's internal controls.

No new ECA performance audit was announced nor launched in 2022. One ECA follow-up audit of Special Report No 24/2019 – Asylum, relocation and return of migrants was launched in October 2022, the works are ongoing.

## 2.8. a. Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits <sup>(34)</sup>

At the beginning of the 2022, Frontex had in total 16 recommendations from previous audits in the implementation phase. During the year 2022, four new recommendations from the Audit on governance, stakeholder management and external communication (2021) were issued, making total amount of recommendations in implementation 20. As a result of the IAS follow-up audits (3 audits were performed 2022), 10 recommendations have been closed.

Out of the 10 recommendations that remain in implementation, only one recommendation from **the audit on governance, stakeholder management and external communication** (2021) is pending with the following deadline: R.2 Decision making and internal coordination (status: very important), initial deadline 30.06.2023. Three recommendations from the same audit are delayed by less than 6 months:

- R.1 Audit on governance, stakeholder management and external communication (status: very important), initial deadline 31 December 2022.
- R.3 Stakeholders management and internal communication, (status: very important), initial deadline 31 December 2022.
- R.4 Project management (status: important), initial deadline 31 December 2022.

The remaining six recommendations are overdue in their implementation of more than 6 months and are detailed as follows:

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(34) This section of the report takes into account IAS contribution to the Agency's CAAR 2021, document reference ARES (1416128) of 24/02/2022, whereby as set forth in article 78(7) of Frontex Financial Regulation, beyond reporting on his findings and recommendations in audit reports, the internal auditor shall also report to the Management Board and the Executive Director in cases of significant delays in the implementation of the recommendations made in previous years.

**Audit on contract management (2019):** R1. Recognition of contract management function, initial deadline 30 September 2019, with status 'very important'. After the IAS follow-up, the status was changed to 'important' as majority of actions identified for this recommendation (22 out of 24) have been implemented, making **implementation rate 92%**.

**Audit on IT governance and project management (2019):** R1. IT governance framework (status: very important), with the initial deadline of 30 June 2021. After the IAS follow-up, the status was changed to 'important' as majority of actions identified for this recommendation (19 out of 22) have been implemented, making **implementation rate 86%**.

**Audit on HR planning, allocation and recruitment (2020).** Out of 16 actions identified for the pending recommendations 11 actions are still being developed. **Implementation rate 31%:**

- R1. HR Strategy and monitoring (status: very important), initial deadline 30 June 2021.
- R2. Staff allocation process, initial deadline 31 December 2021.
- R3. Attractiveness as an employer and grading (status: very important), initial deadline 30 March 2021.
- R4. Planning of selection procedure (status: important), initial deadline 31 December 2021.

### Follow-up on ECA observations from previous years

This follow-up is based on a table annexed to the ECA annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2021, Chapter 3, point 3.30. The table provides an overview of the actions taken.

Year	ECA observations	Actions taken
2015	There is an unaddressed risk of double funding from the Internal Security Fund managed by the European Commission and Frontex funding.	Completed
2015	States participating in border operations declare the costs incurred on the basis of cost claim sheets. The ECA in its special report 12/2016 recommended that agencies should use simplified cost options whenever appropriate to avoid such inefficiencies.	<p>Progress has been made to extend the use of the unit costs in heavy technical equipment deployments. In response to the Agency's letter from November 2022, several Member States, e.g., Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Denmark (including the biggest contributors of assets) have submitted their proposals for numerous unit costs. The Agency is in the process of assessing the proposals with the aim of finalizing the assessment by the end of May 2023.</p> <p>Four Member States replied they will not propose any unit costs, however, the approach of the Agency is that it is not expected all cost categories in all Member States will be established but only those where Agency together with the Member States will identify efficiency gains and an actual simplification.</p>
2016	The level of carry-overs was high. There is a need to obtain more precise cost estimates and more timely cost reporting from cooperating countries. The Agency may also consider introducing differentiated budget appropriations.	<p>High level of carry overs tends to be commented and perceived as a result of poor budget forecast and implementation, however, in the case of Frontex, it is exactly the contrary. It demonstrates an efficient and sound use of its resources. The Agency has a very specific mandate, which is unlike any other EU Agency, and therefore the reading of carry forward indicators need appropriate context. The level of carry forwards in the last years has been increasing, it is now stabilised in the region between 45-48%.</p> <p>Two important reasons explain these level of carry forwards, which again should be perceived as normal in the context of Frontex:</p> <p>A. Related to the volume and lifecycle of the grants awarded by the Agency. For reference, grants represent around 60% of the total operational budget of the Agency. Most of the grants awarded by the Agency are related to activities that do usually have an extended horizon. In application of budgetary the principle of annuality Frontex awards the grants for actions from the beginning of the financial year till its end, this entails that the final costs and final claims can only be known in the first months of the following year. Hence the need for carry forward</p> <p>Changing this good practice to somehow decrease high level of carry overs, it is just not feasible in the organisation context. A potential change would have an immense impact not only on the administrative burden for the Agency and the beneficiaries but most likely in operations.</p>

		<p>B. The Agency runs a significant number, in terms of value, of tender procedures that are lengthy for their complexity and specificity. This is true for example to heavy technical equipment and a secure confidential network. Two factors are key in these processes that make the carry forwards unavoidable:</p> <p>The use of differentiated appropriations implies a considerable change in budget management, including systems, processes, tools and training. In the existing context of growth of the Agency and all challenges the Agency is facing, including in proper staffing of financial positions, the change of approach is not being considered.</p>
2017	Although the Agency already moved to its current premises in 2014, the Agency still has no comprehensive Business Continuity Plan approved by the Management Board.	Completed. Business Continuity Plan was adopted on 3 February 2022.
2018	The ex-ante verifications were ineffective. The Agency should work on the development of a simplified and transparent financing scheme that also covers equipment-related costs.	<p>Progress has been made to extend the use of the unit costs in heavy technical equipment deployments.</p> <p>In response to the Agency's letter from November 2022, several Member States, e.g., Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Denmark (including the biggest contributors of assets) have submitted their proposals for numerous unit costs. The Agency is in the process of assessing the proposals with the aim of finalizing the assessment by the end of May 2023.</p> <p>Four Member States replied they will not propose any unit costs, however, the approach of the Agency is that it is not expected all cost categories in all Member States will be established but only those where Agency together with the Member States will identify efficiency gains and an actual simplification.</p>
2018	The Agency should adopt and implement a sensitive post policy.	Decision on Frontex Sensitive Functions has been drafted. The draft is pending the legal validation and will be then presented to the Executive Director (ED) for decision. The ED Decision shall be adopted until the end of Q2 2023.
2018	The budget carry-overs to 2019 and the cancelled carry-overs in 2018 were high. The Agency should strive for more precise cost estimates and budget forecasts.	<p>Towards the end of the year, the Agency contacts the MS Beneficiaries to obtain estimations of final payments, whenever possible. Based on this, de-commitments are processed to release unused funds, to reduce the carry over amounts. However, a certain level of carry over amounts is inevitable, as the lifecycle of activities has a final date in December.</p> <p>The high level of carry overs is already explained above (please see the 2016 observation). Regarding the cancellations there have been measures taken to improve the situation. The Administrative Notice AN-2021-11 on the Annuality Principle was introduced in 2021. This Notice clarifies obligations and responsibilities of financial actors with regards to commitments and carry forwards, as per their roles in accordance with Article 45(2) of the Frontex Financial Regulation.</p> <p>This Notice complements the general rules concerning the annuality principle outlined in Frontex Financial Regulation as well, as it aims to align the practices applied in Frontex with the guidance of the European Commission guidelines.</p>

		Accounting Officer provides instructions to the entities for the end-of-year procedure in relation to the requests for carry forwards.
2018 /2019	The Agency did not reach the required occupancy laid down in the staff establishment plan. The Agency should improve the guidance given to selection committee members and verify more closely the candidates' financial entitlements for salary payments.	<p>The occupancy rate in 2020 was 61.1%, in 2021 was 77% and in 2022 was 82.4%. There is a positive growing tendency.</p> <p>The occupancy rate in 2020 was 61.1%, in 2021 was 77% and in 2022 was 82.4%. There is a positive growing tendency.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In 2021, Frontex became the largest EU Agency in terms of the number of staff, recruiting 432 newcomers. The net increase in staff was 320 with 1,234 staff at the beginning of the year and 1,554 positions filled at the end of the year. Compared to December 2019, when the staffing numbers reached 749, the Agency has doubled its size during the last 24 months.</li> <li>2. On 31 Dec. 2022, Frontex reached staffing level of 2,063 and the occupancy rate at the end of the year was 82.4%.</li> <li>3. Undoubtedly, the situation which Frontex is facing since 2020 in its rapid and unprecedented staff increase is very challenging.</li> <li>4. Frontex strives to constantly improve awareness of the members of the Selection Committees and provided training in 2022 to new members.</li> <li>5. Financial entitlements of newcomers are being defined by PMO based on existing SLA. Therefore, a robust verification procedure should be established in PMO - Frontex limited HR resources do not allow to carry out systematic checks on PMO's individual decisions for hundreds of newcomers per year.</li> <li>6. New implementing rules to simplify the recruitment procedure and to better use HR capacities in the recruitment process have been finalised in January 2022 – ED Decision R-ED-2022-17.</li> </ol>
2020	Declaration by a national authority of unannounced return operations totalling EUR 355 000 in a grant agreement at the financial closure of the action. Frontex made an ex-post budgetary commitment to cover the resulting budget deficit which is not in line to its financial regulation.	<p>As an initial stage of monitoring and forecasting of costs in Frontex Application for Return (FAR), a financial component was implemented in FAR Scheduled Flights as of October 2022. The use of FAR is fully implemented as of Q1 2023, after MS financial users of FAR have been trained by the Agency.</p> <p>By the end of 2023 at the latest, new financial modules e.g. grant management module (GMM) and other financial components in return activities will be fully introduced to this IT tool.</p>
2020	Ombudsman in two own-initiative inquiries: (a) in the first opened in November 2020 assessed the effectiveness and transparency of Frontex complaint's mechanism as well as the role and independence of Frontex's Fundamental Rights Officer and issued on 15 June 2021 nine suggestions for improvement to Frontex (b) the second opened in March 2021 aimed to look into how the Agency complies with its fundamental rights obligations and ensure accountability in relation to its new enhanced responsibilities. Furthermore, there are two other ongoing investigations: (a) From OLAF over allegations of harassment, misconduct and migrant pushbacks concerning the Agency and (b) from the European Parliament (EP) into possible allegations	<p>The Agency is fully committed and cooperates closely with all institutions.</p> <p>To address all the recommendations originating from the European Ombudsman, Management Board Working Group on Fundamental Rights and Legal Operational Aspects of Operations (FRaLO), and the European Parliament Frontex Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG), Frontex developed a comprehensive action plan (altogether 115 actions). The progress in implementation of recommendations is regularly monitored by the Management Board.</p>

	of violations of fundamental rights in Frontex. The EP in July 2021 announced that had identified deficiencies – among others – in Frontex’s mechanisms to monitor, report and assess fundamental rights situations, and has made recommendations for improvement.	
2020	Delay in the recruitment of the required 40 fundamental rights monitors which poses a serious risk to the operations and reputation of the Agency.	At the end of 2022 the Agency filled in 41 posts of fundamental rights monitors (30 x AD and 14 x AST4).
2020	Frontex was exposed to reputational damage and litigation due to the offers sent to 47 candidates as advanced level (AD7 or higher) without expecting the Commission’s reply on the posts. Commission subsequently concluded that Frontex had not legal authority to upgrade these posts.	Following the allocation of new AD posts to Frontex in 2022, Frontex followed up on its indicative plan and offered (as of February 2022) those candidates who have accepted the offer in 2021 the AD7 posts.  No legal case has been launched in view of the issue of ‘9 September 2022’ and no significant reputational damage has been sustained.
2020	No registration of an authorised exception in a payment schedule governing a contract, into the Agency’s central registry.	Completed.
2020	The four Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) contributions in FRONTEX initial budget are understated as they made up of 6,91% instead of 7,43% of the budget. There is a need for horizontal guidance from the European Commission to EU bodies on how to calculate contributions from non-EU countries consistently.	After reviewing the issue, the Management Board of Frontex during its 86th meeting concluded that the methodology to calculate SAC contributions will currently not change.
2020	A provisional budgetary commitment of EUR 18.1 million for the preparation of field deployments in 2021 was carried forward without the Agency having entered into legal commitments within the time limit laid down in Article 75 of the Agency’s Financial Regulation.	Completed. The situation did not repeat in 2021, this has been confirmed by ECA during the audit mission No 2 of 2021.
2020	When calculating its performance indicators, Frontex treated the reductions to the budget not as amending budgets but as acts of budget implementation which contradicts two decisions by the Management Board.	The Accounting Officer will continue with the same approach in the accounts 2022. Accounting Officer provided justification/explanations during DAS 2021.
2020	An increase of EUR 10 million of the EU funding by the EU amending budget No 1 is not visible in the Agency’s budgetary accounts. This reduces transparency.	Completed.
2021	In July 2021, Frontex launched a procurement procedure for a framework contract with a single contractor for a maximum duration of four years, for the provision of travel services including the deployment of the Standing Corps. The contract was signed at the end of December 2021. We found the following: (a) For the evaluation of technical and professional capacity, Frontex required bidders to provide an experienced team of at least 10 travel agents plus a team manager, without requiring a minimum size in terms of overall staff. Setting the technical and professional capacity requirement so low exposed Frontex to a risk that the contractor would not be able to deliver the contracted services at the minimum quality and on time.	On the 3rd of January 2023 the Contract Notice 2023/S 002-003199 for open procedure related to provision of travel agency services to Frontex was published on the Tenders Electronic Daily website. The time limit for submission of offers was set for 6 February 2023. The opening session was held on 7 February 2023. The bids received under each lot are currently under evaluation by the two Evaluation Committees appointed accordingly per lot concerned.  The scope of the new procurement procedure has been divided into two distinct lots:  • Lot 1 - Provision of corporate travel services;

	<p>(b) In order to assess the economic and financial capacity of bidders, Frontex based its work on the estimated value of the contract, which was €15 million. However, this amount included only the fees paid to the contractor and not the underlying value of the contract covering planned mission costs, which were estimated at approximately €240 million. Frontex required bidders to demonstrate an average annual turnover of at least EUR 2 million. Setting the financial capacity requirement so low exposed Frontex to a risk that the contract would not be performed correctly.</p> <p>In February 2022, Frontex suspended the contract due to lack of performance that resulted in serious disruptions of business continuity. In May 2022, following verifications, the contract was terminated.</p>	<p>• Lot 2 - Travel and related arrangements in support of the deployment of Frontex Standing Corps.</p> <p>For each lot, Frontex intends to conclude a single framework contract with one tenderer for a maximum duration of four years.</p>
2021	<p>Frontex's internal guidelines for recruitment procedures require selection committees to attempt to reach their conclusions by consensus. In two audited recruitment procedures, we found that the selection committees applied the arithmetical average of their members' individual assessments, instead of a consensual method. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear standards or instructions to selection committee members on how to assess the individual selection criteria. These design and implementation weaknesses undermine the principles of transparency and equal treatment of the candidates in recruitment procedures and may expose Frontex to reputational and legal risks.</p>	<p>New implementing rules adopted in January 2022 (ED Decision R-ED-2022-17) clarify the issue as follows in its Article 3:</p> <p>8. Members, alternates and observers shall carry out their duties objectively and impartially. For this purpose, they shall complete, and update without delay when necessary, a declaration of confidentiality and an absence of conflict of interest</p> <p>9. A selection committee shall aim at reaching its conclusions by consensus, based on individual scorings and resulting average scores. Where this is not feasible, a conclusion shall be taken by a simple majority of votes of members. Where no simple majority exists, the opinion supported by the Chairperson shall be conclusive. Members have a right to have their dissenting opinions recorded in the selection committee's final outcome report and shall justify their individual scoring in case it significantly diverges from the average score.</p> <p>10. The final outcome report of the selection committee shall be approved by all its members and as such shall be considered as the only official record of the procedure.</p>
2021	<p>The authorising officers (by delegation or sub-delegation) approving payments in 2021, as well as the related legal and budgetary commitments, had not formally accepted the conditions of the Executive Director's Decision of 22 December 2020 on delegations. Moreover, they have not formally declared their compliance with Article 4 of the decision on the declaration of the absence of conflicts of interest. This is a serious internal control weakness in Frontex's delegation process.</p>	<p>This has been corrected in 2022 and the delegation and sub-delegation of powers is signed via ARES for all authorising officers, including declaration of absence of conflicts of interest.</p>
2021	<p>In May 2021, Frontex signed multiple interinstitutional framework contracts through the re-opening of competition for the provision of personal protective equipment and sanitary items. The contracts did not have a standard price list but included a maximum gross margin percentage for every product ordered. When implementing the contracts, Frontex did not carry out systematic checks on the gross margin applied to some of the orders placed. This is not compliant with the Financial Regulation and constitutes an internal weakness in Frontex's ex-ante controls.</p>	<p>Based on risk assessments, the Agency requested the awarded contractors twice (there were only two new rounds of reopening the competition) to provide all supporting documentation to analyse the gross margin applied for those exact orders (#27 and #45).</p> <p>The contractor's gross margin could only be verified after the completion of deliveries, so these measures were taken at a later stage. Order #27 was awarded to a Germany-based company (which is different from the Italian company awarded for Order #45), so these exercises covered a number of awarded contractors. Both exercises have been</p>

		<p>completed, and the calculations have resulted in numbers below those offered in the tender process. Accordingly, the contractors have stated that their offers are below the gross margin.</p> <p>The above statements have been confirmed by the relevant documents submitted to the Contracting Authority. Supporting evidence of the checks made was provided to the Court.</p>
2021	<p>We also found the following internal control weaknesses in Frontex's procurement procedures:</p> <p>(a) For a framework contract comprising two lots, Frontex had published the award decision significantly later than the deadlines set by the Financial Regulation.</p> <p>(b) In another procurement procedure, in order to assess bidders' economic and financial capacity Frontex requested twice the average minimum annual turnover allowed by the Financial Regulation. Setting a higher threshold is only allowed in duly justified cases. However, there was no documented justification for using a higher threshold amount.</p>	<p>a) The Agency has incorporated a control mechanism to monitor and prevent such situations from materializing in the future. Indeed, a specific entry has been created in Frontex' PROC-Log into which all procurement officers should encode accordingly the exact date of Contract Award Notice's dispatch to the EU Official Journal for any relevant procurement procedures. Moreover, monitoring of the Contract Award Notices' publication by dedicated procurement officers (Team Leaders) has been introduced at the level of the Sector.</p> <p>b) A non-compliance event, i.e., NC-187, documenting ex-post the use of a higher average annual turnover threshold to assess the economic and financial capacity of the bidders has been recorded.</p>
2021	<p>In the case of three audited grant agreements, the beneficiaries did not respect the 75-day deadline after the end of the agreements for requesting final payment. Frontex did not ensure that the processing and final monitoring of these grants was carried out at the right time. Furthermore, it did not make final payments within 60 days of receiving the corresponding requests for payment of the balance. These delays in the process are in breach of the grant agreement provisions and the Financial Regulation and constitute a systematic issue with Frontex's grant payment cycle.</p>	<p>ECRET-FIN team was reinforced with staff in 2022 which allows to properly distribute and manage tasks including making payments timely.</p> <p>Based on the analysed data, there is visible decreased level of delays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in processing the payments under Grant Agreements within ORD remit: Number of delayed payments - state December 2021 - 42* Number of delayed payments - state December 2022 - 26*</li> </ul> <p>*Source: Budget implementation reports dated 16 December 2022 and end of December 2021. The reports contain raw data. Respective filters have been applied to identify ORD grants, both in 2021 and 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in submission of the Requests for Final Payments by Member States in relation to ORD grants: Number of delayed Requests for final payments in 2021 - 21** Number of delayed Requests for final payments in 2022 - 14**</li> </ul> <p>** Source: Register of records of exceptions in relation to Outdated Claims.</p> <p>ORD-FIN monitors the dates for submission the Requests for Final Payments and notifies the Beneficiaries about approaching deadlines. However, according to Administrative Notice No R-AN-2021-5 Revised Policy on Outdated Reimbursement Claims, of 20/06/2021, when an official reminder is sent out, Beneficiaries are granted 30 additional days to submit the Request for Final Payment. Consequently, Member States have the right to submit to the Request for Final Payment within 105 days. ORD-FIN staff</p>

		makes sure that an appropriate suspension in ABAC is made, when there are grounds for that, to meet 60 days for processing the final payment.
2021	<p>Our overall analysis of payments made in 2021 showed that:</p> <p>(a) out of 7,776 payment requests, 1 269 were settled late (16.3%, 2020: 23%)</p> <p>(b) out of the total value of payment requests (EUR 317,994,125), EUR 39,731,717 was paid late (12.5%, 2020: 12.1%)</p> <p>(c) of the 1,269 late payments, 1 205 had been legally required within 30 days (2020: 1 932 payments), and 62 within 60 days (2020: 38 payments). These payment delays are a serious deficiency in Frontex's internal controls.</p>	<p>Regular reporting is performed by FIN on several financial indicators including on late payments. The reports are shared with all financial actors for information and action. Moreover, reminders are sent to AOs responsible for delayed payments. There has been an improvement although not to the desired level.</p>

*Table 29. ECA observations actions taken updated as of 17 March 2023 as reported by the Agency to ECA.*

## Follow-up on relevant aspects of service that received a 'red light' from the ECA for one of the two last years

For the financial year 2020: n/a

For the financial year 2021 the Court issued the emphasis of matter by which the Court draws attention to Note 4.0.3 'The financing sources of the budget', which explains that contributions from non-EU Schengen area countries (SAC) and, in consequence, the balancing EU contribution are not correctly calculated. The EU contribution is overstated by EUR 2.6 million and the SAC contributions are understated by the same amount. As the EU contribution is a balancing contribution, and there is a surplus in 2021, there is no impact on the operating revenue of the statement of financial performance for the year 2021.

In the specific annual report 2020 the Court made an observation that the four Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) contributions in FRONTEX initial budget are understated as they made up of 6,91% instead of 7,43% of the budget. There is a need for horizontal guidance from the European Commission to EU bodies on how to calculate contributions from non-EU countries consistently.

The Agency has reviewed its method of calculation and the Management Board of Frontex during its 86<sup>th</sup> meeting concluded that currently used methodology to calculate SAC contributions will remain unchanged. The arguments substantiating the position of Frontex are the following:

### a) 2014 - European Court of Auditors preliminary finding number 4

In 2014, in the DAS of ECA there was a finding related to the calculation of the SAC contributions to Frontex. At the time, the finding originated from the fact that for the calculation of the contributions Ireland and United Kingdom were also being considered. Therefore, the ratios (including the GDN/GNI of those two countries) were incorrect.

However, the finding scope went beyond this and clearly specified that there were other mistakes in the calculation, namely that the contribution of SAC countries should be calculated on the final amount of EC subsidy as stated in the budget outturn account and not on the voted budget at the beginning of the year (that did not reflect amendments during the year).

Although the wording in the finding can be somewhat confusing on the correct method, the auditors provided as an Annex to the preliminary finding with the correct method of calculation to be used by the Agency. The method proposed by the auditors took into account the EC subsidy with any amendment occurring during the year. This method is in line with the method that Frontex has been using over the last years.

b) In 2016, following up on the finding from ECA, the working group on budget and accounts presented the new methodology, as proposed by the auditors, to the Management Board. This method has been in place since the 2017 budget calculations.

c) The annual report on EU Agencies for the financial year for 2017, where the finding from 2014 was followed up, and where again, it states that the calculations are to be based on the final EC contribution at the end of year and not on the initial voted budget, was considered as completed. This is the result of the change in methodology as indicated in the previous point.

d) In COM(2015)671COM(2018) 631 final, and COM(2015)671 which were the European Commission's proposals to the European Parliament and Council, the legislative financial statement (LFS) indicates that the SAC countries contributions are to be calculated with EC subsidy and GDP comparison as the basis. These are the proposals that gave rise to the new Frontex regulation in 2016 and 2019 as approved.

Furthermore, the documents specify the expected contributions for the next several years, with calculations made over the EU subsidy. Important to note, that the agreements with SAC countries were already in place, before the new regulation and therefore they were surely, considered, in the LFS and legislative act.

e) The Agency contacted the European Commission for clarification. DG HOME and DG BUDG provided in 2020 their opinion on this matter twice. They consider the current method to be correct and that there is no legal basis for the change as requested by the Accounting Officer.

f) There is a principal issue with the approach for calculation as preferred by the Accounting Officer. If the Agency is to calculate the contributions based on the total final budget at the end of the year, the amount will already include the SAC contributions. This would in practice mean a double taxation from those countries on their own contributions.

Also, (using the total budget as reference) and considering the possibility that Frontex will get additional revenue from other agreements not related to the Schengen Acquis – but still adding up to the total budget – SAC countries would have to contribute to activities outside of the scope of the agreements in place.

g) On 25 April 2021 Frontex received a review on third countries contributions issued by ECA. This issue was not included into the review (the review describes different formulas for calculation, the proportionality factor), nevertheless, the closing remarks state that there is no single automatic formula for setting the contributions to the EU and agencies budgets or standardised methods for adjusting them. The final contribution amount is in most cases agreed following negotiations with the non-EU country, which are based on many factors including political interests and an assessment of the country's participation in that programme or activity. This creates a diverse system of arrangements for establishing the contributions.

It is also stated that for the next multiannual financial framework, the Commission is seeking to increase consistency. Consequently, the Commission agreed on horizontal guidance on contributions of non-EU countries to the Union programmes, covering some basic parameters. The Commission emphasised that the new guidance can only be applied to new international agreements and will therefore not apply to contributions under the existing EEA Agreement or Schengen acquis-related agreements.

h) There was also the argument that the current method does not reflect the difference in economic power between EU MS and SAC countries. This argument seems flawed. The purpose of using the GDP/GNI exactly allows to measure existing difference and to consider them when calculating the contributions. The actual contribution from SAC countries it is even higher than initially predicted.

i) Lastly, the corrections required by the Accounting Officer and the amount of 2.7 M EUR indicated in the final accounts as the difference between the current SAC contributions and his views on what they should contribute is also flawed. This does not take into consideration that in 2020 the Agency – through an amending budget – returned 90 million EUR of its funding to EC. This would mean a reduction of the SAC contributions, in comparison with the estimates.

For all the above arguments, and considering legal texts, assessment by the EC, MB, ECA reports and internal reasoning, Frontex sees that the current method in use for the calculation as substantiated and correct.

#### **2.8. b. Follow up of recommendations issued following investigations by OLAF**

On the basis of the findings and evidence collected, OLAF final report on case no. OC/2021/0451/A1, established facts in the course of the investigation and concluded their inquiry with the outcome that serious misconduct and other irregularities were committed by the respective persons concerned.

For the grouped three (3) categories of failings (1. failure to follow procedures and processes, 2. failure in the duty of loyalty and 3. failure in the managerial responsibilities), Frontex was granted access to the report close to the end of 2022, the Agency identified nine countermeasures to address the listed wrongdoings, drew up an action plan, which implementation is being regularly reported to the Management Board.

#### **2.9. Follow up of observations from the discharge authority**

##### **The discharge authority's (European Parliament's) observations and measures taken by Frontex**

On 4 May 2022 the European Parliament voted to postpone the decision on granting discharge to the Agency for the financial year 2020 and adopted a Resolution <sup>(35)</sup> forming an integral part of the Decision on the discharge. In September 2022, the Agency reported <sup>(36)</sup> to the European Parliament on the state of implementation of observations contained in this Resolution.

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(35) Resolution (EU) 2022/1807 of the European Parliament.

(36) ARES (2022)6451059.

On 18 October 2022, the European Parliament voted to refuse granting discharge to the Agency for the financial year 2020 and adopted a Resolution <sup>(37)</sup> forming an integral part of the Decision on Discharge. In December 2022, the Agency informed on the state of implementation of observations contained in this resolution.

**The observations reported as completed/implemented:**

1. Regarding a provisional budgetary commitment being carried forward without the Agency having entered legal commitment within the time limit.
2. Regarding the implementation of the conditions formulated for the 2019 discharge of the Agency.
3. Regarding the recruitment of at least 40 fundamental rights monitors.
4. Regarding return-related activities of the Agency in support of Hungary.
5. Regarding making sure that all signals concerning professional misconduct are taken seriously and properly followed-up and regarding the compulsory training on harassment for management and for all staff.

**The observations reported as ongoing:**

1. Regarding the appointment of the new Executive Director, and the implementation of the FSWG recommendations.
2. Regarding the commitment for the preparation of an action plan on the remedial actions.
3. Regarding the evaluation of the Agency's activities in Greece.
4. Regarding the revision of the serious incident report standard operating procedure.
5. Regarding increase in accountability and transparency.
6. Regarding the analysis and follow up to the issues raised in the OLAF report (several observations).
7. Regarding the implementation of ECA Special Report 8/2021 recommendations.
8. Regarding the implementation of the European Ombudsman recommendations in strategic inquiry OI/4/2021/MHZ, and on the development and implementation of a code of conduct ensuring transparency and good management.
9. Regarding further development of structures of cooperation, information sharing and exchange of best practices on fundamental rights between the Agency and Member States.
10. Regarding the implementation of the recommendations in the annual report of the FRO for 2021.
11. Regarding redrafting of the Management Board decisions on data processing rules to ensure full compliance with the EU data protection rules.
12. Regarding an action plan with measures ensuring zero tolerance towards sexual and psychological harassment.

## **2.10. Environment management**

*NB: in line with the Commission communication Brussels, 20.4.2020 C(2020) 2297 final, on guidelines to elaborate the CAAR, this segment of the report constitutes a summary of the more detailed information provided as Annex IX of this document.*

In March 2022, Frontex published on its website the final report and the visual booklet findings of The Green Deal and the European Border and Coast Guard (europa.eu) <sup>(38)</sup>. The overall goal of the study was to support Frontex and the EBCG community in reducing the environmental footprints of their facilities, operations, and services in order to achieve and then maintain a high level of environmental sustainability.

With the aim at contributing to the EU strategic priorities in this policy, Frontex is addressing sustainability and resilience in the framework of capability development activities to explore how its capabilities can be sustained over time and their resilience enhanced to be able to meet the evolving nature of the challenges at the external borders. To that end, sustainability principles are being addressed on the strategic and operational level. As for strategy developments in 2022, the key elements of resilience concept linking to sustainability have been included in the draft multiannual strategy for developing the Agency's own technical capabilities, which shall be adopted by the Management Board in 2023.

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(37) Resolution 2023/326 of the European Parliament.

(38) <https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/the-green-deal-and-the-european-border-and-coast-guard-vRwylg>

During 2022, environmental and social elements were introduced in critical Frontex procurement procedures. Inclusion of green, sustainable criteria and solutions in Frontex tenders have been persistently fostered in 2022 via the provision of relevant advice to Frontex entities prior to launching a procurement procedure, periodic use of the different services offered by the Green Public Procurement Helpdesk. In this line, the terms of reference developed to procure travel services for the standing corps included the requirement for the successful bidder to provide detailed information on the environmental impact in respect of each flight or journey arranged with the view of decreasing our carbon footprint in this domain.

In the area of returns, the Agency organises several thousand of returns to third countries each year by means of both scheduled and chartered flights and the number of airlines cooperating with the Agency in carbon offsetting is gradually increasing. The initiative on the offsetting of the carbon footprint was finalised with internal and external partners in 2022, and it will be consistently implemented from 2023 with one airline group.

Frontex also continues sharing good practices, insights and lessons learnt with other peer EU entities on various occasions, such as during the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies (JHAA) workshop on the Greening of JHA Agencies' administration held in November 2022.

Frontex is also an active partner in EMPACT, the EU most relevant policy initiative to counter serious organised and international crime. EnviCrime is one of the crime priorities where Frontex is engaged since the outset. For the EMPACT cycle 2022–2025, Frontex is the Action Leader of an Operational Activity (OA) aimed at preventing, detecting and combating illegal waste trafficking at the EU external borders, both at land and sea borders.

Among the actions developed to ensure duty of care and occupational health and safety, some are following environmental considerations such as the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to launch alerts about possible harmful environmental conditions during deployments.

Regarding the environmental performance of the premises, the Agency's leases the offices in two modern A-class buildings in the centre of Warsaw that have the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) certificate and are built according to the green building standards. Regarding the new permanent premises in July 2022, Frontex launched the request for potential companies to participate in the design and construction of the building. The award criteria are aligned with the EU goals of climate neutrality in 2030 and no-net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050.

To conclude, as the environmental footprint of Frontex will grow in the upcoming years, as a result of increasing number of staff, technical equipment, geographical spread, and intensity of operational activities, Frontex is working in finding best ways to decrease environmental impact per person and per piece of technical equipment while ensuring operational capabilities are sustained.

## 2.11. Assessment by management

Year 2022 was a particularly demanding year for Frontex and for the EU border management. Despite unprecedented challenges, the Agency continued to remain a reliable partner for the rest of the European integrated border management community, providing expertise and support to Member States and neighbouring countries to secure the EU external borders. With only few exceptions, the Agency overall fulfilled the expectations set by the key performance indicators and made good progress in the implementation of its enlarged mandate as set out in the Regulation.

The CAAR describes main achievements and activities of the Agency in 2022, including reinforced operational support in the aftermath of the Russia's invasion on Ukraine, further development of analytical products, enhanced support in the area of returns and continued preparation of the launch of ETIAS.

The Agency has in place a comprehensive set of processes to plan its annual work programme and to monitor and report reliably on its implementation. In 2022, the Agency reviewed and updated its set of performance indicators to better reflect the Agency's expanded mandate and meet stakeholders' expectations.

A development with serious consequences for the Agency was the conclusions of the European Anti-Fraud Office's (OLAF) investigation regarding potential misconduct and/or irregularities related to Frontex's possible involvement in and/or cover-up of illegal pushbacks. In October 2022, the European Parliament voted to refuse Frontex discharge of the 2020 budget, citing among others the findings of the OLAF investigation. The Agency is following up on the observations and recommendations issued by the discharge authority and is regularly informing the discharge authority about the progress made.

During the transition period which continued from April until the end of the year, the Agency's management managed to ensure business continuity in the Agency, enhance oversight and accountability, improve the

management culture, strengthen the fundamental rights framework, and improve stakeholders' trust. To further follow up on the issues raised in the OLAF report, the Agency drafted an action plan which was presented to the Management Board in January 2023.

To strengthen internal oversight, the Internal Audit Capability was established, and the Internal Audit Chapter adopted in September. The Agency also systematically examined the available control results as well as the observations and recommendations of the Internal Audit Service (IAS), the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Ombudsman, and made progress in their implementation albeit with delays in some areas.

At the end of 2022, 10 IAS recommendations were in the implementation phase, out of which none was considered 'critical', while 6 were assessed as 'very important'. The latter stemmed from the recent audits on HR planning, allocation and recruitment (2020) and on governance (2021). Implementation of these recommendations will be prioritised in 2023 as a crucial step towards the improvement of the efficiency of key processes within the Agency.

The Agency is continuously taking steps to improve the budgeting process, including better monitoring and forecasting of the budget implementation, given the increasingly large annual budgets. In 2022, the Agency achieved 99% budget implementation with regard to commitments, and 50% with regard to payments after two budget amendments to return funds to the general EU budget (EUR 41.7 million, and EUR 15.5 million) and a decrease by corresponding amount of SAC contributions (EUR 2.9 million, EUR 1.1 million). In this respect the Agency acknowledges the need to improve its financial performance in terms of timeliness of payments and with regard to deviations from standard procedures logged in the Register of Exceptions.

Several factors influenced the capacity to implement the budget fully including the impact of COVID-19 on the operational activities in the last two and a half years and the war in Ukraine. The latter led to cancellations of certain missions and affected supply chains and the ability of contractors to deliver services and equipment on time. In addition, high inflation rates in Poland delayed certain procurement procedures. Internal factors such as availability of human resources and operational constraints also played a role.

With 753 recruitments and the net increase in staff number of 509 in 2022, Frontex strengthened its position as the largest EU Agency in terms of the number of staff. In 2022 as many as 2,063 posts and positions (temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts) were filled at the end of the year, compared to 1,554 at the beginning of the year. Key recruitment activities in 2022 included the completion of onboarding of the new Deputy Executive Directors in early 2022, recruitment of Fundamental Rights Monitors and additional 325 standing corps officers, and the appointment of the new Executive Director at the end of the year.

### Part III - Assessment of effectiveness of internal control systems

Internal control is a process that helps an organisation to achieve its objectives and sustain operational and financial performance, respecting rules and regulations. It supports sound decision making, taking into account risks to the achievement of objectives and reducing them to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls. Internal control applies to all activities, irrespective of whether they are financial or non-financial.

Following the expanded mandate and responsibilities of Frontex under the Regulation as well as the introduction of changes to the European Commission's internal control framework in April 2017, the Frontex internal control framework (ICF) was updated accordingly<sup>(39)</sup>. Hereunder the components, principles and characteristics of the Frontex Internal Control System:

Components	Principles
I. Control Environment	1. Demonstrates a commitment to integrity and ethical values.
	2. Internal Control function demonstrates independence from management and exercises oversight of the development and performance of internal control.
	3. Management establishes, with political oversight, structures, reporting lines, and appropriate authorities and responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives.
	4. Demonstrates a commitment to attract, develop, and retain competent individuals in alignment with objectives.
	5. Holds individuals accountable for their internal control responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives.

(39) Frontex Internal Control Framework was adopted by the Management Board Decision 32/2017 on 22 November 2017.

<b>II. Risk Assessment</b>	6. Specifies objectives with sufficient clarity to enable the identification and assessment of risks relating to objectives.
	7. Identifies risks to the achievement of its objectives across the organisation and analyses risks as a basis for determining how the risks should be managed.
	8. Considers the potential for fraud in assessing risks to the achievement of objectives.
	9. Identifies and assesses changes that could significantly impact the internal control system.
<b>III. Control Activities</b>	10. Selects and develops control activities that contribute to the mitigation of risks to the achievement of objectives to acceptable levels.
	11. Selects and develops general control activities over technology to support the achievement of objectives.
	12. Deploys control activities through corporate policies that establish what is expected and in procedures that put policies into action.
<b>IV. Information &amp; Communication</b>	13. Obtains or generates and uses relevant quality information to support the functioning of internal control.
	14. Internally communicates information, including objectives and responsibilities for internal control, necessary to support the functioning of internal control.
	15. Communicates with external parties about matters affecting the functioning of internal control.
<b>V. Monitoring Activities</b>	16. Selects, develops, and performs ongoing and/or separate assessments to ascertain whether the components of internal control are present and functioning.
	17. Assesses and communicates internal control deficiencies in a timely manner to those parties responsible for taking corrective action.

These structured approach based components and principles aim at providing reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the five objectives:

1. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations;
2. reliability of reporting;
3. safeguarding of assets and information;
4. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities, and
5. adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

To address its objectives appropriately and effectively, Frontex follows a risk-based approach. This approach enables the Agency to act according to its strategic directions safeguarded by internal control processes and mechanisms that provide the Executive Director with reasonable assurance that Frontex delivers effectively even in cases where business continuity measures are activated.

The current ICF defines five major components that underpin the framework's structure and support the Agency in its efforts to achieve its objectives, namely: (1) control environment, (2) risk assessment, (3) control activities, (4) information and communication, and (5) monitoring activities. These five components are integrated and must be present and effective at all levels of the Agency, in order for the internal control over Frontex's operations to be considered effective.

There are seventeen (17) principles attributed to these five components. The principles supported the implementation of the ICF during 2022 and served as a guidance for the management when assessing whether each of the above-mentioned components is present and functioning effectively and in harmony. A holistic approach of assessing the framework based on the detailed guidelines described in the 17 principles contributes to providing reasonable assurance that the Agency's objectives are met, as they specify the actions required for maintaining an effective internal control with all five components working properly together.

The Executive Director was mandated to implement the framework, and to conduct an overall assessment of the presence and functioning of all internal control components at least annually (in the context of the preparation of the consolidated annual activity report), in order to:

- develop and/or streamline the processes, structures and functions to accommodate changes resulting from the revision of the Frontex internal control framework, and in particular the processes of risk management, control, planning and evaluating, reporting, and communicating;
- ensure the adequate resources for an efficient and consistent implementation, and effective assessment of the internal control system;
- to take appropriate actions to establish and manage the revised internal control framework with the support of the Inspection and Control Office entrusted as internal control coordinator function, the Office facilitated

the process and supported managers in defining the baselines and targets as regards internal control, taking into account their specificities and risks, and to improve awareness and understanding of the internal control framework by all staff, in particular through training, information and support activities.

### 3.1. Effectiveness of the internal control system

Principle 16 (attributed to component Monitoring) of the Internal Control Framework states that ‘The Agency selects, develops, and performs ongoing and/or separate assessments to ascertain whether the components of internal control is well-founded and properly implemented across Frontex:

The following five components of the ICF work together to ensure that a robust internal control within Frontex:

1. **Control environment** – directed leadership, shared values and a culture that emphasises accountability for control.
2. **Risk assessment** – the various risks facing the company are identified and assessed routinely at all levels and within all functions in the organization.
3. **Control activities** – control activities and other mechanisms are proactively designed to address and mitigate the significant risks.
4. **Information and communication** – information critical to identifying risks and meeting business objectives is communicated through established channels across the organisation.
5. **Monitoring activities** – the entire system of internal control is monitored continuously, and problems are addressed timely.

The Authorising Officer performed the required assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control system, based on the Frontex Internal Control Framework. A number of surveys, reports, audit results, non-compliances, complaints, risks, opportunities, ex-post evaluations and other sources of information were analysed to draw conclusions.

**Description of the ICS assessment exercise.** Exercise performed according to the following steps:

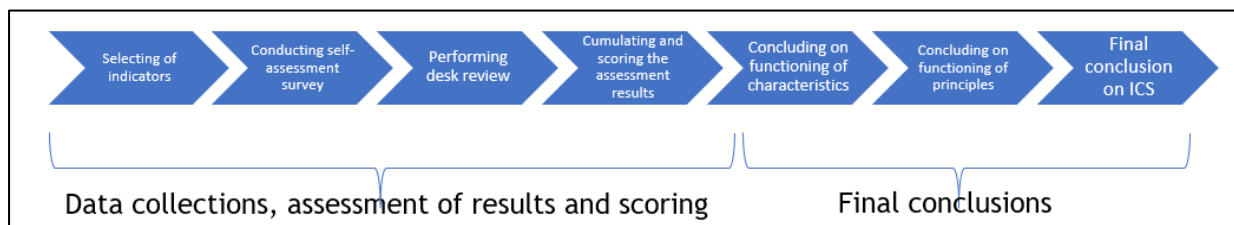


Figure 1. Process of the ICS assessment exercise.

**Internal control indicators.** To measure the performance of the individual internal control principles and characteristics in general, a number of soft and hard indicators are established. The list of indicators has been selected by choosing the most relevant from the list made available by DG BUDG.

**Self-assessment survey.** **Soft indicators** were measured via a self-assessment survey, (soft indicators show a perception, and hence are subjective in character). The internal control self-assessment survey was initiated in December 2022. The managers were invited to assess statements (control indicators) related to different control characteristics or principles and to show their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements (on a scale from 5 – fully agree to 1 – fully disagree). The target set was to reach a level of 85% agreement with the statements. The assessment results were calculated by scoring from 0 (characteristic is not effective at all) to 3 (very effective), taking into consideration the percentage of agreements with the survey statements accordingly: results between 0 < 25% score 0; between 50% < 25% score 1; between 85% < 50%; score 2 and results > 85% score 3.

**Hard indicators** are measured based on facts. The majority of hard indicators are measured via desk review and are related to an assessment of appropriate control documentation or activity. Such indicators answer closed questions (yes/no). The scoring is given accordingly: 0 – not all, 1 – started, 2 – in progress, 3 – yes.

The output of the internal control indicators’ assessment is a **score given to an internal control characteristic**. If a characteristic has more than one indicator, the final score was calculated by creating an average of all indicators. The maximum score given is 3 – no risks linked, followed by 2 – some or significant risks, mitigating

actions introduced, 1 – some risks, mitigating actions not introduced and 0 – significant risks, mitigating actions not introduced.

**Assessment of characteristics taking into consideration audit issues (recommendations).** The status of ECA and IAS observations and recommendations has been analysed, linking issues identified with the internal control characteristics. The final score was given accordingly: 3 – no issues linked, 2 – important, 1 – very important or important with delay in implementation and 0 - critical with delay in implementation.

**Assessment of characteristics and principles taking into consideration the report on exceptions and non-compliance events.** The exceptions and non-compliance events were linked with the internal control characteristics. The final score was given accordingly: 3 – no exception/non-compliance linked, 2 – some exceptions, 1 – some exceptions and non-compliance, 0 – significant number of non-compliance and exceptions.

After all the steps listed above had been finalised, the results were compiled and the final score for each characteristic was calculated as a sum of all 4 scores, having the maximum score of 12 (Figure 2).

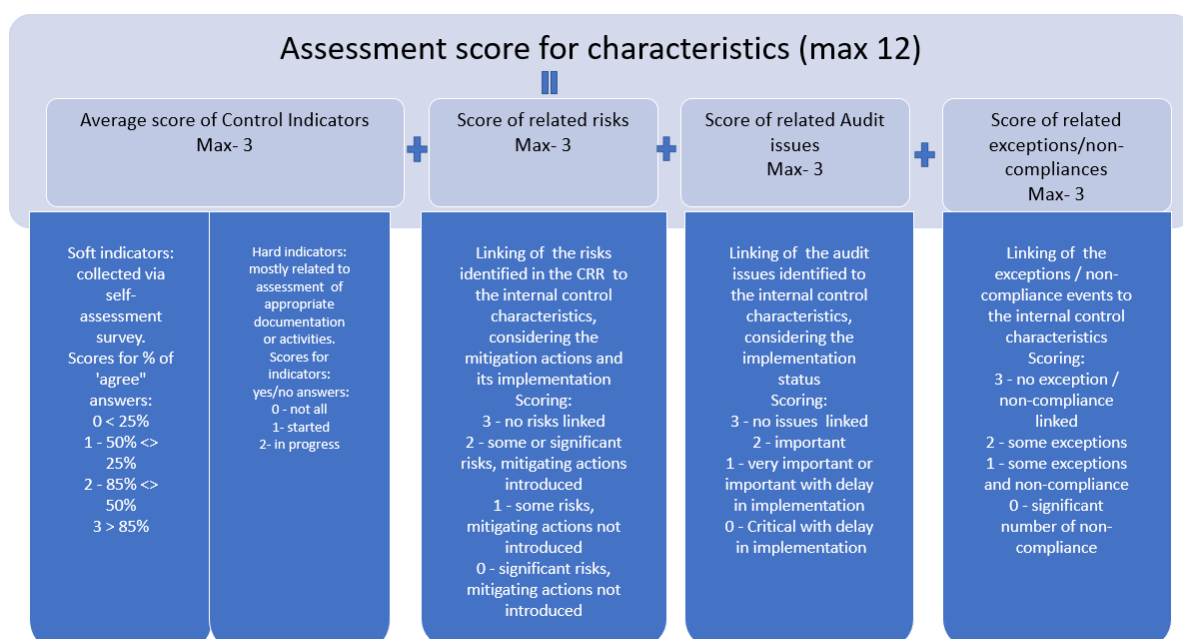


Figure 2. Assessment score for characteristics.

The severity of identified deficiencies in relation to the characteristics is according to the scale:

- **Minor deficiency** – it has a minor impact on the presence and/or functioning of the principle. The principle is in place and functions well, if only minor improvements are needed, when at least 1 of 4 pillars contributing to the final assessment are having the highest score 3, meaning the total score is  $\geq 9$ .
- **Moderate deficiency** – it has a moderate impact on the presence and/or functioning of the principle. With such a deficiency, the principle is in place and functions, but some improvements are needed, when the total score is from 6 to 8.
- **Major deficiency** – it has a significant impact on the presence and/or functioning of the principle, making the principle partially effective. With such a deficiency, the principle is partially in place and/or is partially functioning; substantial improvements are needed, when are scored at least 1, meaning the total score is from 4 to less than 6.
- **Critical deficiency** – it has a fundamental impact on the presence and/or functioning of the principle and the principle is not effective. With such a deficiency, the principle is not in place and/or essentially does not function as intended, when is scored 0, meaning the total scope for all 4 pillars is less than 4.

#### Description of the defined conclusions on presence and functioning of the principles

- **Category 1.** The principle is present and functioning well, only minor improvements are needed. Only minor deficiencies are identified, or one moderate deficiency is identified, however, the average score is more than 10.

- **Category 2.** The principle is present and functioning, but some improvements are needed. Minor or moderate deficiencies are identified, or one major deficiency is identified, however, the average score is more than 8 but less than 10.
- **Category 3.** The principle is partially present and functioning, major improvements are needed. When a major deficiency or combination of moderate deficiencies exists – the principle is partially effective, the average score is more than 6 but less than 8.
- **Category 4.** The principle is not present and functioning. The existence of a critical internal control deficiency or combination of several major deficiencies, combined with the average score of the principles less than 6, determines that the principle in general is not effective. A critical/major deficiency in one principle cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level by the effectiveness of other principles.

## ICS 2022 assessment results

### Component I - Control environment

**This component is present and functioning, with an aggregate score of 9.54, falls within category 2 and some improvements are needed.**

The overall scoring for the component 'Control Environment' is category 2. The level of overall deficiencies is in general minor. Out of the five principles of the component, three are assigned to category 1, meaning that the principle is present and functioning, and minor improvements are needed. On the other hand, one principle is assigned to category 2, meaning that the principle is functioning despite some improvements are needed and one to category 3 indicating that the principle is partially present and functioning, major improvements are needed.

The assessment showed **no deficiencies** are identified in the domains of planning; annual activity reporting and declaration of assurance; and reporting lines.

Improvements are needed in six areas where low scores indicate **moderate deficiencies**:

- Tone at the top: All management levels respect integrity and ethical values in their instructions, actions and behaviour;
- Alignment with standards: processes are in place to assess whether individuals and departments are aligned with the Agency's expected standards of conduct and to address deviations in a timely manner; and
- Four related to commitment to attract, develop, and retain competent individuals in alignment with objectives including competence framework, professional development, mobility and succession planning and deputising arrangements.

With regards to **Principle 1 – Demonstrates a commitment to integrity and ethical values**, the low score was attributed to the survey assessment of soft indicators which scored low (target audience was mainly Directors, and Deputy Directors i.e. Senior Management). Also, hard indicators for the reporting year 2022, such as corporate risks CR-6 (HR procedural limitations) and CR-9 (fundamental rights), and the IAS Report on Governance in 2022 contributed to the overall score for this principle. Principle 1 therefore scored the lowest of all 17 principles in the assessment, with a total of 7.47 out of 12, which represented category 3 with moderate deficiencies, and contributing to the overall score of the component 1 (Control Environment).

**Principle 2 – Internal Control function demonstrates independence from management and exercises oversight of the development and performance of internal control and Principle 3 – Management establishes, with political oversight, structures, reporting lines, and appropriate authorities and responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives** are in place and functioning, with only minor areas for improvement.

**Principle 4 – Demonstrates a commitment to attract, develop, and retain competent individuals in alignment with objectives**, scored an average of 8.04 (category 2) which indicates that the principle is present and functioning, but some improvements are needed with a deficiency rating of moderate. The main areas for improvement under principle 4, are identified as:

- Competence framework (IAS Audit 2019 Human Resources planning, allocation and recruitment);

- Professional development (AS Audit 2019 Human Resources planning, allocation and recruitment);
- Succession planning and deputising arrangements (AS Audit 2019 Human Resources planning, allocation and recruitment).

This was marked as a major deficiency rating at 7.67 (succession planning and deputising arrangements for operational activities and financial transactions are in place to ensure continuity of operations). In this domain improvement is needed as succession planning and deputising arrangements for both operational activities and financial transactions impacting on business continuity; therefore corrective measures are advised in this area.

**Principle 5 – Holds individuals accountable for their internal control responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives** was also considered to be in place and functioning (category 1) with only minor areas for improvement. However, as in the previous year, this principle was impacted by the overall very low implementation rate as regards audit recommendations. The Agency is strongly advised to improve on the timing of implementation of audit recommendations. There were improvements in the following areas which moved from category 2 to category 1:

- Management establishes, with political oversight, structures, reporting lines, and appropriate authorities and responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives;
- Holds individuals accountable for their internal control responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives.

#### Summary of main areas of concern

The fact that accountability has improved is positive, but there is room for improvement as assessed by the senior management in terms of alignment with standards and the tone at the top. It is strongly recommended to address these areas as a priority and to therefore to work on mitigation measures to address these two areas which scored below 7, including serious efforts to reduce the overall number of deviations i.e. exceptions and non-compliances which are authorised at the level of the AO(D(SD)). In addition, there is a need to address succession planning and deputising arrangements which also scored low at 7.67.

#### Summary table – Control Environment

Principle/Characteristic	Final Score 2022	Deficiency/ Category 2022	Final Score 2021	Deficiency/ Category 2021
1. Demonstrates a commitment to integrity and ethical values.	7.47	Category 3	9.72	Category 2
1.1. Tone at the top.	6.67	Moderate	11.33	Minor
1.2. Standards of conduct.	9.00	Minor	10.33	Minor
1.3. Alignment with standards.	6.75	Moderate	7.5	Moderate
2. Internal Control function demonstrates independence from management and exercises oversight of the development and performance of internal control.	10.83	Category 1	10.5	Category 1
2.1 Internal control function.	9.33	Minor	10	Minor
2.2. Each manager oversees the internal control systems within his/her division/unit/function.	10.00	Minor	8	Moderate
2.3. The Planning and Evaluation.	12.00	No Deficiencies	12	No deficiencies
2.4. The Annual Activity and declaration of assurance.	12.00	No Deficiencies	12	No deficiencies
3. Management establishes, with political oversight, structures, reporting lines, and appropriate authorities and responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives.	11.33	Category 1	9.53	Category 2
3.1. Management structures are comprehensive.	11.00	Minor	8.33	Moderate
3.2. Authorities and responsibilities.	11.00	Minor	8.25	Moderate
3.3. Reporting lines.	12.00	No Deficiencies	12	No deficiencies
4. Demonstrates a commitment to attract, develop, and retain competent individuals in alignment with objectives.	8.04	Category 2	7.5	Category 2
4.1. Competence framework.	8.00	Moderate	7.33	Moderate
4.2. Professional development.	8.50	Moderate	7	Moderate
4.3. Mobility.	8.00	Moderate	9	Minor
4.4. Succession planning and deputising arrangements.	7.67	Moderate	6.67	Moderate
5. Holds individuals accountable for their internal control responsibilities in the pursuit of objectives.	10.00	Category 1	8.67	Category 2
5.1. Enforcing accountability.	9.00	Minor	4	Major
5.2. Staff appraisal.	10.00	Minor	11	Minor
5.3. Staff promotion.	11.00	Minor	11	Minor

Table 30. Component I - Control environment.

#### Component II - Risk assessment

This component is present and functioning, with an aggregated score of 10.46, falls within category 1, and only minor improvements are needed.

For most of the characteristics only minor improvements are needed. Out of four related Principles, three Principles are assigned to Category 1 and one to Category 2.

Improvements are needed with respect to:

- Non-financial reporting objectives;
- Risk of fraud to be considered during the risk identification and assessment. (Ongoing monitoring);
- Allocation of resources based on objectives (Project resource management - IAS audit on IT Governance and Project Management).

**Summary table – Risk assessment**

Principle / Characteristic	Final Score 2022	Deficiency / Category 2022	Final Score 2021	Deficiency / Category 2021
6. Specifies objectives with sufficient clarity to enable the identification and assessment of risks relating to objectives.	9.69	Category 2	10.19	Category 1
6.1. Mission.	11.00	Minor	11.5	Minor
6.2. Objectives are set at every level.	8.00	Moderate	11	Minor
6.3. Objectives are set for the most significant activities.	9.50	Minor	11	Minor
6.4. Objectives form the basis for committing resources.	8.00	Moderate	9	Minor
6.5. Financial reporting objectives	9.00	Minor	11	Minor
6.6. Non-financial reporting objectives.	8.00	Moderate	8	Moderate
6.7. Risk tolerance and materiality.	12.00	Minor	10	Minor
6.8. Monitoring.	12.00	Minor	10	Minor
7. Identifies risks to the achievement of its objectives across the organisation and analyses risks as a basis for determining how the risks should be managed.	10.50	Category 1	10.33	Category 1
7.1. Risk identification.	9.00	Minor	8	Moderate
7.2. Risk assessment.	11.00	Minor	11	Minor
7.3. Risk identification and risk assessment are integrated into the annual activity planning	11.50	Minor	12	Minor
8. Considers the potential for fraud in assessing risks to the achievement of objectives.	10.67	Category 1	9.29	Category 2
8.1 Risk of fraud.	10.00	Minor	7.25	Moderate
8.2 Anti-fraud strategy.	11.33	Minor	11.33	Minor
9. Identifies and assesses changes that could significantly impact the internal control system.	11.00	Category 1	10	Category 1
9.1. Assess changes.	11.00	Minor	10	Minor

Table 31. Component II – Risk assessment.

### Component III - Control activities

This component, with an aggregated score of 9.62 is present and functioning, but some improvements are needed.

Out of three principles of this component, one is assigned to category 1 and two to category 2. The assessment of this component has identified some improvements in deficiencies in relation to **Principle 10 – Selects and develops control activities that contribute to the mitigation of risks to the achievement of objectives to acceptable levels** – which moved from category 3 in 2021 to category 2 in 2022.

However, it is noted that there are still some areas which do require improvement:

- Delay in implementation of audit's recommendations from IAS audit on: contract management, IT governance and project management; HR planning and allocation;
- ECA observations related to different control activities;
- Policy on sensitive posts is still pending adoption.

Moderate deficiencies are identified in relation to **Principle 11 – Selects and develops general control activities over technology to support the achievement of objectives**.

- Delay in the implementation of critical audit recommendations in the domain of IT project governance, mainly related to enterprise architecture, which is now planned for 2023;
- High amount of non-compliance events in the domain of contract and grants management.

**Summary table – Control Activities**

Principle/Characteristic	Final Score 2022	Deficiency/ Category 2022	Final Score 2021	Deficiency/ Category 2021
10. Selects and develops control activities that contribute to the mitigation of risks to the achievement of objectives to acceptable levels.	9.10	Category 2	7.3	Category 3
10.1. Control activities are performed to mitigate the identified risks and are cost-effective.	9.00	Minor	4.5	Major
10.2. Control activities are integrated in a control strategy.	9.00	Minor	9	Minor
10.3. Segregation of duties.	9.50	Minor	9	Minor
10.4. Business continuity plans based on a business impact.	11.00	Minor	10	Minor
10.5. Sensitive positions are identified.	7.00	Moderate	4	Major
11. Selects and develops general control activities over technology to support the achievement of objectives.	9.08	Category 2	7.58	Category 2
11.1. Control over technology.	8.67	Moderate	6.67	Moderate
11.2. Security of IT systems.	9.50	Minor	8.5	Moderate
12. Deploys control activities through corporate policies that establish what is expected and in procedures that put policies into action.	10.67	Category 1	9.61	Category 2
12.1. Appropriate control procedures ensure that objectives are achieved.	10.00	Minor	7.33	Moderate
12.2. Exceptions and non-compliance reporting.	11.50	Minor	11.5	Minor
12.3. Impact assessment and evaluation.	10.50	Minor	10	Minor

*Table 32. Component III Control activities.*

## Component IV - Information and communication

**Information and Communication – the component with an aggregated score of 8.78 is in category 2 and is present and functioning, but some improvements are needed.**

Out of three related principles, all are rated at category 2. A moderate deficiency is identified in relation to external communication, 15 – Communicates with external parties about matters affecting the functioning of internal control. This is due to:

- No external communication and stakeholders' management policy in place;
- High-level risk related to stakeholders' management identified in the CRR;
- IAS 'very important' recommendation on stakeholder management and external communication.

External communication related characteristic has the lowest score (6) due to the IAS recommendations and corporate risk identified on 'Stakeholder Management' and 'External Communications'. Within the scope of improvement to External Communication, there is a need to consolidate the communication lines and strategy, and to finally put in place a Communication Strategy.

**Summary table - Information and Communication**

Principle/Characteristic	Final Score 2022	Deficiency/ Category 2022	Final Score 2021	Deficiency/ Category 2021
13. Obtains or generates and uses relevant quality information to support the functioning of internal control.	9.00	Category 2	10.33	Category 1
13.1. Information and document management.	9.00	Minor	10.33	Minor
14. Internally communicates information, including objectives and responsibilities for internal control, necessary to support the functioning of internal control.	9.33	Category 2	10	Category 1
14.1. Internal communication.	8.67	Moderate	9	Minor
14.2. Separate communication lines are in place.	10.00	Minor	11	Minor
15. Communicates with external parties about matters affecting the functioning of internal control.	8.00	Category 2	8.25	Category 2
15.1. External communication.	6.00	Moderate	6.5	Moderate
15.2. Communication on internal control.	10.00	Minor	11	Minor

*Table 33. Component IV – Information and communication.*

## Component V - Monitoring activities

The component 'Monitoring activities' – is present and functioning rates as 10.54 (category 1)

Both principles of this component are assigned to category 1, meaning the principles are present and functioning well, while only minor improvements are needed.

Summary table – monitoring activities

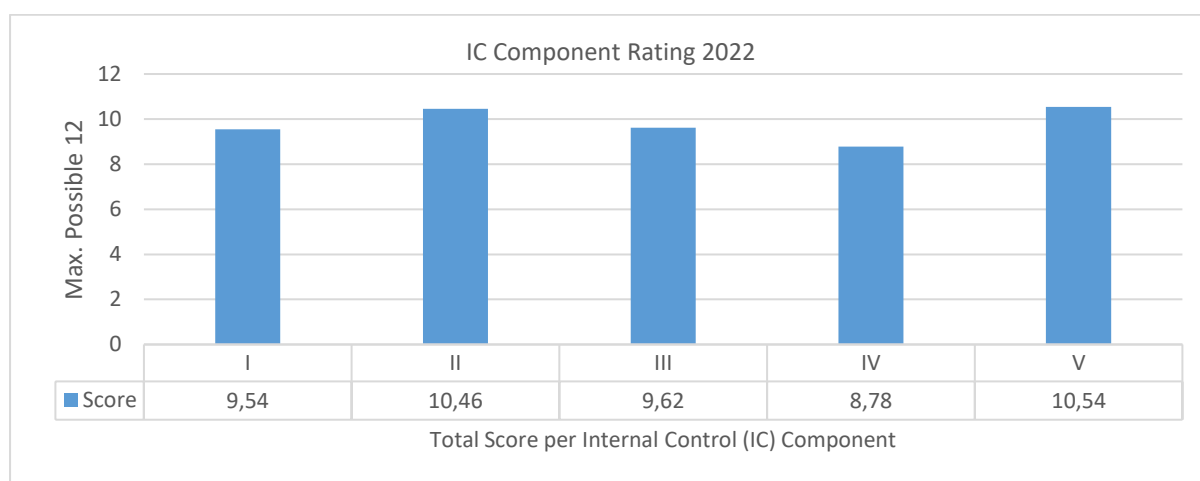
Principle/Characteristic	Final Score 2022	Deficiency/ Category 2022	Final Score 2021	Deficiency/ Category 2021
16. Selects, develops, and performs ongoing and/or separate assessments to ascertain whether the components of internal control are present and functioning.	10.83	Category 1	10.92	Category 1
16.1. Continuous and specific assessments.	11.00	Minor	9.75	Minor
16.2. Sufficient knowledge and information.	10.50	Minor	11	Minor
16.3. Risk-based and periodical assessments.	11.00	Minor	12	Minor
17. Assesses and communicates internal control deficiencies in a timely manner to those parties responsible for taking corrective action.	10.25	Category 1	10.25	Category 1
17.1. Deficiencies.	11.50	Minor	11.5	Minor
17.2. Remedial action.	9.00	Minor	9	Minor

Table 34. Component V – Monitoring activities.

**Conclusions on the functioning of the Internal Control System (ICS): the system of internal controls was partially effective in 2022.**

All five components are present and functioning, while there are areas identified for improvement noted at the time of the assessment exercise covering the year 2022, the weaknesses identified do not call into question the declaration of assurance for the year 2022.

The maximum aggregate score possible for the soft and hard indicators was 12, below is a graph representation of the aggregate score per component. Two components are present and functioning – risk assessment and monitoring activities while for the three further improvement is required.



Graph 11. IC Component rating 2022.

### 3.2. Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The conclusions were elaborated based on the following relevant data and information:

- regular internal control activities, including the monitoring and periodical update of Frontex corporate risk register, analysis of the register of exceptions and non-compliance events (quarterly reports), monitoring of implementation of improvement actions, the annual assessment of the internal control system.
- the opinion of the internal auditor (IAS) as expressed in the audit reports and in its assessment of the implementation of post audit recommendations.
- the opinion and observations of the external auditor of Frontex (European Court of Auditors –ECA) as well as Frontex actions proposed in response to the observations and recommendations received.
- other issues identified ad-hoc during meetings at strategic and tactical levels as part of the ongoing assessment of the internal control system.

This information result from a systematic analysis of the available evidence. This approach should allow to provide ‘reasonable assurance’ so as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported.

The control results and other elements that support management’s assurance are detailed in sections 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11 and 3.1 of this consolidated annual activity report 2022 and are as follows: audit observations and recommendations, follow-up on recommendations from audits, investigations and observations from the discharge authority, the register of exceptions and the assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system.

All directors of divisions, and where appropriate, their subordinated staff were requested to issue individual declarations of assurance which were presented to the Executive Director as an input and supporting evidence for him to prepare his own declaration of assurance as the Agency’s Authorising Officer.

The Agency’s Authorising Officer performed the required assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control system, based on Frontex’s Internal Control Framework.

#### **Compliance and effectiveness of Internal Control Framework**

Conclusions as to the overall appreciation of the effectiveness of the internal control system: Frontex has an internal control framework (ICF) in place which specifies the necessary requirements, actions and expectations in order to build an effective system of internal control that can provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of Frontex objectives.

The internal control system also includes a number of internal procedures, for example, guidance on conflicts of interests, three codes of conduct, ex-ante and ex-post control policies and financial and procurement procedures. New internal procedures are introduced when necessary and existing procedures are revised at regular intervals.

In accordance with the outcome of the annual risk assessment exercise and in view of the existence of overdue audit recommendations, the Agency can conclude that its internal control system, although deemed as overall effective, still requires some improvements as corroborated by the internal control assessment summarised in section 3.1 of this consolidated annual activity report 2022. In view of that, the Agency will continue during 2023 addressing these shortfalls.

The management of the Agency acknowledges the importance of setting the tone at the top for this improvement and expresses its commitment to conclude a major review of the process for the following-up on the implementation of action plans to address audit recommendations received. The Agency envisions gathering objective evidence for a major improvement in this regard within the year 2023 whereby only on duly justified cases an audit recommendation could be overdue by more than six months.

### 3.3. Statement of the Head of Inspection and Control Office

I, the undersigned, manager in charge of risk management and internal control within Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, in my capacity as manager in charge of risk management and internal control, I declare that in accordance with Frontex's Internal Control Framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the Agency to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022 and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.

Warsaw, 10/04/2023

[signed]

Michael Juritsch

## Part IV - Management assurance

### 4.1. Review of the elements supporting assurance

Frontex conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, striving to deliver in line with the expected high level of professional and ethical standards while upholding EU values and full respect to fundamental rights.

The Agency's Internal Control Framework, based on the equivalent standards laid down by the European Commission and international best practice, aimed to ensure the achievement of policy and operational objectives. Further to this, Frontex Financial Regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems are set up in accordance with these principles.

In light of the measures in place to ensure legality and regularity, in particular: the risk self-assessment carried out; ex ante verification; the ex post evaluations, the systematic registration and follow-up of exceptions; the system for the delegations of the powers embedded in different areas of the Agency's activities and the opinions, the value added from relevant roles in this respect including Frontex Internal Audit Capability, Fundamental Rights Officer, Data protection office and our Accounting service; the results of the self-assessment on the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control system carried out at Divisional level and the opinions expressed in the final reports by internal and external auditors it can be concluded that the Agency's internal control system is appropriate and provides reasonable assurance on the implementation of the five components included in the Internal Control Framework as present and functioning although some improvements were identified for implementation during 2022.

This approach provides sufficient guarantees of the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in exhaustive coverage of the budget delegated to the Executive Director.

### 4.2. Reservations

Based on the internal control assessment process, the Directors of Divisions who were in charge of risk management and internal control of the activities performed by the Division under their managerial remit, confirmed that the state of internal control in their division during 2022 was duly reported, and the information provided and represented in Part 3.1 of the report is to the best of their knowledge, accurate and complete.

Following these statements, and the outcome of the overall internal control assessment process for year 2022, it can be concluded that the internal control standards are present and functioning effectively. However, as described above, there are areas where improvements are needed. This is especially important given that there will be a continued increase in both financial and human resources envisaged in the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027. The significant changes in the mandate of the Agency will further impact on Frontex's activities, the internal organisation and the way it interacts with the Member States and other external stakeholders. It is anticipated that these changes will put a major strain on the internal control system, thus placing the revised Internal Control Framework in focus.

The information reported above stems from the results of internal control assessment processes, audits and monitoring and is contained in the reports listed above. This approach provides sufficient guarantees on the completeness and reliability of the information reported and provides a comprehensive coverage of Frontex's budget.

Reviewing the elements supporting the assurance as described and the evidence as presented in this Consolidated Annual Activity Report some areas for improvement were identified. However, they do not rise to the level of "reservations".

## Part V - Declaration of assurance

I, the undersigned, Executive Director of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency,

In my capacity as authorising officer,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the Agency.

However, the following reservations should be noted:

- I have taken note of the reservations expressed in the declaration of assurance from Fabrice Leggeri, as Executive Director of Frontex from 1 January 2022 to 28 April 2022, and in the declaration of assurance from Aija Kalnaja, Executive Director ad interim of Frontex from 1 July 2022 to 28 February 2023. I am not in the position to provide an opinion on these reservations, as they relate to matters predating my entry into service as Frontex Executive Director on 1 March 2023. Nevertheless, I will ensure that the reservations are internally examined and will receive a follow-up, if appropriate.
- In Annex 3 (Statistics on financial management) of the consolidated annual activity report for Frontex for the year of 2022, the budget outturn indicated by the Agency's Accounting Officer is of EUR 52.7M, whilst the budget outturn calculated by financial services is of EUR 49.5M. The difference is stemming from the reading made from the legal agreements related to the Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) contributions to Frontex.
- In this regard the Agency, Management Board, European Commission and Schengen Associated Countries agree on the methodology to be used for the calculations of the SAC contributions. The methodology used by the Agency since 2016 is in line with the existing legal framework and the governing agreements with the SAC. During the 86<sup>th</sup> Management Board meeting of 21-22 September 2021, based on a thorough examination of the methodology carried out by the Management Board Working Group on Budget and Accounts in cooperation with other actors, the Management Board concluded that the calculation methodology for the SAC contributions to the budget of Frontex would not be revised <sup>(40)</sup>. The Accounting Officer has proposed a different methodology <sup>(41)</sup>. In addition, the Accounting Officer considers that the additional amount to be charged to SAC as per his calculations, which was not requested by the Agency, constitutes a loss to the EU Subsidy. The EU Subsidy is a fixed amount approved by Budgetary Authority, and it is not attributed in function of any other contributions that are made to the budget of the Agency.
- The Agency does not consider that the different opinion of the Accounting Officer on the methodology to calculate SAC contributions corresponds to a loss to the EU, since the amount indicated has never been a revenue for the Agency. In the adoption of the consolidated annual activity report for Frontex for the year 2022, the information on the Agency's budget outturn should be validated, while the budget loss identified by the Accounting Officer, pending a potential revision of the Management Board's position on the calculation methodology for SAC contributions, should not receive attention.

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*(40) The methodology used by the Agency considers that the SAC contributions are calculated in percentage of their GDP or GNI ratios, as applicable per the agreements, with the EU Subsidy as reference amount.*

*(41) The methodology of the Accounting Officer considers that the SAC contributions are calculated in percentage of their GDP or GNI ratios, as applicable per the agreements, with the Frontex total budget as reference amount.*

Place: Warsaw, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

[signed]

Hans Leijtens

Executive Director