

FRONT**X**



EUROPEAN BORDER AND
COAST GUARD AGENCY

Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023

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Main abbreviations

- ABAC Accrual Based Accounting
- ABN Annual Bilateral Negotiations
- API Advance Passenger Information
- BCP Border Crossing Point
- CBC Cross-Border Crime
- CCC Common Core Curriculum
- CEPOL European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
- CF Consultative Forum
- CIRAM Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model
- COM / EC European Commission
- CONT European Parliament Committee on Budgetary Control
- COSI Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
- CRO Collecting Return Operation
- CVAM Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology
- DPIA Data Protection Impact Assessment
- DPO Data Protection Officer
- EAD Empact Action Days
- EASA European Aviation Safety Agency
- EBCG European Border and Coast Guard
- (E)BTP (Extended) Basic Training Programme
- ECA European Court of Auditors
- EDPS European Data Protection Supervisor
- EEAS European External Action Service
- EES Entry Exit System
- EIBM European Integrated Border Management
- EMPACT European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats
- EMSA European Maritime Safety Agency
- EMWP Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration
- ERRIN European Return and Reintegration Network
- ETIAS European Travel Information and Authorisation System
- EUAA European Union Agency for Asylum
- EUBAM European Union Border Assistance 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
- Europol European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- EUROSUR European Surveillance System
- FADO False and Authentic Documents Online
- FAR Frontex Application for Returns
- FFR Frontex Financial Regulation
- FIELDS Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Document System
- FLO Frontex Liaison Officer
- FRA Fundamental Rights Agency
- FRESO Forced Return Escort and Support Officers
- FRO Fundamental Rights Officer
- FROM Fundamental Rights Monitor
- FSA Frontex Surveillance Aircraft
- FSWG Frontex Scrutiny Working Group
- FWC Framework contract
- HLRT High-Level Roundtable
- IAC Internal Audit Capability
- IAS Internal Audit Service
- IBC Illegal border crossing
- ILO Immigration Liaison Officer
- IPA Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
- IRMA Integrated Return Management Application
- IXIM Working Party on JHA Information Exchange
- JAD Joint-Action Day
- JHA Justice and Home Affairs
- JO Joint Operation
- JORA Joint Operation Reporting Application
- JRS Joint Reintegration Services
- LEWP Leaders to Working Party
- LIBE Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- MAS Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance
- MB Management Board
- MID Multiple Identity Detection
- MMO Multipurpose Maritime Operations
- MOA Multipurpose Operational Activities
- MOCADDEM Meeting of the Operational Coordination Mechanism for the External Dimension of Migration
- MOST Mobile Operational Support Teams
- MS Member State
- MS Mobile Surveillance Systems
- NCC National Coordination Centre
- NFPOC National Frontex Point of Contact
- OLAF European Anti-Fraud Office
- PAD Public Access to Documents
- PRAN Pre-Return Activities Network
- PRRN Post-Return and Reintegration Network
- RECAMAS Return Case Management System
- RIAT Reintegration Assistance Tool
- RPAS Remotely Piloted Aircraft System
- SAC Schengen Associated Countries
- SAR Search and Rescue
- SBC Schengen Borders Code
- SC standing corps
- SEACOP Seaport Cooperation Project
- SEM Schengen Evaluation Mechanism
- SIR Serious Incident Report
- SIS Schengen Information System
- SLA Service level agreement
- SLS Standard Level Service
- SNE Seconded National Experts
- SOP Standard Operating Procedure
- SPD Single Programming Document
- SRA Strategic Risk Analysis
- SRAN Strategic Risk Analysis Network
- SYSPER Human Resource Management information system of the European Commission
- TCN Third Country National
- TE Technical Equipment
- TOEIBM Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management
- VA Vulnerability Assessment
- VRN Voluntary Return Network
- WA Working Arrangement
- WG Working Group

Introduction

About the Agency

Frontex is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. Its main mission is to ensure - together with the Member States - safe and well-functioning external EU borders. The Agency contributes to the implementation of European integrated border management with a view to managing external EU borders efficiently and in full compliance with fundamental rights and to increasing the efficiency of the Union's return policy.

The Agency is governed by the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Agency's headquarters is in Warsaw (Poland).

About this report

This Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023. It presents the progress made by the Agency in achieving the objectives set in the Frontex Single Programming Document 2023-2025 through the implementation of the 2023 Annual Work Programme.¹ An overview of budgetary and human resources developments, as well as of evaluation, audit and internal control management activities, is also included in the report.

The report has been prepared following the guidelines provided by the European Commission² and taking into account the requirements stemming from the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896. It is submitted on behalf of the Executive Director to the Management Board. It shall be adopted by the Management Board and transmitted, by 1 July, to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

¹ Included in the Single Programming Document 2023-2025 as amended by the Management Board through amendments N1, N2, N3.

² 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, 20 April 2020, C(2020) 2297 final, Annex 2.

Executive summary

Strategic developments

In March 2023, the European Commission presented the **multiannual strategic policy for European Integrated Border Management** giving the steer for the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) to address challenges that affect the EU's external borders for the period 2023-2027. Consequently, Frontex's Management Board (MB) adopted in September the **Technical and Operational Strategy** which translated this policy steer into concrete actions to be implemented by the EBCG, including the Agency. Progress was also made on developing the Capability Roadmap which was presented to the MB at its November 2023 meeting. The Roadmap will provide the first ever consolidated framework for long-term investments in capabilities at both European and national levels.

Throughout 2023, the European Commission carried out the first **evaluation of the EBCG regulation**, which was finalised and adopted in February 2024. The evaluation concluded that despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the instrumentalisation of migration and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Frontex significantly contributed to strengthening the management of the EU's external borders in full compliance with fundamental rights. The evaluation is supplemented by the Action Plan, which will help the Agency to further improve its activities.

Internally, to reshape Frontex to better respond to the volatile migratory landscape and to fully align with its mandate, a **new organisational structure** was adopted by the MB in November 2023, along with the **2027 vision** setting strategic goals.

The key strategic operational development in 2023 was the successful **implementation of the pilot project Centurion to test the new Frontex Chain of Command concept**, which will be further rolled out in 2024. The main aim of the concept is to decentralise command and control and deploy standing corps officers in contingents.

Situational awareness

Throughout 2023, the Agency continued to support the operation of the **European Border Surveillance system (EUROSUR)**. Particular attention was given to improving **service quality** including through the establishment of the Standard Operating Procedure for EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS) quality assurance and the implementation of the European Court of Auditors' recommendations related to data quality reporting.

Under the EFS framework, **Frontex Surveillance Aircraft (FSA)** performed 938 Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance missions in pre-frontier area, during which 1,576 events involving approximately 69,600 migrants were detected. In the vast majority of those events migrants were in an emergency at sea, and FSA contributed to their rescue by immediately informing authorities and providing situational awareness.

The Agency also continued to provide **vessel tracking services**; 183 vessels of interest were tracked and 99 early alerts were delivered about vessels presenting abnormal behaviour.

Supporting the implementation of EU migration management policy, the Agency also regularly contributed **risk analyses and migration forecasts** to the Commission's Blueprint Network for Migration Management, Schengen Barometer and State of Schengen Report. In addition, in 2023 an analytical capability for risk management activities for the ETIAS was established and the risk analysis on returns was strengthened. Cooperation with MS/SAC and third countries was enhanced, including through the creation of a new thematic risk analysis network for cross-border crime and the finalisation of the project "Strengthening of Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community as an instrument to fight serious cross-border crime."

Contributing to the **reduction of vulnerability at the EU's external borders**, in 2023, the Agency delivered 29 Baseline Assessments, five Simulation Exercises and one Rapid Vulnerability Assessment. Based on their outcomes, 60 measures were recommended to MS and 47 implemented.

European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

In 2023, the Agency continued **setting up the ETIAS Central Unit (ECU)**. It finalised the recruitment and onboarding of the third wave of Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators, as well as of several specialised functions, and ensured that ETIAS Central Unit staff with the right to access and process data are adequately trained.

Throughout the year, the Agency progressed on the development of ECU internal rules and standard operating procedures, support services for carriers and travellers and simulation models, and kept improving many of the core capabilities. The business impact assessment, business continuity plan, security risk analysis and security plan were reviewed in cooperation with eu-LISA and internal stakeholders.

Cooperation with external stakeholders continued, to ensure the alignment of the legal, business, and technical streams for the development of the ETIAS. In this regard, Frontex supported the Commission, eu-LISA, Europol, and the Member States/Schengen Associated Countries in their respective activities for the implementation of ETIAS.

Operational response

In 2023, **24 joint operations** were implemented: 14 at Member States' external borders, seven in third countries with executive powers based on a Status Agreement and three in third countries based on a working arrangement. As a result of joint operations, 2,043 facilitators (people smugglers) were apprehended. The Agency also played an important role in **Search and Rescue (SAR) activities**. Maritime and aerial assets deployed to the joint operations (including host and participating MS, Frontex owned, co-owned and leased assets) were engaged in 785 SAR incidents, involving 43,508 migrants.

Throughout 2023, the Agency deployed to the operations 784,033 person-days of all three categories of standing corps. Of the total, 41% were standing corps category 1, 21% category 2, and 38% category 3. Germany contributed the highest number of working days, followed by Italy and Romania. **A large amount of technical equipment was also deployed**, responding to operational needs.

In line with the European Commission's policy document "Towards an Operational Strategy for more effective returns", the Agency further strengthened its support to the Member States at all stages of the **return process**. In 2023, **almost 40,000 persons** who received return decisions from national authorities were returned with the support of the Agency, 57% more than in the previous year. **Over half of those returns were voluntary**. More than 6,400 persons received assistance through **Joint Reintegration Services**, contributing to sustainability of returns. The Agency also continued to develop and support MS on the **Integrated Return Management Application and Return Case Management System (RECAMAS)** model. The model has been updated, and gap analyses performed for two MS. The Agency also invested significant resources to enhance returns through closer cooperation with third countries.

In the area of **combatting document fraud**, the **EBCG False and Authentic Documents Online (FADO)** Personal Data Processing framework, a model for user access management and the data migration strategy were developed. The Agency also contributed to the EU Commission in drafting the implementing acts on the EBCG FADO. In November 2023, access to the current FADO system was granted to standing corps officers. In addition, the Frontex Reference Manual and the **Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS)** were expanded by over 2,688 Quick Check Cards. Western Balkan countries³ and Moldova got access to the system, and progress towards its integration was made in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Equipment and Service Portfolio

The **Agency's Multiannual Strategy for Acquisition and Management of Equipment** was adopted by the MB in September 2023. The strategy prioritises the strengthening of the Agency's ability to acquire, manage and deploy equipment towards 2027, including the gradual rollout of a New Logistics Model.

³ Except Albania.

Disruptions in global supply chains were still experienced in 2023, leading to increased costs and fluctuating market conditions. Mitigation measures employed by the Agency included diversification of suppliers, increasing their numbers in new contracts as well as stockpiling.

In 2023, the Agency's contractual capacity delivered 10,946 **flight hours** by manned and unmanned aircraft. In addition, 178 **Interpreters and Cultural Mediators** were contracted and deployed to 48 different locations of Frontex-led Joint Operations. Four new framework contracts were established to cover the needs for **duty car rentals**, and within the new framework contract for Patrol Cars, 250 vehicles were ordered. The Agency also replenished its contractual capacity for charter flights for return operations, and secured capacity for transport and deployable storage for weapons and ammunition.

Training

In 2023, **50 standing corps officers** participated in the Basic Training Programme. The Agency also delivered **162 specialisation courses** to the standing corps and the wider European Border and Coast Guard community.

On the development side, the Agency provided support to the MS/SAC and partner countries in **transposing the Basic Common Core Curriculum onto the national level**. In addition, all training courses were aligned with the Sectoral Qualifications Framework and the Agency continued employing its Quality Assurance System to ensure the highest standards of training.

A third upgrade of the Basic Training Programme was initiated, and significant progress made on the **review of the standing corps profiles**.

Research and innovation

The Agency continued to work closely with the European Commission to evaluate proposals and provide strategic advice on the programming of EU-funded research, in particular on the scope of the **Border Security Theme of Horizon Europe**.

Under the umbrella of the **EU Innovation Hub** for Internal Security, the Agency carried out studies on High Altitude Pseudo Satellites and on Key Enabling Technologies and Privacy Enhancement. A study on the status, implications and opportunities arising from extended-reality technology was also conducted.

Four projects were kicked off within the framework of the Agency's own grants programme for research. In addition, in 2023 the Agency conducted **its first Prize Contest** in which researchers and engineers were challenged to detect and track Low Flying Objects. The Agency also tested shipborne Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems with Vertical Take-Off and Landing capabilities for multi-purpose aerial surveillance. Pilot activities were also launched on deployment modalities of small drones in Frontex operations.

Ninety-seven companies were invited to showcase their technological solutions to the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Agency continued its work on **standardisation**, supporting the development of Common Minimum Standards for Air Border Surveillance and establishing a taxonomy for Border Control Equipment.

International cooperation

The Agency contributed tangibly to the implementation of the EU Action Plan on the **Western Balkans**. In April 2023, amid growing migratory pressure in the region, based on a new-generation Status Agreement, Frontex launched Joint Operation North Macedonia. The signature of the new-generation Status Agreement with Albania in September 2023 will allow for further expansion of Frontex operations. To ensure that effective complaint mechanisms underpin EU Status Agreements' implementation, Frontex concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Albania and Moldova. Moreover, an MoU between the Fundamental Rights Officer and Ombudsperson of Montenegro was signed. Complementing operational efforts, the Agency strengthened its capacity building and technical assistance work in the region.

The Agency also supported **Ukraine's border management efforts**, providing 100 patrol cars and other relevant equipment as part of a EUR 12 million grant agreement.

The **Frontex Liaison Officers' (FLO) network** continued to effectively contribute to Frontex's strategic and operational priorities. In 2023, the network reached six FLOs covering 16 third countries, and 11 FLOs covering the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries.

Fundamental rights

Throughout 2023 the Agency advanced the implementation of the **Fundamental Rights Action Plan**. Out of 87 activities foreseen, 15 have been fully implemented, 54 have been implemented and are ongoing, six are partially implemented and 12 are delayed.

In March 2023, a joint ED and FRO Decision was adopted to lay down the procedures for the work of **Fundamental Rights Monitors** in assessing the compliance of Frontex operational activities with fundamental rights.

The role of the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer was fully incorporated into the work of the Fundamental Rights Office, and the Serious Incident team within the Office was expanded. All Fundamental Rights Monitors positions were filled and fully operational. During 2023 the **Fundamental Rights Monitors** were deployed to 27 countries for 1,627 days, a 71% increase compared with 2022, and 44 return flights were monitored.

Data protection

Implementing rules concerning the **tasks, duties and powers of the Data Protection Officer** were adopted by MB decision in March 2023. In consultation with EDPS, the Data Protection Officer coordinated the redrafting of the **rules on processing operational data and operational personal data**, which were adopted by the MB in January 2024.

Financial and human resources

The initially adopted budget of EUR 845.4 million was amended once, resulting in a **final budget of EUR 829.3 million**. Of the final C1 appropriations, **99% were committed** and **55%** of those committed were **paid**, an increase of 5 percentage points compared with 2022. The carry over from 2022 to 2023 came to a total of EUR 341.3 million, out of which 86% was paid.

The **occupancy rate at year-end was 89%, very close to the planned target of 90%**. There had been a clear improvement over the last three years as the occupancy rate grew from 61.1% in 2020, 77% in 2021 and 82.4% in 2022.

In November 2023, **Frontex's HR strategy 2024-2027** was approved by the MB. In view of its implementation the Agency adopted the Mobility policy and Sensitive posts policy.

Audits and internal control

In May 2023, the European Parliament **granted discharge** to the Executive Director for the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2021.

In October 2023, the **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** issued a **positive opinion** in relation to the reliability of the 2022 annual accounts of Frontex as well as the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. Emphases of matter were made concerning the non-validation of an accounting system by Frontex accounting officer and the calculation of SAC contribution to the Frontex budget. Six (6) previous years' observations were closed.

At the beginning of 2023, 17 recommendations from past **Internal Audit Service's (IAS)** audits remained open. IAS did not issue any new recommendations in 2023, while as a result of follow-up audits, 2 recommendations were closed and 1 re-opened. Of the recommendations remaining open at the end of 2023, nine were "very important" and none "critical".

In 2023, the **Internal Audit Capability** conducted its **first assurance audit engagement** on the 'Implementation of the Codes of Conduct'. A risk-based Annual Audit Plan for 2024 was developed. The IAC's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme was issued and progress was made in elaborating the audit Manual to conduct assurance engagements.

The system of **internal controls** was effective in 2023. All five components of the internal control framework were present and functioning well, and only minor improvement needs were identified.

Part I - Achievements of the year

Progress against Key Performance Indicators

In the area of staffing (KPI 1) the Agency focuses on measuring the occupancy rate as well as external and internal staff turnover. The annual objective of the Agency was to reach an occupancy rate of 90% at the end of 2023 implying 2,249 occupied posts. The target was almost achieved with 2,242 positions filled and an occupancy rate of 88.9%. The internal turnover rate remained close to the target. However, external turnover, at 4.24%, exceeded the target value, showcasing the need for the Agency to intensify its efforts to retain employees.

Regarding budget implementation (KPI 2) the objective of the Agency in 2023 was to reach C1 commitment implementation rate of 100%, a C1 payment rate of 55% and a C8 payment rate of 95%. Objectives for both C1 commitments and payments were achieved. However, the result on C8 payments was 85.7%, below the initial target. NB: Initial budget 2023 was set at EUR 845.4 million and final budget was EUR 829.4 million.

Indicators concerning digital services (KPI 3) measure four domains including cyber risk and uptime of our systems, compliance with SLA in ticket resolution and workload of the IT support services vs the customer base. Overall, the annual results show that preventive measures decreasing cyber risks were rolled out as planned and the uptime of core systems met the defined targets. Ticket resolution times were in the first part of the year below the desired level in view of the growing customer base. However, the results gradually improved throughout the year. Lastly, the ratio of support staff to customer base, despite a certain improvement, remained well above the “ideal” industry reference throughout the year indicating the heavy workload in a growing organisation.

In the area of capabilities planning (KPI 4) the Agency measures the overall implementation of planned milestones. The information is further disaggregated at the level of business area. Results for 2023 show that out of the 328 activities planned, a total of 284 were implemented. Looking at quarterly results, in Q1 95% of planned activities were implemented, in Q2 - 89%, in Q3 - 84% and in Q4 - 80% versus the initial target set at 85%. The results slightly below the target are related to the dynamic operational situation increasing the work requirements and milestones to be completed.

Indicator concerning deployment of capabilities to operations (KPI 5) measures the volume of human and technical capacities deployed in operations. For 2023 the annual target for human deployments was set at 125k staff-weeks including all three categories of standing corps. The Agency exceeded this target with 130k staff weeks deployed (+5% vs 2022). The biggest operations in terms of staff weeks deployed included Terra, Poseidon, Themis, Focal Points Air and Albania land. In terms of equipment, based on operational needs, the Agency deployed 575 weeks of fixed wing aircraft, 220 of helicopters and 40 of unmanned air vehicles, 1,079 weeks of coastal patrol boats, supported by 577 weeks of coastal patrol vessels and 162 of offshore patrol vessels. In land operations 951 weeks of mobile surveillance systems, 484 weeks of vehicles for migration management and 10,562 weeks of patrol cars were deployed.

In the area of returns (KPI 6) the Agency measures the level of its contribution in implementing the returns of third country nationals. The annual objective was set at 26k returns. This target was exceeded as in 2023 the Agency directly supported the return of over 39k third country nationals. Of these, 21k were voluntary while 18k were forced returns.

KPI 7 measures satisfaction with border management and return operations. For border management operations the results achieved were in general quite positive. Twenty-five out of 26 respondents indicated their overall satisfaction with Frontex Joint Operations was high or very high. Half of the respondents

highlighted that the objectives of the operations were fully achieved and 19 out of 26 respondents indicated that flexibility of Frontex Joint Operations in adapting to unexpected situations or changes was high or very high. With regard to return operations, the Agency inquired about five dimensions of support including flexibility, responsiveness, professionalism and overall satisfaction with the support received. On average, for all questions, 85% of the respondents rated the support as high or very high.

KPI 8 concerns fundamental rights compliance. It measures the number of days of deployment of fundamental rights monitors and the number of return flights monitored per type of operation, country of destination and departure country. In 2023 Fundamental Rights Monitors were deployed for a total of 1,627 days, representing a 71% increase in comparison with 2022. The number of flights monitored also increased by over 20% in comparison with 2022, reaching 44 return operations supported, involving 13 countries of origin and 24 of destination.

In 2023, the Agency conducted a staff survey to assess the level of **staff engagement** (KPI 9). The previous survey was conducted in 2019. The Agency was able to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement that will be swiftly addressed. Overall, the results indicate an engagement index⁴ of 74%.

More details about Key Performance Indicators are available in Annex I. Core business statistics.

1.1. Strategic Objective 1 - Reduced vulnerability of the external borders based on comprehensive situational awareness.

1.1.1 Key achievements

EUROSUR

In 2023, the Agency continued to support the development and operation of EUROSUR in line with the EBCG Regulation and the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/581. A cross-divisional EUROSUR Programme was established under the strategic lead of the Deputy Executive Director-Information Management. The EBCG community was engaged via **quarterly meetings of the EUROSUR Framework Network (EFN)**, a forum to review technical and operational aspects of the implementation of the EUROSUR integrated framework, such as the development of new processes, guidelines, and standards for information exchange. The Network is composed of the delegates from the Agency, Member States (MS), Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) and the European Commission.

Moreover, the Agency implemented the European Court of Auditors' recommendations related to **data quality reporting** in EUROSUR. Specifically:

- In Q3 2023, an agreement was reached with the EFN experts from MS/SAC on the final version of the EUROSUR business data model for events. The model will be used for the implementation of the bridging solution to EUROSUR 2.0 for the reporting of single events (*the EUROSUR business model for indicators was agreed and implemented via the bridging solution already in Q4 2022*).
- In Q1 2023, the implementation of the data quality assessment procedure started, as agreed with the EFN members.
- In September 2023 and with a monthly sharing schedule, MS received the first comprehensive Data Quality Report on timeliness, completeness and consistency for the events reported in the EUROSUR application.

To define a procedure for the assessment and evaluation of the EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS), the **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for EFS quality assurance** was established.

In addition, **three Specific Situational Pictures** were established following the Status Agreements between the EU and respective Third Countries to provide support with EUROSUR capabilities to operational activities (JOs).

⁴ This index is calculated as the average total favourable score to the following questions: Q19. I am willing to do an extra effort in my job, in order to deliver better results; Q40. I feel motivated to continue contributing to Frontex's future success; Q46. I would recommend Frontex as a good place to work; Q49. I am proud to work for Frontex.

In alignment with Article 121(5) of the EBCG Regulation, the **Biennial Report on the Functioning of EUROSUR** was finalised and disseminated to the EU Parliament and the Council. The report provides an overview of developments, highlights and challenges experienced by the EBCG in the EUROSUR domain.

The **EUROSUR 2.0 European Technical Component release roadmap** was established providing an overview of developments and improvements to be released in the applications and tools used for EUROSUR purposes. The roadmap is regularly discussed with the EFN members.

In addition, Frontex continued the implementation of user uptake activities under the Copernicus Programme. Specifically, **Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) workshops** were delivered to law enforcement authorities of MS/SAC, providing theoretical knowledge and practical exercises on the purpose, content, and added value of Imagery Intelligence. In 2023, 68 participants attended four IMINT trainings.

As a Copernicus Entrusted Entity, Frontex is committed to research and development to improve the delivery of the Copernicus Services and to efficiently meet its users' needs. In this regard, in 2023 the Agency cooperated with other entities in the definition of a Strategic Research Agenda aimed at defining strategic research priorities for Earth Observation (EO)-based security applications.

Risk analysis

To support the Technical and Operational EIBM Strategy and the formation of national EIBM strategies regarding **risk analysis for border management**, the first "Risk analysis conference: Growing with Partners" was held. A large number of experts participated.

Frontex successfully contributed risk analyses and migration forecasts to the **EU Commission's Blueprint Network for Migration Management** as well as to the Schengen Barometer and State of Schengen Report. The risk analysis on return was strengthened and included in the strategic risk analyses.

The cooperation with MS/SAC, third countries and partners regarding risk analysis continued successfully. In 2023, a new thematic risk analysis network for cross-border crime was launched in the framework of which meetings and workshops on different risk analysis topics were held with more than 950 participants. The project **"Strengthening of Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) as an instrument to fight serious cross-border crimes affecting Africa and the EU"** was concluded successfully in February 2023. Having started as an informal network in 2010, AFIC was institutionalised in the 2018 Déclaration de Niamey, as the platform for information exchange and joint analytical work and the basis for cooperation between the Agency and African countries of origin and transit. Following the establishment of the AFIC Community in 2010, the AFIC project came as a support to reinforce the network, build risk analysis structures embedded in national institutions, and create regular opportunities for exchanges through meetings and workshops as well as direct access to targeted training on integrated border management. Frontex continued the cooperation in AFIC, harvesting the capacities built by the project. Frontex has produced further joint reports and analyses on secondary migration and migrant smuggling together with partners Europol and EUAA.

In the context of the preparations for the entry into operation of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), in 2023 the Agency carried out a project to establish an **analytical capability for risk management activities** for this system.

For qualitative data collection, many standing corps officers with the 'Debriefer/Screeners' profile were trained. This was done in close cooperation with the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer and the Frontex Data Protection Officer.

Vulnerability Assessment

The year 2023 saw the successful and timely delivery of the Agency's Vulnerability Assessment (VA) mandate: **29 Baseline Assessments, five Simulation Exercises and one Rapid Vulnerability Assessment** were developed, in line with the Common Vulnerability Assessment Methodology. The recommendation of **60 and the implementation of 47 measures** based on the outcomes of the assessments, alongside five technical support offers tabled in the process, contributed to the reduction of vulnerability at the EU's external borders. A quantification methodology was elaborated that allowed the launch of a **major revision of the VA methodology** (to be finalised in 2024), in consultation with the MS within the format of the Vulnerability Assessment Network (VAN). At the same time, the Vulnerability Assessment Platform underwent an important upgrade to improve the management of data. Regular exchanges between the Agency and the national authorities assembled in the VAN further developed efficient, trust-based cooperation, the results of which may be seen in the increased timeliness of data provision by MS, the improvement of data quality, and the acceptance by a majority of the MS concerned of the Agency's offers of bilateral talks on recommended measures. Internal and external customers were kept up to date on VA developments through the delivery of knowledge products.

1.1.2. Results by activity

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. Surveillance and situation monitoring in all four-tier access control model			
Results achieved			
In 2023, Frontex offered to the MS/SAC 17 EUROSUR Fusion Services (EFS) to enhance situational awareness at the external borders and in the pre-frontier area. The Agency received and processed 664 service requests. Among the services offered, Coastal Monitoring Service and Satellite Imagery Service were the most requested. Moreover, the Agency revised the EFS catalogue and developed new capabilities to cover the air border domain. An important milestone for the Agency was the active involvement of EUROCONTROL in this initiative, paving the ground for enhancing the cooperation and maximising synergies and future agreements between the Agencies. In 2023, several NCCs expressed an interest in hosting an EFS validation exercise in their countries, with the participation of other MS/SAC as observers. All three validation exercises planned for 2023 (hosted by Cyprus, Norway and Portugal) took place by the end of Q4 2023. Moreover, the Agency organised several awareness sessions for MS/SAC on the EFS services and to further enhance cooperation, which in the case of several MS/SAC resulted in an increased number of service requests submitted to the Agency. Frontex has also continued the cooperation with EUSatCen and EMSA under the umbrella of Copernicus Programme with the purpose of delivery of earth observation services available within the EFS. In the context of cooperation with strategic third countries, three Specific Situational Pictures were established under OPLANs of JOs 2023 (Moldova, North Macedonia and Montenegro). Regarding crisis monitoring and information exchange, Frontex Situation Centre hosted an information sharing meeting on the implications of the Nova Kakhovka dam breach and issued an orientation paper about the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. The crisis management team provided regular input to the integrated political crisis response (IPCR) meetings on Ukraine. Higher standards of incident validation were achieved, through deploying of over 20 Information Officers in various Joint Operations, supporting reporting efforts to ensure close to real-time situational picture and through the constant presence of 10 Information Officers on 24/7 Shifts in HQ. More than 102,000 incident reports were crosschecked, validated and filtered from fundamental rights perspective. Incidents concerning potential violation of fundamental rights were flagged without delay after reporting to FRO for further assessment. Incidents with Personal Data were rejected and approved only after been cleared. Frontex delivered 99 early alerts about vessels presenting abnormal behaviour in the proximity of EU borders and in the pre-frontier area. Moreover, 183 vessels of interest were tracked, and daily reporting was in place. In this context, 2,358 reports were delivered to Frontex partners. Frontex Surveillance Aircraft (FSA) - six fixed-wing aircraft and two remotely piloted aerial systems (RPAS) - performed 938 Multipurpose Aerial Surveillance (MAS) missions in the pre-frontier area, under EUROSUR EFS framework, reaching a total of 6,953 effective flight hours. During MAS missions a total of 1,576 events and approximately 69,600 migrants were detected. In the vast majority of events, migrants were in a condition of emergency at sea and FSA contributed to the rescue of their lives by immediately informing the competent authorities and providing situational awareness. In addition, FSA provided support to JO OPAL COAST, INDALO, THEMIS and TERRA.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Level of satisfaction of core users with provided EUROSUR Fusion Services	75%	Actual result: 87% (measured via the user satisfaction survey on the use of EFS)	Achieved
Establishment of a common European situational picture in EUROSUR in line with Regulation (EU) 2019/1896	The European Situational Picture is in line with the new Frontex regulation and the EUROSUR implementing act	Programme activities to align the current European Situational Picture to the requirements set in the EUROSUR Implementing Regulation are ongoing. They include advances impacting all three layers (event, operational and analysis) of the European Situational Picture.	Partially achieved

Key Activity 1.1.2. Maintain a robust awareness mechanism based on constant situation monitoring and risk analysis			
Results achieved			
In 2023, Frontex continued to enhance its capability of information gathering from operational activities by training additional standing corps officers with debriefing officer profile, National Team Leaders and national debriefing and screening officers. Standing corps officers participated in relevant training courses. Four tailored training programmes were delivered to four host MS with the participation of 82 officers of the MS. Six additional workshops were delivered to 83 standing corps officers with debriefing officer profile in the maritime domain. The portfolio of cross-border crime related risk analysis was embedded in the risk analysis portfolio and business processes were designed or adjusted. The portfolio and the respective business processes are under constant evaluation and review to achieve the best possible results for the EBCG community, addressing legal requirements and responding to the Agency's stakeholders' needs. The Agency has set up a dedicated team focusing on the cross-border crime dimension that is supported by the establishment of the Cross-Border Crime Risk Analysis Network, where Frontex, MS and EU Agencies representatives take part. Overall, the product management approach is being followed and product managers have been nominated for the risk analysis products, monitoring the efficiency of the products and undertaking actions to review and adapt them to customers' needs. Moreover, the Agency supported the development of an operational framework for anticipating migration flows as part of the Blueprint Network by developing a forecasting capability and providing advice at both strategic and working level.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Forecast picture for the first (situation in third countries) and second (measures with neighbouring countries) tier of the EIBM access control model available for two of main migratory routes towards the EU	Forecast available for two main migratory routes towards the EU and used in analytical products	Initial scope of the forecasting project changed; new scope, business case and timeline created. Basic forecasting modelling approaches developed in 2023.	Partially achieved
Customer satisfaction	50 Net Promoter Score (NPS) points	Customer satisfaction was measured in 2023 via specific surveys for risk analysis products. However, systematic data collection related to customer satisfaction is not yet in place. Frontex relied mostly on case-by-case feedback from stakeholders, which in general is very positive (Contribution to Blueprint Network, strategic and thematic analysis products, etc.). By involving stakeholders' representatives from early stages of the development of products, Frontex assures customer satisfaction and that stakeholder's needs are met. The Evaluation of the EBCG Regulation provides evidence that Frontex has steadily enhanced the quality of its risk analysis products, that increasingly focus on prediction and prevention. Member States view Frontex risk analysis products as highly informative, and these products also help inform Frontex operational activities.	Partially achieved
Comprehensive tool ready and made available to analysts	Coverage of all tools needed by analysis pending complete integration for the following period	Although the project documentation was prepared in 2023, the project was not initiated. The project was affected mainly by continuous changes in the organisational structure of the Agency and the tasks and roles of SAM division, which culminated with the reorganisation at the end of 2023. The activity will be continued in 2024, with the aim to have a tool in place by the end of 2025.	Not achieved

The portfolio of cross-border crime integration level	Cross-border crime portfolio defined and incorporated into risk analysis portfolio	The cross-border crime portfolio was defined and is incorporated into the risk analysis portfolio.	Achieved
Cross-border crime business process(es) status	Business processes defined and continuously improved	Business processes for the cross-border crime portfolio were defined. The business processes will need to be adjusted following the adoption of the MB Decisions 4 and 5/2024 on the processing of personal and operational personal data.	Achieved
Staff allocated to traveller-focus risk analysis tasks	Adequate number of staff members recruited, trained, and allocated to traveller-focused risk analysis' tasks	In 2023 two FTEs were assigned to a project to establish the capability for ETIAS-related risk analysis activities within the Agency.	Partially achieved
Technical, communication and artificial intelligence solutions ready and made available to staff	Technical, communication and artificial intelligence solutions defined and implemented	A few technical and communication initiatives/projects were implemented to support analysts' work, however artificial intelligence solutions are far from being implemented, due to objective constraints, also related to the Agency's mandate to process personal data and staff and budget limitations. Other technical solutions for information sharing and creation of an Agency-wide situational picture are under development, with the timeline on track (Panorama project). Also, 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.	Partially achieved
Trained debriefers	100% of debriefers trained	All debriefers were trained. Several training courses and awareness sessions took place over the year	Achieved
Product management index	Product managers nominated for all risk analysis products and services	Product management approach followed - All risk analysis products have product managers assigned	Achieved
Increased visibility	Visibility is higher than or equal to that in 2022	In September 2023, the first "Risk Analysis Conference - Growing with Partners" was organised by Frontex attended by many participants from MS, international organisations including IOM and researchers. Three panels discussed the developments relevant for the evolution of Risk Analysis for EIBM.	Achieved

Key Activity 1.1.3. Contribute to EBCG planning processes through the knowledge generated by situation monitoring, risk analysis and vulnerability assessment

Results achieved

Frontex continued to support the EBCG community with regular (weekly, monthly) analytical reports drafted in the framework of joint operations: 722 regular reports were distributed according to the operational plans to the MS/SAC and other relevant stakeholders, such as the EU COM. In addition, 13 ad-hoc analytical products helped to steer the operational response to emerging threats at the EU's external borders, focusing on the Central Mediterranean, Western Balkans and the EU's eastern land and air borders. In 2023, three new land joint operations were launched which required additional analytical input for the planning and implementation. Moreover, Frontex executed the monthly assessment of EUROSUR impact levels. In 2023, nine monthly reviews were produced about the border sections and 11 change requests on current

impact levels were initiated by the Agency. Of these, five changes were not accepted by two MS, in three cases responses are pending, and three cases were opened recently. In addition, one MS updated its maritime border sections (BSs), resulting in six new BSs, which were assessed together with the MS. In 2023, Frontex's risk analysis contributed to the final evaluation reports of 13 joint operations. Additionally, the drafting of OPLANs and SAPs for the Frontex supported joint operations in 2024 started. Frontex provided a comprehensive situational picture to serve as the basis of future operational activities in line with art. 38(3)a of the EBCG regulation. In May 2023, Frontex launched information collection to produce the Assessment for Operational Initiation report to support the planning of Frontex supported operations in 2025. The report was finalised and distributed to the internal and external stakeholders (NFPOCs), together with 29 updated country fiches pooling key vulnerabilities, risks, Scheval and FLO information.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Average report products delay (days overdue)	Reduced number of reports produced overdue (vs. future baseline in 2022)	As a result of the product portfolio review and retirement of several products, the average delay in issuing products was also reduced. Although this indicator is not yet measured in a systematic manner, data collated on case-by-case basis from our customers show the aforementioned improvement.	Achieved
Customer satisfaction	45 NPS points	Customer satisfaction was measured in 2023 via specific surveys for products issued by Situational Awareness and Monitoring Division. However, a systematic data collection related to customer satisfaction is not yet in place. SAMD relied mostly on case-by-case feedback from stakeholders, which in general was very positive (CBC tailored assessments, Assessment for Operational Initiation, EMPACT activities reports, etc.). By involving stakeholders' representatives in the products' development from early stages customer satisfaction is assured and stakeholders needs are met.	Partially achieved
Average impact level assessments delay (days overdue)	Reduced number of assessments overdue with average time delay in year N	The internal business process for the attribution of impact levels per border section was optimised and regular meetings and joint assessments of involved units ensure the timely delivery of results.	Achieved
Timely production and provision of bi-annual reports to EU institutions by Vulnerability Assessment Unit, fully in line with the requirements set by Article 32(11) of the Regulation	2 reports per year	2 biannual reports drafted and shared	Achieved

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			
Results achieved			
In 2023, the Cross-Border Crime Risk Analysis Network (CBC-RAN) was established, which will support the analytical work within the EBCG Community in the assessment of cross-border crime. MS/SAC and Europol representatives participated in the first CBC-RAN meeting. The work will develop further with the establishment of CBC Cells on specific topics of interest for the EBCG Community. At the same time, in general, the activity of the Risk Analysis Networks (FRAN, SRAN, EDF-RAN, CBC-RAN, MIC-RAN, AB-RAN) remained high, with the organisation of plenary meetings and workshops on specific matters, supporting the production of tailored reports and efficient information exchange between the Agency and its key stakeholders. Within the framework of AFIC, the Agency successfully closed a six-year capacity building project resulting in the establishment of eight Risk Analysis Cells in West African countries. Moreover, as a prerequisite to the business architecture of EUROSUR 2.0, business processes reengineering and modelling of EUROSUR 'to-be' business process were defined and the EUROSUR 2.0 Business Architecture definition was established. This is a blueprint that sets the basis for the technical development of EUROSUR 2.0 in the coming years, ensuring that all requirements envisaged by the legislator for the EUROSUR Integrated Framework will be met. The European technical component release roadmap was defined to systematically roll out the capabilities foreseen by the legislators and ensure that the needs of the EBCG community are met in a timely manner. Detailed EUROSUR/SSP provisions were included in the relevant OPLANs providing for Joint Operations with executive powers and several draft and signed working arrangements with TCs and entities to enable cooperation in the context of Specific Situational Pictures and via established EUROSUR coordination centres. In 2023, the Agency started activities under IPA III Border Security project for the Western Balkans, which included a "NCC establishment" component foreseeing capacity building activities related to interconnecting the European Technical Component with the External Component under the integrated framework of EUROSUR.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
CBC-RAN participation level	70% of MS actively participating	Cross-Border Crime Risk Analysis Network was established. Over 70% of MS participate actively.	Achieved
CB Cell activity level	CB Cell running, used for at least 2 tailored analyses with the participation of at least 8 interested MS.	The necessary actions for the establishment of 2 Cross-Border Crime Cells were undertaken. MS expressed interest in the participation in the CBC Cells. The level of interest for participation exceeded the number of 8 MS.	Partially achieved
External advisors' contribution	Expertise of the group members used in the development of 2 thematic analyses	The establishment of the external expert group was initiated in 2023. Given the new procedure for the establishment of the Frontex Working Groups, the complexity of the topic and the change of scope in late 2023, the work on the establishment of the group was not finalised and will continue in 2024.	Partially achieved
Cooperation level	Number of events in 2023 is higher or equal than in 2022	Objective for Risk Analysis Networks was achieved. Additional events with MS and EU Agencies were organised on specific topics and for the production of tailored reports.	Achieved
Share of timely EUROSUR capabilities provided in line with the EUROSUR roadmap	Share in 2023 is higher than or equal to that in 2022	Capability mapping completed and related recommendations issued. Capabilities planned for deployment in 2023 according to the programme roadmap were delivered.	Achieved
Number of awareness sessions delivered in relation to study visits in Western Balkan countries	5 study visits performed under IPA III project	Due to delays related to the kick-off meeting for the IPA III project, which only took place in November 2023, no awareness sessions were delivered in Western Balkan countries in 2023	Not achieved

Key Activity 1.2.2. Drive the development of an EBCG community ecosystem of information management capabilities.			
Results achieved			
The Agency provided comprehensive information contributing to risk analysis, vulnerability assessment and situation monitoring for both regular and ad-hoc requests in a timely manner. On a monthly basis, the Agency provided DG HOME with statistics on irregular migration, cross-border crime, search and rescue and regular border crossings. Since June 2023, the Agency has been providing, on a monthly and weekly basis, input to the ISAA report (Integrated Situation, Awareness and Analysis). Other EU bodies regularly provided with statistics on irregular migration were the EU Council and the EUAA. The trustworthiness of the information was ensured by regular data quality checks in line with the defined procedures for ensuring timeliness, completeness, and consistency as well as meeting with relevant MSs for improving the quality of data. The Agency continued the implementation of the roadmap established under the Data Governance Strategy for Situational Awareness and Monitoring Division. The management of data assets was improved through the implementation of a data matrix and a data issue log as well through increasing the trustworthiness of data through data governance and quality processes.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Delivery of statistical and analytical services.	90% of requests delivered on time	94% of requests delivered on time	Achieved
Implementation of EUROSUR roadmap	Schedule variance +/- 5%	100% completed activities in line with the programme roadmap	Achieved
Business process improvements	Implement all 2023 planned process improvements	Business processes planned for implementation in 2023: • Ongoing data quality monitoring and reporting • Periodic data quality assessment • Reporting and handling data issues • Data access rights and data sharing All planned business processes were implemented to a level of 80% of required functionalities due to a delay in the availability of the IT software required for their automatisations.	Partially achieved
SAM Product management adoption level	90%	More than 90% of products have a product manager assigned - portfolio management framework was implemented	Achieved
Workforce alignment level with SAM work competency framework	Alignment level higher or equal with that in 2022 level	As a result of the termination of the SAMD Transformation Programme (in line with ED decision R-ED-2023-74), the SAMD competency framework was updated in 2023.	Not achieved

Key Activity 1.2.3. Establish standards and implement common models for information sharing and analysis, including on cross-border crime in all four-tier access control model			
Results achieved			
To ensure standardised information exchange, Frontex continued close collaboration with MS on the definition of a common business data model based on the requirements set in the EUROSUR Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/581, the drafting of a data management policy and data collection plans as well as the implementation of the data quality monitoring procedure. The data model was agreed and finalised in Q3. In Q4, Frontex organised a workshop with MS to discuss roles and responsibilities, data sharing, and data quality reports. The implementation of the data quality monitoring procedure contributed to the increase of data quality and reporting on cross-border crime related EUROSUR indicators and single events.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status

Issuing to the Member States of data quality reports related to EUROSUR	100% of reports issued in line with the timelines set in the data quality assurance procedure agreed with Member States	100% of data quality reports were sent in line with the timelines set.	Achieved
Priorities in the maritime domain regarding thematic areas of work, geographical areas of interest, and crime typologies	Achievement of common priorities together with MS in the maritime domain regarding thematic areas of work, geographical areas of interest, and crime typologies	Risk screening framework for the identification of geographical and thematic areas of interest has been established - Risk Analysis Networks support the analytical work	Achieved
Documentation provided to the SAB for Security accreditation decisions on the EUROSUR central component and the interconnections	Security accreditation decisions are taken by the EUROSUR Security Accreditation Board in a timely manner, based on comprehensive documentation provided by the Agency	Full set of documentation according to the ESAB's Security Accreditation Strategy and ESAB requests were provided in a timely manner.	Achieved

Focus Area 1.3. Contribute to the development and implementation of an 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			
Results achieved			
Frontex delivered baseline assessments in a timely manner to all Member States and conducted Simulation Exercises on different thematic areas based on risk analysis and findings of the previous Baseline Assessments. Additionally, following the continuous monitoring of the upcoming challenges, an RVA was conducted on the southern coasts of Italy. These products were delivered on time to the respective MS. Based on the findings, knowledge products for Frontex business units were developed and delivered. The only expected result which was partially achieved was the improvement of the quality and timeliness of the data provided by MS/SAC for vulnerability assessment activities. Although most of the countries improved their data quality and data completeness, some MS still struggle to provide accurate and qualitative data. Frontex analysts were in regular contact with their countries of responsibility and supported them, when needed, with workshops, trainings, data uploads, field visits.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Delivery of assessments of MS/SAC according to the timeframes established in the CVAM	100% reports delivered within deadlines	29 Final Baseline Assessments, 1 Rapid Vulnerability Assessment and 5 Simulation Exercises delivered in 2023.	Achieved
Improvement of the data gaps and timeliness of the data reported by MS/SAC in the annual baseline assessment process	Improvement in terms of timeliness and data gaps compared to year n-1	Majority of Member States delivered the data for the annual baseline process on time.	Partially achieved
Delivery of vulnerability assessment knowledge products portfolio	Results timely shared in line with stakeholders' requirements	29 AOI and CFs, as well as 12 tailored Knowledge products were delivered to other Frontex business units in a timely manner.	Achieved

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

Sixty recommended measures were issued to MS following Baseline Assessment 2023, three Simulation Exercises and one Rapid Vulnerability Assessment. Five offers of technical expertise were issued to support the implementation of the recommended measures. Forty-seven recommended measures were successfully completed while two were escalated for the attention of the Management Board following their non-implementation in the established time limit by MS.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Technical expertise offer defined in the Article 32 (8) and (9) is based on Frontex catalogue of services		5 technical expertise offers issued	Achieved
Bilateral meetings on measures conducted with majority of MS	Offer of bilateral talks for all proposed measures issued for consultation	12 bilateral meetings took place with 12 out of 21 MS.	Partially achieved
Recommendations issued according to timelines set by the CVAM	100% of recommendations consulted and issued within deadlines stipulated by the CVAM	60 recommended measures issued within the CVAM timeline	Achieved
Timely monitoring of the implementation of measures according to the Regulation and the CVAM	Quarterly progress reports for Executive Management and the European Commission, updates during Management Board meetings are delivered	4 quarterly monitoring reports delivered; updates delivered during MB meetings	Achieved

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 developing tools and platforms to support activities such as data collection and reporting, and capacity building for external stakeholders, as well as further develop the CVAM by designing standards and benchmarks			
Results achieved			
The year 2023 saw a continuation of regular and fruitful communication with the EC regarding the Schengen Evaluation Mechanism and Vulnerability Assessment, followed by exchange of documentation to further enhance the SEM-VA interoperability. The principal data collection tool, the Vulnerability Assessment Platform, underwent a major upgrade that allowed for more reliable data collection and storage. At the same time, two Expert Groups elaborated a quantification methodology that laid the foundations for a significant revision of the CVAM. This revision gained momentum in the second half of 2023, with its completion and approval planned for Sep 2024.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Timely exchange of relevant documents between VA/SEM over secure channels is performed.	Approximately 4-6 document packages	All relevant documents exchanged on time	Achieved
Regular meetings with MS/SAC stakeholders	4 regular meetings of the Vulnerability Assessment Network and at least 2 technical workshops per year	All planned meetings took place.	Achieved
VAP digital solution number of features implemented	VAP digital solution one major upgrade	One major technical upgrade completed on the Data Collection Module. Moreover, the Recommendations Module has been developed and is currently in the testing phase. Deployment in production will occur after MS testing.	Partially achieved
Quantification of at least one of the objective criteria set in the CVAM	CVAM accuracy level equal or higher to baseline (accuracy level of 2021)	CVAM accuracy level is higher than the baseline; it remains in draft form, to be adopted by MB in September 2024.	Achieved

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			
Results achieved			
In 2023, the ETIAS Central Unit (ECU) Division continued the implementation of activities for the setting up of the ETIAS Central Unit and managed, inter alia, to finalise the recruitment procedure of the third wave of Application Handlers and Traveller and Carrier Support Operators, and of several specialised functions. 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. Throughout the year ECU 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. In 2023, ECU started the development of self-monitoring and auditing capabilities, including consultation with stakeholders and preparatory activities for the development of a policy that will govern the processes. It reviewed and updated the business impact assessment and security risk analysis and refined the security plan and business continuity plan, cooperating with eu-LISA and internal stakeholders. The ECU 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.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Recruitment rate	At least 95% of the staff foreseen for each phase in the overview table on the recruitment is recruited at least 3 to 6 months before the respective start of operations of the EES, ETIAS and Interoperability	In 2023 the following recruitments were finalised: 76 ETIAS operators, Head of the Data Management Office, Deputy Head of Assistance Centre Unit, Deputy Head of Application Handlers Unit, 4 Team Leaders, 2 ETIAS Risk Screening Officers, 2 Data Management Officers, Stakeholder Management Officer, Stakeholder Management Assistant.	Achieved
Training rate	100% of the ETIAS Central Unit that have a right to access and process data recorded in the ETIAS Central System are trained	100% of the ETIAS operators recruited in 2023 completed successfully the Frontex training programme for ETIAS staff.	Achieved
Implementation of SOPs	Before the end-to-end testing of each of the systems (EES, ETIAS and Interoperability), the respective SOPs are adopted and used for testing; before the start of operations, the SOPs are thoroughly fine-tuned, where necessary	Throughout the year, the SOP for carriers was refined following the feedback from carriers and the review of requirements provided by eu-LISA and in consultations with eu-LISA. Its final adoption will only be possible once carriers onboarding and support tool is available. Similarly, internal SOPs have been prepared. Their completion will be possible after receiving information about the final shape and functionalities of the tools to be used after the entry into operation.	Partially achieved
Tests' completion rate	User acceptance tests and the end-to-end tests of the ETIAS Central System are successfully completed	Testing of ETIAS Central System has not yet started due to changes of the eu-LISA timeline for the ETIAS project.	Not achieved

	within the established timelines to be ready for the start of operations	Test strategy, test Scenarios and Test Cases for the testing, including the end-to-end scenarios, were developed by the ETIAS CU.	
Timeliness of establishment of entities	Necessary ETIAS Central Unit entities to operate the Carrier Assistance Centre are established and operational before the start of operation of EES; the establishment and entry into operation of the remaining ETIAS Central Unit entities take place before the start of operation of ETIAS	The organisational structure of the ETIAS Central Unit has been established.	Achieved
Development of self-monitoring and auditing capabilities	ETIAS Central Unit's self-monitoring and auditing capabilities are developed, and necessary implementing measures are adopted before the start of operations of ETIAS – baseline and target to be assessed at a later stage	The ECU started developing the necessary capability, including the draft policy that will govern the related processes in adherence to COSO three lines of defence model, IIA Standards and Frontex Internal Control Framework. Consultation with internal (ECU, INTEL, IAC, ICO) and external stakeholders (eu-LISA, Europol, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand authorities) took place. In parallel ETIAS CU is focusing on identifying risks and control points in the ETIAS environment.	Partially achieved
Timeliness of preparation of relevant plans	Support for the drafting and adoption of security, disaster recovery and business continuity plans take place in a timely manner following the adoption of the Commission implementing acts on the model security plan and model business continuity and disaster recovery plan	Throughout the year, ECU reviewed and updated the business impact assessment and security risk analysis. Following the update of the business architecture and feedback from internal stakeholders and eu-LISA, the new structure (based on eu-LISA template) of the security plan and business continuity plan is being prepared. In parallel, the assessment of the common assets is under harmonisation.	Partially achieved

1.2. Strategic Objective 2 - Safe, secure, and well-functioning EU external borders

1.2.1. Key achievements

Frontex's operational response in 2023 continued to play an important role in ensuring safe, secure and well-functioning EU external border. Three pillars of joint operations constituted the core of the operational response: multipurpose operational activities at the EU external border; multipurpose operational activities in third countries based on a Status Agreement between the EU and a host third country; and coordinated operational activities based on a working arrangement between Frontex and a host third country in the framework of which standing corps officers were deployed as EU experts with monitoring and advising tasks. In addition, Frontex's operational response included elements of coast guard functions, combatting cross border crime, and fighting document fraud.

Joint operations

Fourteen joint operations were implemented at the Member States' external borders, **seven joint operations** on the territory of third countries with **executive powers** based on a Status Agreement and **three joint operations based on a working arrangement**. Within the framework of these activities, 2,300 staff were deployed by the Agency on average on a daily basis, consisting of approximately 750 standing corps officers category 1, 400 standing corps officers category 2, 750 standing corps officers category 3, 300 host country staff and 100 other staff such as interpreters/cultural mediators. However, due to the seasonality of operational needs and of the contribution from the participating Member States, the number of standing corps officers in the joint operations varied significantly through the year. The overall human resources deployed by Frontex, in addition to the standing corps officers, comprised interpreters/ cultural mediators, crew members, host country staff, as well as observers from participating third countries and from international organisations.

Heavy technical equipment deployed in joint operations included nine fixed wing aircraft and five helicopters deployed on average, providing border surveillance capabilities. Furthermore, an average of four offshore patrol vessels, 12 coastal patrol vessels and 21 Coastal Patrol Boats were deployed to support maritime activities. Twenty multipurpose surveillance systems and 172 patrol cars were deployed for the land patrols, supported by 10 vehicles for migration management used at the Member States' external border and in third countries.

An almost 30% increase in the numbers of illegal border crossings was reported in the framework of joint operations (from 265,664 in 2022 to 341,877 in 2023), which gives a good indication of the challenges faced at the EU's external borders. To respond to the challenges, **the number of operationally active locations was increased** to a similar extent (33% increase), from 336 in 2022 to 448 in 2023. Joint operations' activities yielded significant results including apprehension of 2,043 facilitators (people smugglers).

The most important strategic development in the operational response was the launch and **implementation of the operational pilot project Centurion**, hosted by Romania. The aim was to test the Frontex Chain of Command concept, whose core elements were to de-concentrate tasks and functions and deploy standing corps officers in contingents. Given the initial successful results of the project, the decision was taken to further roll out the chain of command in 2024.

To better meet the emerging operational needs and ensure adequate flexibility, a proactive **strategic planning model** was developed, to allow the **prioritisation of operational response** based on clear criteria and methodology. As a result, multiple redeployments of standing corps category 1 and 2 took place to provide support to Portugal and France for World Youth Day and the Rugby World Cup, respectively. In total 17 officers categories 1 and 2 were redeployed to Portugal and 33 to France. In addition, in 2023, a total of 15 new Frontex Multipurpose Surveillance Systems (MSS) were deployed to Albania, Romania,

North Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro, which also required the redeployment of trained border guard officers to staff these assets.

In addition to providing direct support to border control and migration management activities, various initiatives were implemented to keep the **standing corps officers up to date in terms of knowledge**, skills and best practises, for example the first Network meeting for Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers (MVCDO), two ALDO community webinars on ID documents, the third CBCDO Annual Network meeting for all Cross Border Crime Detection Officers (CBCDO), and mandatory Use of Force trainings for the standing corps officers Category 1.

Frontex continued to play a significant role in **Search and Rescue (SAR)**. Maritime and aerial assets deployed to joint operations (including host and participating Member States', Frontex owned, co-owned and leased assets) were engaged in SAR 785 incidents involving 43,508 migrants.

Furthermore, **five Member States and one third country gave permission to Frontex deployed staff to perform first line border checks**, including access to the national and international databases. This was of particular importance during the implementation of the joint operation Rugby World Cup 2023 in France.

Other notable developments in 2023 were related to the ongoing work towards streamlining **data protection** into the operational plans of the joint operations and the adoption by the joint ED and FRO decision of the standard operating procedure on the **roles and responsibilities of the Fundamental Rights Monitors**, which greatly enhanced the capacity of the Agency to monitor compliance with fundamental rights. Moreover, Frontex, through its framework contract on **interpretation and cultural mediation services**, became the main provider for interpreters and cultural mediators in joint operations.

Document fraud

In the area of **document fraud**, in 2023, the Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud (CED) implemented 118 activities, which were assessed positively by participants. In total, 1,243 participants benefited from sharing expertise by CEDs experts in 43 training/roadshow sessions, 15 operational briefings, 11 operational awareness sessions, two ALDOs webinars and a webinar for non-ALDO officers. Webinars were also delivered to Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers (MVCDOs) to keep them abreast of the latest trends related to their specialisation and to establish a MVCDO community.

In 2023, CED started to publish a revamped **Quick Check Newsletter on ID Document**, which was highly appreciated by the standing corps and several Member States. The product, released every three months, contains news and short explanations about security features, tricks and tracks to detect forgeries and false identities.

Concerning systems, the **EBCG FADO** Personal Data Processing framework was drafted and approved before providing a contribution to the European Commission in drafting the EBCG FADO implementing acts. A four-level model for user access management was developed and the data migration strategy concluded. In November 2023, access to the current FADO system was granted to standing corps officers.

The Frontex Reference Manual and the **Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS)** were further expanded by recording over 2,688 Quick Check Cards. Western Balkan countries⁵ and Moldova got access to FIELDS and the related content, while the system is currently under integration in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Upon request of the European Commission, Frontex carried out the assessment of compliance of European Member States' identity cards. The Agency was also consulted in the design phase of the new documents

⁵ Except Albania.

in the Netherlands, Malta and Slovakia. Furthermore, CED delivered the EU Capability Framework on Document and Identity Control that is expected to substitute in 2025 the Council Doc 16261/2014 by extending capabilities of training to Standard Operating Procedures, Equipment, Premises, and information systems.

Returns

In 2023 the Agency continued to support Member States in the implementation of activities **at all stages of the return process**. Almost **40,000 persons were returned** with support of the Agency, a new record high. Furthermore, critical support was provided to identify and document migrants, as well as to provide information about return procedures, leading to an increase of candidates for **voluntary return**. A high number of reintegration cases were submitted by MS through the Joint Reintegration Services, contributing to the sustainability of returns. The Agency continued dialogue with key partners in the Member States to ensure the services provided respond to the changing needs. The Agency also progressed with **several projects**, the outcomes of which will benefit the entire EU community. Notably, the materials developed as part of the Toolbox for Children in Return gathered a lot of interest from the Member States.

Frontex continued to deploy **two return standing corps profiles**: the Frontex Return Escorts and Support Officers (FRESO) and Return Specialists. The size and the geographical coverage of deployments of both FRESO and Return Specialists grew in 2023, and both the FRESO and the Return Specialists have the potential to be deployed in even bigger numbers and in more locations, subject to the availability of human resources.

There were also significant developments aimed at supporting Member States with better utilising the possibilities offered by the **Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA)**. IRMA itself has been improved and continues to be developed. Also, the **Return Case Management System (RECAMAS) model** has been updated, and gaps analyses were performed for two Member States, comparing their existing national return case management systems to the Frontex model. These activities aimed to build capacity in the MS and to make Frontex tools as easy as possible to use.

Frontex also invested significant resources to enhance returns through **closer cooperation with third countries**. The European Return Liaison Officers (EURLOs) network provided added value to the Member States by providing support directly on the ground in third countries. Frontex also supported several initiatives aimed at improving the cooperation with third countries of return, ranging from capacity building projects, to dedicated meetings and workshops focussing on specific countries or issues.

1.2.2. Results by activity

Focus Area 2.1. Provide effect-oriented and flexible operational response

Key Activity 2.1.1. Implement flexible and multipurpose permanent operational response, by deploying standing corps and technical equipment to support the MS in border control and migration management to tackle cross-border crime and to enhance European cooperation on coast guard functions and law enforcement activities, supported by vulnerability assessment and risk analysis and as part of MS contingency planning			
Results achieved			
Joint operations at the external border were implemented as multipurpose permanent operational responses. Besides the main focus of the activities, which was support for the MS in border control and migration management (with the exception of the multipurpose maritime operations (MMOs) focused on coast guard functions), the majority of the activities included objectives to combat cross-border crime. Furthermore, joint maritime operations also included activities supporting coast guard functions. All operational activities that were planned as a part of the annual planning cycle were implemented without significant challenges. However, due to the dynamic environment at the external border, adaptations of the operational response were quite frequent.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of agreed operational plans.	100% of planned operational activities are agreed and implemented	100% (23 OPLANs were agreed and implemented)	Achieved
Number of new host MS and new operational locations	5 new locations hosting operational response activities are included in the list of deployment locations for the operational activities	20 new locations where operational activities were included in the list of deployment locations: 15 in the land domain (external land border), one land BCP during Rugby World Cup in France and 4 airports	Achieved
Number of joint operations which include objectives, tasks and deployments for combatting cross-border crime	The majority of joint operations include objectives for combatting cross-border crime	All activities included objectives for combatting cross-border crime	Achieved
Number of maritime joint operations which include objectives and tasks for coast guard functions	3 maritime joint operations are conducted supporting coast guard-functions	Out of the 13 joint operations with a maritime element, 9 were conducted supporting the coast guard functions	Achieved
Number of joint action days (JADs) fulfilled by means of or supported by joint operations	Joint operations contribute or cover all JADs the Agency has committed to organise, (co-)lead or to take part in	9 JADs were implemented, 7 in coordination role and 2 in co-leading role, targeting all types of cross border crime, with migrant smuggling, THB and firearms as a focus	Achieved

Key Activity 2.1.2. Implement flexible and multipurpose permanent operational response, by deploying standing corps and technical equipment to support the TC in border control and migration management, to tackle cross-border crime and to enhance European cooperation on coast guard functions and law enforcement activities, based on the four-tier access control model			
Results achieved			
Five joint operations with executive powers were implemented in total. More specifically, joint operations in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Moldova were implemented as a continuation of the 2022 joint operations, whereas new activity was launched in North Macedonia, following the conclusion of the Status Agreement with the EU. The joint operation was instrumental in the management of the migration flow along the Western Balkan route and replaced previous bilateral deployment of border guards from the EU MS in the area.			

As a result of the updated Status Agreement between the EU and Montenegro, the scope of the activities in the country was enhanced to new locations at the land border with Albania. Similarly, Chisinau airport was also included in the framework of the JO Moldova, where the deployed standing corps officers started to perform their tasks with executive powers in the first line of border checks.

With regard to joint operations without executive powers, the good cooperation with the partner third countries based on the working arrangements continued. Twenty-six border crossing points hosted standing corps officers with the status of the EU expert (monitoring and advising role) and were activated as coordination points. This activity contributed to the exchange of experiences and strengthened cooperation on the EU Integrated Border Management between Frontex and the third countries and served as the preparation of the third countries to host fully fledged joint operations in the future.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of agreed operational plans for the joint operations under the status agreement framework	5 operational plans	5 operational plans for joint operations implemented in third countries under the status agreement framework	Achieved
Number of coordination points	15 coordination points	26 coordination points activated during the reporting period	Achieved
Number of joint operations in third countries which include objectives, tasks and deployments for prevention, detection and combatting cross-border crime	All (7) joint operations in third countries include objectives for the counteraction of cross-border crime	All joint operations include these objectives	Achieved
Number of joint operations supporting the EMPACT related activities, including JADs led, co-led and participated by Frontex	All (7) joint operations in third countries support the EMPACT related activities, including JADs	All joint operations in third countries supported EMPACT activities	Achieved
Number of maritime joint operations in third countries which include objectives and tasks for coast guard functions	2 maritime joint operations support coast guard functions	All maritime joint operations in third countries supported the coast guard functions and included relevant objectives and tasks	Achieved

Key Activity 2.1.3. Tighten up the operational support to coast guard and law enforcement activities against cross-border crime, including strengthening of control of documents, identity and vehicles as part of the operational response

Results achieved

The Centre of Excellence for Combating Document Fraud actively contributed to different Joint Action Days (JADs) that Frontex was involved with, by participating in evaluation meetings, delivering presentations, handling remote support, contributing to the draft of SOPs and evaluation reports. Major support and resources were given to support operational activities to contribute to improving the detection and prevention of document and identity fraud, to the detriment of the forgery desk's readiness.

Results achieved during the JADs implemented in 2023 showed an overall increase in detection of various cross-border crime activities. The detailed results of the JADs coordinated or co-led by Frontex are as follows: 530 stolen vehicles; 1,978 parts from stolen vehicles; 16 stolen boats; 32 stolen outboard engines; 1,476 potential victims of child trafficking identified; 138 suspected traffickers of child trafficking identified leading to 212 arrests and 244 new investigations; 375 migrant smugglers; 875 illegal stay; 2,325 refusals of entry; 5,088 irregular migrants apprehended; 277 document fraud cases; 35 Visa fraud cases; 448.19kg + of cocaine seized; 38.9 kg of marijuana and other drugs seized; 810,995 counterfeit goods seized; 61,246 counterfeit electronic devices seized; 10,069 kg raw tobacco seized; 13 863 0632 cigarettes seized; 1,255 236 e-cigarettes seized; 64 firearms seized; 19,828 L of alcohol seized; EUR 33 million value of seized goods; 2,128 pieces of psychoactive substances.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
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Operational results, at targeted border areas during the operational activities	Number of detentions, seizures and initiated investigations increased	Results achieved during the JADs implemented in 2023 showed an overall increase in detection but slightly less in some categories.	Partially Achieved
Number of joint action days (JADs) coordinated, co-led and supported by Frontex	Minimum 5 JADs led and co-led by Frontex planned and implemented	9 JADs led or co-led by Frontex: JAD Stopover 2, JAD Arktos 5, JAD Danube 8, JAD Mobile 6, JAD Global Chain, JAD Finestra 3, JAD Pirates 1, JAD SEE, JAD Horseshoe	Achieved
Number of multipurpose maritime operations with the law enforcement component and number of cross-border crime detection officers deployed.	1 multipurpose maritime operation implemented with two cross-border crime detection officers deployed.	Since all maritime Border Control Points (BCP) were included in the joint operation Sea Ports 2023, the multipurpose maritime operations in 2023 had no longer the law enforcement component.	N/A
Number of pilot projects, training/awareness raising sessions organised with participation of other border authorities.	1 pilot project implemented, 7 training/awareness raising events	ISA CBC pilot project successfully implemented. 10 cross border crime dedicated activities, such as the Roadshow on border and customs cooperation: the workshops on firearms detection or MOST CBC.	Achieved
Frontex forgery desk is ready to provide remote support to check travel, identity, maritime documents, and vehicles in operational activities	In 2023 the remote service processes are drafted	A draft analysis was prepared. However, staff constraints and other priorities prevented the development and stabilisation of the remote service processes.	Not achieved
Number of document experts' category 1 staff assigned to operational activities implemented in house and in the field activities	By the end of 2023, new statutory staff/document experts join 1 additional document fraud team, staffed with 5 standing corps specialised members. 2 members of this document fraud team are equipped and capable to carry out checks on vehicles.	By the end of 2023 12 standing corps members have been assigned to CED. 9 of them are SC Cat. 1 out of which there are 3 Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers.	Achieved
Number of Frontex crosswise activities contributing to improving operational results on detection and prevention of document and identity fraud	In 2023, at least 15 crosswise activities contributing to improving operational results on document and identity fraud are supported	118 activities supported by a total of 869 working days, benefiting 1,243 participants (including 43 training/roadshow sessions, 15 operational briefings, 11 operational awareness sessions 2 ALDOs webinars, a webinar for non-ALDO officers, 2 webinars for Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officers (MVCDOs) deployed in Frontex joint operations) Between January and December 2023, CED received and processed 137 Frontex Document Alerts. In 2023, CED started to publish the Quick Check Newsletter on ID Document (the product released every three months).	Achieved

Focus Area 2.2. Position Frontex as an important contributor to combatting cross-border crime by full use of its mandate in support to its stakeholders

Key Activity 2.2.1. Position the Agency along the four-tier access control model as a key IBM actor to support the EU's fight against all types of cross-border crime by actively cooperating with EU agencies and other partners in line with its mandate			
Results achieved			
Among the most relevant operational recommendations provided by CED to its networks and stakeholders were the structure of the FADO delegated act agreed with COM; the proposal of the Operational Reference-Capability Framework in Document and identity (which will be presented by the Polish Presidency as an evolution on the Council doc 16261/14); a new possible way to acquire information on the models of documents in circulation by proposing in the frame of ICAO Border and Law Enforcement Engagement Subgroup a new standard encoding the related information in the microchip of travel documents to support the machine recognition of documents at front lines.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of JADs led and co-led by Frontex	Minimum of 5 JADs led and co-led by Frontex	9 JADs led or co-led by Frontex: JAD Stopover 2, JAD Arktos 5, JAD Danube 8, JAD Mobile 6, JAD Global Chain, JAD Finestra 3, JAD Pirates 1, JAD SEE, JAD Horseshoe.	Achieved
Number of EU MS and third countries participating in the JADs coordinated and co-led by Frontex	An increase by 1 entity compared to 2022	19 non-EU MS participated in JADs in 2023, an increase of 7 compared with 2022.	Achieved
Number of meetings of the high-level round table	2 high-level round table meetings	Two meetings of the HLRT were held in April and November 2023, contributing to Frontex's strategic decision making on document and identity control.	Achieved
Contribution provided by the EXP-DOC group members enhancing Frontex activities	EXPDOC group members contribute to at least 6 major Frontex activities, adding value to the overall results	EXP-DOC members participated in six FIELDS/Reference Manual workshops developing the content of the Frontex databases (392 QCCs, 194 presentations and 5 high quality document alerts).	Achieved
The Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud is invited to a number of international working groups where it provides technical and operational recommendations	At least 2 technical/operational recommendations are provided to each policy working groups	In course of 2023, upon the invitation of the European Commission, CED participated in the Travel Facilitation and the Article 6 (including its FADO sub-group) comitology committee meetings and provided expert opinions. Two main initiatives where recommendations were provided were the EBCG FADO development and the DTC pilot project run by the Commission.	Achieved
Number of operational actions (OAPs) related to document fraud led/co-led and participated by Frontex under EMPACT OAPs.	At least 3 OAPs mention Frontex engagement	CED is co-leading with Spain the OAP 5.1 on Trafficking in Human beings (THB). The materials and guidance supporting investigators applied by Spain now stand as a reference for MS while conducting THB investigations. CED developed the implementation of the OAP 5.2 (OAP Migrant smuggling) that in 2024 will be implemented with the activation of two sessions of a Mizar Operational Module dedicated to countering document and identity fraud. CED contribution to OAP 5.2 resulted in the development of 154 FDAs (46 validated according to set standards and distributed via FOSS). 20 operational briefings, 11 awareness sessions, 2 information sharing meetings and 10 workshops were also delivered.	Achieved

		Within the framework of OA 6.2 (OAP Firearms), 4 training sessions in Croatia and 1 in Moldova for Moldovan and Ukrainian border guards were delivered. In the context of the EMPACT common strategic goal N. 5 (Document fraud) the document fraud investigation group, co-led by CED and France, held two meetings to find links between different ongoing operations in MS facilitating information exchange and best practice in the domain of document fraud.	
Number of different law enforcement authorities responsible for the prevention and counteraction of the cross-border crime and involved in the integrated border management from EU MS and TC taking part in Frontex operational activities	To sustain the high level of engagement	24 MS, 19 TCs, 4 EU bodies and 3 International Organisations participated in the JADs led by Frontex in 2023 which was a new record.	Achieved

Key Activity 2.2.2. Enhance the technical and operational assistance to 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

KEY ACTIVITY PHASED OUT

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

Results achieved

Frontex supported the organisation and coordination of 3 major EMPACT events directly engaging Customs Authorities. As planned, Customs Authorities were encouraged to closely collaborate with the Border Guard Agencies. In several MS fully integrated operational response was achieved and standing corps officers supported the detections of excise and counterfeit goods.

Tangible results were as follows:

- JAD Arktos 5: 30.4 million pieces of conventional cigarettes seized; 46 facilitators detected/apprehended; 2,178 irregular/illegal migration related cases detected.
- JAD Finestra 3: 15.7 million pieces of conventional cigarettes seized; 1.2 million pieces of e-liquid, heated tobacco and vaping devices; 17,819 tons of raw tobacco seized; 24,356 litres of alcohol seized.
- JAD Pirates 1: 810,955 pieces of variety of counterfeit goods; 7.8 million pieces of counterfeit cigarettes; 18,000 litres of e-liquid

The total amount of the seizures exceeds EUR 33 million.

Furthermore, Frontex cooperated with Customs related organisations such as CELBET and SELEC through exchanging experience and creating lists of common indicators to detect excise and counterfeit goods being smuggled by passenger traffic.

Due to Frontex's liaising efforts a significant portfolio of data exchange channels was placed at the disposal of the partnering Customs and Border Guard Agencies (e.g. VOCU - OLAF, SIENA - Europol, Interpol channel)

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
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Number of Frontex activities with customs participation	3-4	4 activities with customs participation: 3 within EMPACT, 1 within LEWP-C.	Achieved
Number of customs led or co-led operational activities supported by Frontex's own operational activities		1 within LEWP-C.	Achieved

Key Activity 2.2.4. Enable effective operations by developing products, systems and services for document and identity control, enabling the support to operations, including the establishment of centralised information systems (FADO and FIELDS) and a 24/7 remote assistance service along the four-tier access control model

Results achieved

FIELDS: The new FIELDS Technical Agreement was negotiated internally and with INTERPOL, and the draft was almost finalised. In 2023, 21 document experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova gathered in four workshops to contribute to the main content of FIELDS: the Quick Check Cards (QCC). The Agency received approval from COREPER and the HLRT on Document and Identity control to share information with those countries under certain conditions. CED drafted and agreed with the HLRT the criteria to be fulfilled to access FIELDS (Concept of Mutual Benefit Cooperation Approach in the Context of FIELDS Outreach Policy Implementation). By the end of the year access to Frontex QCC was granted to the above mentioned countries except Albania.

FADO: The system takeover was 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 2023, Frontex, on behalf of the Commission, organised and led three FADO Subgroup meetings and one workshop on user access management levels. The first implementing act provided for by Art.6(1)(a)(b)(c)) of FADO Regulation was drafted and submitted to COM. The implementing act entered into force in Q1 2023 after receiving the EDPS opinion.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
The number of countries integrating FIELDS into national databases	In 2023 at least 2 countries integrate FIELDS into national databases	Grant signed for the integration of the system in Croatia. Preparatory work for the integration in other countries: - Technical integration visit to Romania - Online technical integration sessions with Bulgaria - Preliminary meetings with Malta and Iceland.	Partially achieved
The number of users of the reference manual. The level of preparation of the reference manual to be integrated into FADO	In 2023 at least 2,000 users regularly access the reference manual. The reference manual is ready to be integrated into FADO	2,120 users accessed the RM in 2023. Six workshops were held to produce content with the participation of 98 members from the Expert Group (+15%) on Document Control (EXP-DOC Group). By the end of 2023, the Reference Manual content was enriched by 17%. The content of the Reference Manual is still being prepared for the transition into the FADO.	Partially achieved
Development phase of the project for the first version of the FADO system	By the end of 2023, the documentation is ready for technical design according to the technical specifications contained in the implementing acts of the European Commission	In 2023, CED led the project team in revising, in view of the FADO tender, the Business Requirement Document and the High-level Architecture of the FADO Takeover Project and participated in Phase 1 of the tender, concluded in December.	Achieved

The development and testing of the concept for the 24/7 help desk	In 2023 the concept is developed	Frontex Forgery Desk concept was drafted but still in internal consultations, including in view of the Agency's reorganisation.	Partially achieved
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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 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 functions)			
Results achieved			
All 24 EU/SAC coastal countries were actively involved in the work related to the Practical Handbook on the European Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions, available online by June 2023. The country factsheets were updated for all 24 countries.			
Three Technical Subcommittee (TSC) meetings and one TSC chairs meeting were conducted in the frame of the Tripartite Working Arrangement between Frontex, EMSA and EFCA.			
A technical inter-agency group was established to discuss and agree on the best technical solution to dynamically display the mapping of the agencies' multipurpose assets.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of coastal EU/SAC Member States involved in the update of the practical handbook on European Cooperation on Coast Guard Functions.	24	24	Achieved
Number of technical subcommittee (TSC) meetings organised	4	4	Achieved

Key Activity 2.3.2. Implement multipurpose maritime operations (MMO) in cooperation with EFCA and EMSA in order to support the coast guard functions including SAR as component of EIBM 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 (EUMSS) Action Plan			
Results achieved			
Three Multipurpose Maritime Operations (MMOs) were implemented in 2023, with involvement of all three Agencies, EFCA, EMSA and Frontex, in line with initial planning. Frontex led an MMO in Western Black Sea during the period 1 June - 15 December 2023 with Romania as a host Member State. EMSA led an MMO in the Central and Eastern Baltic Sea during the period 1 June - 31 August 2023 with Estonia, Finland, and Latvia as host MS. EFCA led an MMO in Adriatic Sea during the period 12 September - 9 October 2023 with Croatia, Italy and Slovenia as host MS. Frontex operational activities within MMOs were implemented in the form of joint operation.			
As regards cooperation with CSDP missions ECGFO permanent deployment as Frontex Associated Expert in EUNAVforMED - Operation Irini, Operational HQ in Rome, Italy.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of JOs implementing MMOs	3	3	Achieved
Number of MMOs involving cooperation of customs	1	0	N/A (*)

		Since all maritime Border Control Points (BCP) were included in JO Sea Ports 2023, the cooperation with Customs no longer fell under MMO remits.	
Number of activities performed in close cooperation with CSDP missions	1	1	Achieved

Key Activity 2.3.3. Implement capacity building activities related to Coast Guard Functions in order to share best practices among the European Border and Coast Guard and when possible with non-EU countries' stakeholders including SAR as component of EIBM

Results achieved

SAR drills: Due to the Bulgarian Border Police authority's decision not to host the MMO in the Western Black Sea, the related SAR drill was not implemented.

Boarding working groups: Due to extensive work related to the negotiations, planning, implementation, and evaluation of three MMOs implemented in the course of 2023 and other operational activities at the CGS level and the lack of personnel, the activities of the Boarding Working Group were postponed to 2024, also to be in line with the new Frontex Executive Director Decision on the working groups.

Boarding drills: The activities were implemented during the regular patrolling activities within the MMOs.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of SAR drills implemented	4	3	Partially achieved
Number of boarding working groups	1	0	Not achieved
Number of boarding drills	2	2	Achieved

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

Results achieved

During 2023, 39,239 third country nationals were returned with the support of Frontex, more than initially planned. This was mainly due to a rise of 87% of voluntary returns. Forced returns also increased by 20%. The number of Frontex chartered aircraft increased by 14% and the Agency reached its target on this indicator.

Different pre-return projects were developed and implemented:

- The Technical Assistance Projects for Return, Readmission and Reintegration (TAP4RRR) - a general umbrella encompassing several projects
- the Toolbox for Children in Return project - various strands were completed (books, workshops, training content)
- Frontex Return Mobility Programme
- Alternatives to Detention (start of implementation).

Due to staff limitations some of the projects did not start or were not completed in 2023.

The Agency also continued to support MS in the area of post-arrival and post-return. During 2023 the number of cases submitted by MS in the Joint Reintegration Services significantly exceeded the target: 28.7% more persons were supported than initially anticipated.

In addition, dedicated meetings with MS experts facilitated cooperation and sharing of best practices. Dedicated Terms of Reference was agreed for the network meetings clarifying the reporting lines towards the High Level Round Table for Returns and the Management Board.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of third country nationals returned by air (by charter and scheduled flights)	22,000 third country nationals returned in 2023 and 20 chartered aircrafts in 2023	39,239 third country nationals returned in 2023 and 31 chartered aircraft in 2023	Achieved
Number of pre-return projects on technical and operational assistance implemented	6 pre-return projects implemented in 2023	Implemented projects include: Technical Assistance Programme on Return, Readmission and reintegration (TAP4RRR): - Rolling Plan adopted in June 2023. 3 projects were initiated and (partially) implemented (still ongoing). Toolbox for Children in Return: - books were launched, 3 workshops held; FACIR (Families and Children in Return) training content was developed. Frontex Return Mobility Programme: 53 return practitioners from 22 MS completed their study visits, hosted by 20 MS A new project on Alternatives to Detention project was initiated: - Information collected from MS during the annual bilateral meetings - A draft Good Practices document developed. - Further development and actions and possible ways forward.	Partially achieved
Number of persons supported with reintegration assistance through the Joint Reintegration Services	5,000 persons in 2023	6,438 persons in 2023, which is 28.7% more than the target set, due to the growth of the Joint Reintegration Services, in terms of MS participation and larger coverage of third countries.	Achieved
Number of meetings with MS's contact points networks	11 meetings by the end of 2023 with the provision that High-level Round Table will be more closely linked to the MB meetings	3 High Level Round Table on Return meetings 2 Pre Return Activities Network (PRAN) 2 PRAN Third Country Cooperation on Returns meetings 1 EURLO online biannual meeting 2 Direct Contact Points (DCP) on Return meetings 1 DCP - Collecting Return Operations forum meeting 2 Voluntary Return Network meetings 2 Return data and analyst working group meetings 1 RECAMAS workshop 2 Post Return and Reintegration Network meetings 1 reintegration conference for Member States and reintegration partners	Achieved

Key Activity 2.4.2. Strengthen MS return capacities through use of the standing corps, capacity building, further developing of return IT-tools and reducing administrative burden			
Results achieved			
The Agency implemented many activities to support the MS, including operational support by the standing corps with return profiles. Trainings were provided and good practices were identified. Continued development of IT tools and models have improved situational awareness and streamlined procedures. The Agency exceeded its target regarding deployments of FRESO and Return Specialists due to the increased demand from MS regarding this type of activity. The Agency also exceeded its target for the participation of forced-return monitors in return operations. The Agency partially achieved its target regarding percentage of MS national RECAMAS mapped in 2023. MS national RECAMAS mapping is done through gap analysis requested by MSs and in 2023 some gap analyses were postponed to 2024. The Agency also partially achieved its target concerning the update of the RECAMAS model. While the model was updated, the consultation with MS and fine-tuning took longer than expected and was not finalised by the end of 2023. To be completed by Q1 2024.			
Indicator	Target(as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of standing corps forced return escort and support officers (FRESO) deployed	220 forced-return monitors deployed and deployment of 55 FRESO at key MS airports	357 forced-return monitors participating in Frontex coordinated or organised return operations and deployment of 62 FRESO at key MS airports (and other locations)	Achieved
Number of return specialists deployed	25 deployments of return specialists by the end of 2023	63 Return Specialists carried out 94 deployments in 14 Member States.	Achieved
Number of standard operating procedures or guidelines on return developed	5	In total 9 procedures and guidelines were developed, of which 7 were finalised: • Handbook on the Joint Reintegration Services for Return and Reintegration Counsellors • Books for children were developed: ◦ Manual for parents and guardians ◦ Manual for migration officers ◦ Activity Book 4-11 years ◦ My guidebook on return (children version) ◦ My guidebook on return (youth version) ◦ My guidebook on return (unaccompanied minor version) • A draft document for good practices on identification and Acquisition of travel documents for return was developed (foreseen to be finalised in 2024) • A draft Good Practices document on alternatives for detention was developed (foreseen to be finalised in 2024)	Achieved
Fulfilment level of the stakeholder business requirements for improvement of IRMA 2.0	expanded with at least one additional module covering return related business activities	Access Management and Content Management module went-live in July 2023.	Achieved

Number of training sessions provided on the use of the mentioned IT systems (IRMA/FAR and RECAMAS)	40 training sessions per year	- IRMA 2.0 trainings: 13 external sessions (74 participants); 11 internal sessions (96 participants). - FAR Scheduled flights module: 54 training sessions (214 participants) - FAR Charter flights module: 4 sessions (51 participants) Total: 82 training sessions (435 participants)	Achieved
Percentage of MS national RECAMAS mapped	70% of MS national RECAMAS mapped	58% of the MS national RECAMAS (i.e. 18/31) are currently mapped. - In 2023 2 gap-analyses were completed, and 2 grant agreements issued.	Partially achieved
Update of the RECAMAS model in 2023	Completion of update of the RECAMAS model in 2023	The RECAMAS model v.1.3 updated and was under consultation with MSs.	Partially achieved
Number of digitalisation related activities or projects supported for digitalisation in returns	6 projects or activities supported	In total 4 projects and 3 activities supported. Total= 7 Projects (initiated or in progress): - IRMA 2.0 Project modules under development. - IRMA Service Desk - Return and Reintegration App (RRAPP) - PoC Data for ECRET Activities: - Return data collection exercise; - Return analysis roadmap; - Development of Return Data Visualisation Dashboards.	Achieved

Key Activity 2.4.3. Enhance returns through closer cooperation with third countries in the field of return

Results achieved

The Agency continued to enhance its cooperation with countries of return on both operational and strategic level. These included deployment of EURLOs, events related to third country cooperation, as well as projects. While several activities fully under Frontex control (workshops, Country Working Groups etc) were fully implemented in line with the initial planning, others were only partially implemented. The target for EURLOs was not met due to a lack of candidates from MS for open EURLO positions, and due to security issues. No specific actions plans were concluded with individual third countries in the area of return. In some cases, the national political and security situation affected possibilities and/or willingness for cooperation; in other cases cooperation was discussed and agreed on a higher political level, decreasing the need for dedicated action plans or other agreements between the Agency and the country of return.

Indicator	Target(as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of meetings/missions/visits in relation to third country cooperation (e.g. inward/outward missions; familiarisation visits; consular workshops; sensitisation missions; country working groups and identification missions/activities)	35 meetings/missions/visits organised by 2023	In total 36 activities were implemented: 1 joint outward mission, 4 familiarisation visits, 13 identification missions, 11 Country Working Groups meetings, 3 third country ad-hoc workshops,	Achieved

		• 2 thematic ad-hoc workshops, • 2 consular workshops.	
Number of Frontex supported EURLO deployments (according to the EURLO transfer plan and depending on MS needs)	12 EURLO deployments	10 EURLO were deployed by the Agency during the year. One new EURLO, whose deployment started in April 2023, had to be terminated in October at the decision of the deploying MS due to the security situation. Vacancies for 2 posts remained open.	Partially achieved
Number of third countries action plans and/or best practices arrangements developed and concluded	2 action plans and/or best practices developed	Apart from existing activities under TAP4RRR and IPA no other specific action plans or best practices arrangements were developed with third countries. Limited resources, lack of cooperation by the third countries and limited needs are the main underlying reasons.	Not achieved
Number of third country reintegration capacity projects implemented in third countries	3 reintegration capacity projects developed by the end of 2023.	3 activities under the 3 project proposals adopted and under implementation as part of the reintegration component of the TAP4RRR Rolling Plan 2022-2023 were implemented. The outstanding projects are planned to be implemented in 2024, depending on budget, resources and third country related aspects (i.e. security)	Partially Achieved

1.3. Strategic Objective 3 - Sustained European Border and Coast Guard capabilities

1.3.1. Key achievements

Consolidating Investment Planning across the European Border and Coast Guard

The adoption of the Multiannual Strategic Policy by the Commission in March 2023 and the subsequent adoption of its **Technical and Operational Strategy** by the Agency's Management Board in September 2023, is one of the two strategic game changers of the Regulation, enabling policy steer to translate into both concrete operational and capability development actions for the upcoming five years. The **Capability Roadmap** is the vehicle for strategic game change. In preparation, together with experts from Member States during the second half of 2023, the **Roadmap** was presented at the November meeting of the Management Board. Based on an Overview of National Capability Development Plans and the Agency's corresponding multiannual plans, it is slated for adoption by March 2024, setting the capability development 2037 priorities for the whole European Border and Coast Guard. Subject to annual review and revision with the start of a new policy cycle, it will provide the first ever consolidated and coherent framework for long term investments in capabilities and their development at both European and national level.

Growing the Agency's Equipment and Service Portfolio

The September Management Board meeting also saw the adoption of the **Agency's Multiannual Strategy for Acquisition and Management of Equipment**. Fully compatible with the Capability Roadmap and the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management, it prioritises the strengthening of the Agency's ability to acquire, manage and deploy equipment towards 2027. This includes the gradual rollout of a New Logistics Model as well as further development of the competence base and the enabling processes and tools for managing the equipment lifecycle. At the same time, the Agency has committed to become a credible partner to Member States, being able to shoulder the baseline of the operational needs for equipment while operating a green, modular and scalable fleet.

Europe in the post-pandemic environment of 2023, amidst heightening security tensions, continued to experience disruptions in global supply chains, increased costs and fluctuating market conditions. Measures employed by the Agency to de-risk the situation included diversification of suppliers and increasing their numbers in new contracts, as well as stockpiling.

In summary, 2023 saw the following achievements:

- The Agency's contractual capacity delivered 10,946 flight hours by both manned and unmanned aircraft. It delivered 178 Interpreters and Cultural Mediators to 48 different locations of Frontex-led Joint Operations.
- Four new framework contracts were established to cover the needs for duty car rentals. Three framework contracts were established for fuel cards. Within the new framework contract for Patrol Cars, 250 were ordered. With these contractual capacities, Agency's own operational mobility and operational autonomy will be significantly improved.
- The Agency replenished its contractual capacity for charter flights for return operations. It secured capacity for transport and deployable storage for weapons and ammunition both within the Union and in third countries.
- Through 26 separate contracts, the Agency strengthened its detection and inspection equipment for border checks as well as ensured the necessary special garments for standing corps to cope with the challenging weather conditions.

Developing the Versatility of the Corps

A December morning in 2023 - at the Estonian border with Russia in Narva - saw the **graduation of forty-eight standing corps officers from the Basic Training Programme**. Having spent the first part of their one-year programme in Almada, Portugal, the second part was dedicated to putting their newfound skills into practice through experiential learning. A much-appreciated feature that was introduced back in 2022, this part of the training sees the learners work alongside seasoned professionals in real life situations.

Leadership training was delivered to the statutory staff of the standing corps serving as intermediate and advanced level officers. In parallel, the Agency delivered **162 specialisation courses**, not only to standing corps, but also to the staff of the wider community of the European Border and Coast Guard.

Furthermore, on the development side, the Agency supported Member States and partner countries in **transposing the Basic Common Core Curriculum onto the national level**. In addition, all training courses were aligned with the Sectoral Qualifications Framework. The Agency continued employing its Quality Assurance System, lauded by the European Court of Auditors, to ensure that delivery is on par with the highest standards. A key facilitator is the use of a centralised system connecting all training platforms, enabling effective learning design, development and management.

A **third upgrade of the Basic Training Programme** was initiated. Renamed the Operational Training Programme, it will feature an enhanced general strand, providing learners with the necessary skills to perform tasks under several profiles, beyond those under the Border Guard Profile, thus facilitating versatility of the standing corps to perform varied tasks. More specifically, officers will gain general skills to detect crime on land and specific skills to detect stolen vehicles. Learners will also obtain the basic skills to detect fraudulent documents, thus paving the way for more to subsequently qualify for the profile Advanced Level Document Officer. Furthermore, logistics training will be given to those assigned to perform such tasks. To cater to the Agency's Chain of Command, the Programme will come with dedicated managerial strands, adapted to Group and Section Leaders as well as Commanders and their deputies.

The **review of the standing corps profiles** was initiated in the second half of 2023, following what has become a bi-annual rhythm. As with the last review, a team of volunteer experts from both Member States and the Agency was assembled and their findings were presented to and endorsed by the Member States at the Pooled Resources Network meeting in December. The revised definitions were proposed for adoption at the Management Board meeting in January 2024 and applicable in 2025. Border control tasks under the current Border Guard Officer and Coast Guard Officer profiles will be merged under the new European Border and Coast Guard Officer profile. Screening tasks will be included under the Debriefing Officer profile with the caveat that the purpose of screening and debriefing activities are different and should not be mixed in the operational theatres. Furthermore, the tasks under the current Motor Vehicle Crime Detection Officer will be performed under the Cross Border Crime Detection Officer profile. The Frontex Tactical Support Officer will be replaced by the Logistics and Occupational Safety and Health Officer profile. Leadership and field press support tasks will be considered as horizontal functions. Lastly, engineering tasks will be included under the Crew Member profile.

Experimenting and Innovating

The year 2023 saw the Agency continue to work closely with the Commission in both **evaluating proposals and providing strategic advice on the programming of EU funded research**, in particular on the scope of the Border Security Theme of Horizon Europe.

The Agency carried out a study scanning the technological horizon and delivered a report on the status, implications and opportunities arising from extended reality technology. Under the umbrella

of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, the Agency carried out studies on High Altitude Pseudo Satellites, and on Key Enabling Technologies and Privacy Enhancement.

Within the framework of the Agency's own **grants programme for research**, **four projects were kicked off**:

- A coastal surveillance system based on a coherent photonic radar, interoperable with existing coastal surveillance infrastructures;
- A low-cost, reliable and easy-to-operate travel document check system compatible with the False and Authentic Documents Online system (FADO) and Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS) that improves usability and efficiency;
- A combined set of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, sensors, data processing and evidence collection methodology suitable to produce court-worthy evidence;
- A fossil-free Unmanned Marine Surface Vehicle prototype integrating computational intelligence to maximise mission time and range.

In 2023 the Agency conducted its **first Prize Contest**. Launched the previous year, researchers and engineers were challenged to detect and track Low Flying Objects. Conducted in several phases, allowing the contestants to incrementally fine tune their solutions, the final phase saw live demonstrations in Estonia by three consortia. This endeavour delivered effective and deployable solutions that are specifically geared for work at the borders. The finalists of this competition, successfully engaging EU small and medium enterprises to develop new capabilities for European Border and Coast Guard, were awarded prizes during the first Innovation Award Ceremony held in December 2023.

In addition, in 2023 Frontex tested shipborne Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems with Vertical Take-Off and Landing capabilities for multi-purpose aerial surveillance. Piloting activities were also launched on deployment modalities of small drones in Frontex operations.

The Agency's engagement with industry saw 238 applications received with **97 companies invited to showcase their technological solutions** to the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Agency continued its work on **standardisation**, supporting the development of Common Minimum Standards for Air Border Surveillance, expected to be concluded in 2024, and establishing a **taxonomy for Border Control Equipment**.

The Agency continues to support Border Crossing Points' (BCP) **readiness for the Entry Exit System's (EES)** implementation. The pilot project "Conditions of Entry Questionnaire in support of EES" successfully tested the concept of a web-based pre-registration solution to facilitate border procedures. Motivated by this success, at the request of the EU Commission and following consultation with Frontex MB, a new pilot project was launched to develop and test at one airport a pre-registration application for IOS and Android systems, with the understanding that the application has the potential to be transitioned to operational use and gradual roll-out to more locations.

To support MS decisions regarding equipment and technologies, Frontex organised a technology demonstration of solutions for the pre-registration of passengers, complemented with the field visit to Munich airport and sharing the findings of the research study on technologies for mobile and remote solutions at BCP commissioned by the Agency. Responding to continued requests for advice on BCP set-up and optimisation, Frontex continued to provide tailored advice and conducted a series of capacity building actions to enable MS representatives to run such BCP simulations themselves. The EES Knowledge Platform continues as the online reference environment for BCPs.

Deploying Capabilities in 2023

Frontex Operational activities rely on the capabilities provided by both the Agency and Member States. In brief, the Agency in 2023 secured **962 Category 1** (Agency's staff) and **465 Category 2**

officers (Member States long term secondments) for whom almost 4,000 deployment and re-deployment decisions were issued. The administrative process of deployments was significantly improved. In addition, **7,248 short term deployments** of one to four months from Member States (Category 3) supplemented the strength of the operational footprint. In total, 784,033 person-days were delivered to perform operational activities.

To ensure adequate operational effect, **1,782 items of equipment were deployed**, provided both by the Agency and Member States. In addition, Host Member States supplemented the pool of deployed equipment with 652 internal deployments of equipment.

Securing Operational Capabilities for 2024

Operating within the framework of the Regulation and its milestones for the mobilisation of standing corps and equipment from Member States and the Agency, the Agency employed a proactive approach, proposing concrete deployment periods for Member States' resources already at the beginning of the **Annual Bilateral Negotiations** for 2024. This included equipment acquired by Member States under the framework of the Specific Actions of the Internal Security Fund established under the previous Multiannual Financial Framework. In addition, the needs for trainers from Member States were also processed. A mutually appreciated approach, this new way of working yielded a successful outcome, harmonizing expectations, shortening the lead time.

1.3.2. Results by activity

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.
Results achieved
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023: RES-1. Implementation of the updated common core curricula in the Member States Assistance to the Member States and partner countries to implement the new edition of the Common Core Curriculum for Basic Training in the EU in the national curricula was provided, informing of the changes the National Training Coordinators and national experts and facilitating national implementation plans. RES-2. Common training activities among MSs and third countries training institutions and exchange of good practices. European Border and Coast Guard Trainer Community concept was developed and presented to the Partnership Academy and National Training Coordinators Networks to advance the capabilities of border and coast guards and to serve as a hub for knowledge exchange, continuous professional development, and innovation in training methodologies, ultimately contributing to improved border and coast guard training - in line with the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management. In fostering the harmonised approach to training delivery, experts from Member States were certified as Frontex trainers during five courses on border and coast guard training delivery methodology. The European Joint Master's Programme in Strategic Border Management, through a multiannual Framework Partnership Agreement and financed with specific grants. Following a Call and evaluation of proposals, the signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement, the actual commitment of funds and the signature of the specific grant agreement is planned for 2024. RES-3. Delivery of training support to third countries in the defined framework of strategy of cooperation. The Agency delivered training support within the confines of availability of resources and budget. In total, 261 non-European Union officials have been trained by the Agency. RES-4. Delivering training within the partnership academy network. Numerous training activities were hosted and supported by Partnership Academies, based on the call for hosting quarterly sent to Member States. RES-5. Provide specialised training courses and products related to integrated border management as a follow up to the vulnerability assessments, Schengen Evaluations. Following the adoption of the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management, a series of webinars was launched to support the National Coordinators for Integrated Border Management in aligning the National Strategies. The webinars and training material will form the basis of a new course expected to be delivered in 2024. Six courses on the Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model were provided to increase the national capacity. Twenty-one seats were offered for Member States experts during Advanced Level Document Officer courses in 2023 and one iteration was fully dedicated to Moldova (EU support HUB). RES-6. Development and implementation of specialised training programmes to enhance the professionalisation of the European border and coast guards.

The alignment of the Agency's courses with the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding, further development of new training programmes and subsequent implementation.

- **RES-7. Development and implementation of specialised training programmes for the instructors of the border and coast guards of Member States, fostering harmonisation of the border guarding education process.**

Five courses on Training Delivery Skills were provided to train 120 instructors of European Border Coast Guard to ensure harmonised standards for course delivery in line with European best practices and the Frontex quality assurance system.

- **RES-8. Implement multiannual framework partnership agreement, based on the call for proposals for Framework Partnerships to be established with public higher education institution.**

The call for proposals was launched and evaluation for Joint Masters Programme is ongoing.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Satisfaction Score (CSAT- Customer Satisfaction) of the internal and external stakeholders CSAT – level 4 on a scale from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)	80	95%	Achieved
Number of common training activities (border and coast guard)	10 activities	30 courses, 162 iterations, 17 roadshows. 3913 participants trained	Achieved
Number of activities in support to partnership academy network and third countries	5 activities	1 PA/NTC conference organised. 1 CCC workshop for NTCs 1 CCC implementation workshop	Partially achieved

Key Activity 3.1.2. Foster integrated approach to planning

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Established processes needed to ensure that capabilities meet the operational needs.**

The capability request process has been established, the implementation of which has been piloted when preparing for the recruitment of the next generation Category 1 officers. This has similarly been established on the side of equipment. Moreover, as a result of the reorganisation, the remit of capabilities will in 2024 be strengthened with a service desk capability to assess whether requests are in line with the plans as well as the establishment of a transitioning capability, able to manage cross-divisional programmes across the whole lifecycle.

- **RES-2. Resilience and sustainability throughout the integrated planning processes, to be able to effectively adapt to change and sustain EBCG capabilities.**

The Agency has continued to demonstrate its responsiveness to changes in requirements due to operational needs.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Percentage of capabilities resulting from integrated planning vs ad-hoc planning	80%	> 80%	Achieved

Key Activity 3.1.3. Plan, programme and report on capabilities			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
• RES-1. Multiannual planning: ○ RES-2. Finalisation of the capability roadmap and its submission for approval to the Management Board. The Overview of National Capability Development Plans and the Agency's Multiannual Plans for developing its own capabilities was presented to the Management Board at its meeting in June and on the basis of this the Capability Roadmap was developed together with experts from Member States and submitted for adoption by the Management Board at the November meeting. Following the positive feedback by the Management it was agreed to further discuss and fine tune at the expert level due to its strategic significance, anticipating adoption by March 2024 at the latest. ○ RES-3. Alignment of sub-strategies with the capability roadmap (e.g. the Agency's capability development plan, its multiannual strategy for acquisition of equipment, and the multiannual plans for the profiles of the standing corps). Given that the Capability Roadmap has been slated for adoption in March 2024, alignment of both the National Capability Development Plans and the Agency's Multiannual Plans can only commence afterwards. ○ RES-4. Implementation of capability development planning. The Agency has gradually moved towards a coherent approach to the implementation of capability development, embracing the principles of Systems Engineering, thus allowing for an open-minded approach to identifying the optimal solutions, balancing needs, costs and benefits. • RES-5. Annual planning: ○ RES-6. Annual capability plans and established capability pools made available for operational activities in the upcoming operational cycle. Plans and pools of capabilities were established as planned for 2024. ○ RES-7. Management Board Decisions on Minimum Number of Items of Technical Equipment and Profiles for the standing corps submitted for adoption. The Management Board Decisions for 2024 were adopted in by March 2023 in line with the Regulation. • RES-8. Reports: ○ RES-9. Quarterly reports submitted to the Management Board for information. All Quarterly Reports were submitted to the Management Board. ○ RES-10. Annual implementation report submitted to the Management Board for adoption The Annual Implementation Report was adopted by the Management Board as required by the Regulation. In brief, in 2023 the Agency with Member States provided 21% more of human resources and 28% more of technical equipment to the Operational activities: - 946,684 person-days (781,052 in 2022, 21% increase), and - 331,747 asset days (258,321 in 2022, 28% increase).			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Ratio between planned and executed activities	85% execution of planned activities	80% of the planned activities were implemented. 26% of new activities were added while 11% were	Achieved

		cancelled. In total, the Agency was handling a 24% higher workload than planned.	
Management Board Decisions submitted for adoption in line with the Regulation	Full compliance with the Regulation	100%	Achieved

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

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Management, maintenance (corrective and preventive) and upgrades of Opera Evo.**
The Product Management of Opera Evo functioned flawlessly as demonstrated by its Operational Availability.
- **RES-2. Development of new modules to meet the business needs of the agency, facilitating e.g. the implementation of Integrated Border Management as well as the annual and multiannual capability planning processes etc.**
Change management has been managed within the cross-divisional Product Management scheme applying an established prioritisation methodology that organises the requests in order of necessity.
- **RES-3. Management, maintenance, and upgrades of the External Experts Database.**
The establishment of a new External Experts Database has been postponed to 2024 due to the need to prioritise the establishment of the Technical and Operational Strategy and the Capability Roadmap.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Ratio between planned and implemented actions	85% maintenance and upgrade actions implemented	> 85%	Achieved

Key Activity 3.1.5. Develop EBCG capabilities

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Implementation of scenario-based simulations, exercises (including for rapid border interventions), and analysis in support of capability development.**
Thanks to an initiative from Finland in the last two years, an annual exercise was held to address deployments of standing corps and equipment in new operational locations, proactively working on the processes, modalities and practicalities in relation to envisaged scenarios for managing contingencies. The Agency, following its restructuring adopted in 2023 by the Management Board, will strengthen its capability of transitioning into service, employing a programme management approach that also integrates the informative research phase.
- **RES-2. Identification of capability lines of development for each priority area.**

The concept of Capability Lines of Development, which stems from defence, will be further strengthened with the adoption of the Capability Roadmap and the necessary training materials to transfer knowledge. Furthermore, with the restructuring of the Agency, this will be institutionalised as part of the capability development process.

- **RES-3. Establishment of capability concepts, targets, and requirements for each priority area.**

The Agency has in the course of both 2022 and 2023 established outline Concepts, Targets and Requirements for a number of capabilities including personal equipment, patrols, surveillance and counter measures. These together with additional ones will be further elaborated on in 2024 along with finding an appropriate legal vehicle for formalisation.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Ratio between number of planned and implemented activities	85%	<i>circa 85%</i>	Achieved

Key Activity 3.1.6. Assurance of integrated planning processes

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Preparations for ISO certification of the integrated planning processes.**

The Agency has continued to prepare the capability related processes within the Agency with a view of ISO certification. The actual certification process had to be postponed and a new plan during the course of 2024.

- **RES-2. Ensured stakeholder engagement, input, and feedback.**

Satisfaction with activities delivered has been measured through the quality assurance mechanism applicable to each business area.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
ISO certification process launched	ISO certification is prepared and launched by the end of 2023	Postponed, preparations are ongoing	Partially Achieved
Stakeholders' satisfaction	80%	Average 83% (satisfaction with training 95%, satisfaction with capabilities 70%)	Achieved

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

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Availability of trained European border and coast guards for the standing corps category 1. Award of grant(s) to implement the Operational Training Programme for standing corps category 1.**

Training of standing corps category 1 continued to be delivered in line with the Regulation. That was enabled by the timely launch of Calls for host facilities and for trainers. Furthermore, the evaluation of the design and implementation of the Extended Basic Training programme for Category 1 was conducted by the external

evaluators under the aegis of the Commission, with the final report submitted in February 2023 - 95% of the recommendations were successfully implemented. Preparations for future enhanced availability and versatility have been launched in the context of the establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard Academy, because of the restructuring of the Agency, and the roll out of the Frontex Chain of Command.

One iteration of Operational Training Programme was completed with 48 learners graduating out of 50 enrolled. In 2023, 7,809 European Border and Coast Guard were trained (up from 6,397 in 2022), with distribution as follows: 2,203 standing corps officers, 4,142 Member States' officials, 261 non-European Union officials and 313 other Staff (such as Frontex personnel) received training in 162 iteration of 38 courses; 890 Category 1 officers received mandatory Use of Force training.

- **RES-2. Implementation of training quality assurance processes and procedures including a training needs assessment and training evaluation methodology.**
The Quality Assurance process was implemented as planned. Furthermore, the Agency delivered five sessions of the 'Training Delivery Skills courses' to ensure a harmonised approach to training delivery.
- **RES-3. Foster cooperation with MS training institutions for the implementation of the Operational Training Programme, annual ongoing training on the Use of Force for standing corps category 1, and specialisation courses for standing corps.**
This has continued to evolve within the framework of the Partnership Academy network.1 Partnership Academy and National Training Coordinators conference organised.
- **RES-4. Enhanced training digital lifecycle from design to reporting via efficient and cost-effective technological solutions.**
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.
- **RES-5. Centralised system to manage and monitor learners' and trainers' records which aims at supporting the implementation of training maps and enabling large-scale training management.**
The development on the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and Training Evaluation methodology was finalised and the concept was developed, and it won management approval. Further instruments for data collection are to be developed in 2024. The pilot launch of TNA is planned in April 2024.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Availability of trained European border and coast guards category 1 vs recruited	95%	96% 48 EBCG SC cat 1 officers trained out of 50 enrolled.	Achieved
Availability of trained European border and coast guards (category 1, 2, 3 and 4) according to the specialisation profiles identified prior to their deployment	95%	95% SC cat.1 1,817; SC cat.2 212 SC cat.3 174	Achieved
Availability of learner's records prepared to support implementation of individual training maps for European border and coast guards categories 1 and 2.	95%	100%	Achieved
Trainees' and trainers' satisfaction rate with the training	85%	97%	Achieved
Satisfaction of operational divisions with trained personnel in operations	85%	97%	Achieved

Annual planning of training activities based on the training needs assessment and training evaluation methodology	95%	95% (132 activities planned, with 126 of those implemented, In addition 30 unplanned activities delivered, in total 162 activities delivered, i.e. 23% more than planned)	Achieved
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Key Activity 3.2.2. Identify, select, prepare and deploy standing corps in an efficient and effective manner ensuring flexible and qualitative support to operational activities

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Trained and equipped standing corps members with the relevant profile and numbers are ready to be deployed according to the operational needs.**

The Agency continued to ensure that the standing corps officers allocated to operational activities were prepared accordingly in order to ensure readiness for deployment in 200 operational areas.

- 1,500 officers of Categories 1 and 2 received up to 4,000 long- and short-term deployments
- 4,000 missions performed by standing corps officers, enabled by support for travel, accommodation and, in most cases, car rental either for service or commute travel

- **RES-2. The selection of key staff for logistics tasks is completed based on predefined criteria (experience, knowledge and competences).**
Managerial staff for logistics that were selected in 2022 took office in 2023.

- **RES-3. Consolidating the Field Logistics network is achieved while the necessary training on the usage of technical equipment is delivered by senior experts.**

The consolidation was achieved as planned. In 2023 logistics managed 425% higher rate of delivery and maintenance of equipment:

- 1,836 items of light equipment (612 in 2022, 300% increase);
- 3,265 uniform sets and protective gear (1,773 in 2022, 84% increase)
- 22,956 accreditation cards and visual identity items (18,386 in 2022, 25% increase)
- 109 large technical equipment (94 in 2022, increase 16%)

- **RES-4. Management of standing corps members, meeting the dynamic deployment needs as well as taking into consideration their individual qualifications, skills and competences.**

Deployment management has continued to adapt in order to cater to the changes in the operational needs.

- **RES-5. Improved deployment and redeployment policies and procedures are established and implemented.**

Following the roll out of the Agency's Chain of Command structure, initiated in 2023 with a view of operationalisation from 2024 and onwards, the policies and procedures will be revamped accordingly.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
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Needs covered versus requested (in percentage)	ca. 100% of operational requests	83%	Not achieved
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Key Activity 3.2.3. Ensure safe, secure and healthy working conditions for deployed standing corps in operational areas through the establishment and implementation of the duty of care mechanism

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- RES-1. Revision of ED Decision R-ED-2018-1 of 11.01.2018 on occupational safety and health for operational activities.**
 This task was already achieved in August 2022. It has, however, been complemented by an Agency-wide HR Strategy (which includes an Occupational Safety and Health Policy) covering not only the human factors but also equipment, collateral and legal compliance, which was approved by the MB (MB Decision 44/2023) on 22 November 2023.
- RES-2. Development and set up of an occupational safety and health (OSH) function. Organisational structure and reporting lines.**
 The initiative to further strengthen the Occupational Safety and Health function for operational activities that was gradually being built up since 2015 was initiated in 2019 in view of the establishment of the standing corps. During 2023 the Occupational Safety and Health capability for operational activities was reinforced with the recruitment of an additional Occupational Safety and Health Officer. A new and consolidated OSH approach is under preparation and expected to be operationalised in 2024.

 The Agency's Occupational Safety and Health capability supported the transition of the acquired Mobile Surveillance Systems into safe-to-use in service. Furthermore, a thorough risk assessment of the Use-of-Force-Training was provided. In addition, the Agency undertook a more methodological approach to analysing Serious Incident Reports of accidents involving both operational staff and equipment. Lastly, the Agency resumed its operational workplace inspections.
- RES-3. Establishment and application of descending policies and procedures to implement the duty of care mechanism.**
 As a result of the initial strengthening of the Agency's strengthening of the Occupational Safety and Health capability for operations activities, the descending policies and procedures will be continued during 2024.
- RES-4. Standing corps officers are provided with adequate accommodation, and have received travel, financial and logistics support in a timely manner.**
 As the Agency does not have currently contracted services for the provision of accommodation and travel, officers deployed in operational areas have to manage their own travel and accommodation. The officers receive timely support provided by a 'mission and travel' team in headquarters helping with their travel, accommodation, transportation, and taking care that the officers receive all due financial compensations.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
ED Decision on OSH is drafted and adopted	Adopted in 2023	Adopted in August 2022.	Achieved
The OSH organisational structure is in place	In place at 100% in 2023	Successful recruitment of an additional Occupational Safety and Health officer.	Achieved
Policies, SOPs and checklists covering all aspects related to OSH are identified, planned and implemented	Completion in 2023	Policies, initial necessary Standard Operating Procedures have been established. Checklists for equipment and installations developed and tested.	Partially achieved

Satisfaction rate on support provided i.e. accommodation, logistics support, financial and travel arrangements	Satisfaction rate has increased when compared with previous year	In the absence of the FWC for Travel Agency/services, standing corps officers are booking accommodation by themselves, which is considered as satisfactory for most of them (however, no formal survey has been conducted).	Not applicable
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Key Activity 3.2.4. Supply standing corps with adequate operational equipment and tools in order to perform their duty in a professional and safe manner

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Logistics structure and processes are established.**
The results of the FC2 pilot project have been taken under consideration for the implementation of the logistics structure.
- **RES-2. SOPs and streamlined processes for the functional supply chain are developed.**
Standard Operating Procedures and procedures have been introduced for the Pilot Frontex Chain of Command project. The final review and finalisation of the Standard Operating Procedures and policies is expected within 2024.
- **RES-3. Functional network of FTSO SL is deployed in support of field logistics.**
Number of Frontex Tactical Support Officers for Logistics were increased to facilitate field logistics. Additional trainings were conducted as well as specialist armourer training. Identified gaps are expected to be covered in 2024.
- **RES-4. According to the outcome of the key activity 3.2.5, decentralised warehouses are established and restocked to promptly cover operational needs.**
In line with the Agency's Multiannual Strategy for Acquisition and Management of Equipment the lean logistics approach, embracing the expeditionary approach while acknowledging both the budgetary and operational uncertainties, will determine the way forward with the decentralised approach that will go in function of the gradual establishment of the contingents (as part of the Chain of Command concept).
- **RES-5. Critical enabling functions, i.e. fleet, weapons and warehouse management, are consolidated, and best practices are identified for implementation.**
Best practices as well as conclusions from the pilot of Frontex chain of command project have been taken into consideration for the development of required standard operating procedures and policies. Enabling systems and tools to facilitate fleet and stock management continue to be under development.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
SOPs are drafted and adopted.	100%	60% New SOPs were developed. a. SOP on Weapons Withdrawal b. SOP on Coordination of SCOs Cat 2 Traveling with Weapons. c. SOP Technical instructions on the Use of Weapons Clearing Devices	Partially achieved

		d. SOP Instructions on the use of Magnetic stickers on FRONTEX Patrol Vehicles. e. SOP on Bulletproof Vest Use and Maintenance. f. SOP for interpretation and cultural mediation service	
Standing corps are equipped with adequate operational equipment and tools and receive all necessary training on the assigned technical assets.	100%	90% The Deployment of Technical Equipment Satisfied 90% of the requirements of MNITE 2023. New Framework Contracts were signed to cover the needs in view of MNITE 2024.	Partially achieved
Antenna offices warehouses are established in line the formal Decision of the MB establishing these offices. (capacity envisaged under key activity 3.2.5.).	100%	As the Antenna offices were not established during year 2023 it is expected to be implemented during 2024 at the Field Contingents that will be established.	Not achieved
IT systems devised to manage fleet, weapons and warehouse are in place and fully functional.	100%	Dedicated IT Systems devised to manage fleet, weapons, and warehouse were not implemented.	Not achieved

Key Activity 3.2.5. Support the deployment of the standing corps by implementing and managing the antenna offices as a supportive element

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- RES-1. Establish internal legal framework (i.e. Executive Director proposal, Management Board decisions on establishment, composition, mode of operation of the new antenna offices, opinion of the European commission and agreement of the host Member States or host third countries, and other internal instruments).**

In March 2023 it was decided by the Management Board to extend the initial scope of the antenna office concept to include the outcomes of the Chain of Command Pilot and consider use of antenna offices for hosting contingent commanders and support Offices. The Pilot was concluded in 4Q 2023, hence redesign of the concept for antenna offices will be conducted in 2024.

- RES-2. The pilot project of the New Logistics Model is finalised. First lessons learned are identified in the context of the evaluation.**
The new Logistics Model, consisting of three layers: central, regional and local, was successfully tested and proved to be efficient, thus delivering proof of concept that will be rolled out in contingents in line with their establishment timeline. During the Chain of Command Pilot, the new Logistical model received 95% satisfaction. In comparison in 2022 satisfaction rate was 70%.
- RES-3. Additional antenna offices are established, based on MB Decision and the evaluation of pilot project.**
As mentioned, the roll out of the Antenna Offices will continually be subject to needs, cost and benefit analysis.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Internal legal framework	Internal legal framework proposed for adoption	Considering expansion of the initial antenna Office concept to cover Operational decentralisation though establishment of contingents, as well as the dependency on the outcomes of the Chain of Command Pilot which was completed in quarter	Not achieved (postponed)

		four of 2023, new antenna concept will be delivered in 2024	
Evaluation of the New Logistics Model pilot project	Evaluation completed for the New Logistics Model pilot project enabling the successive build-up of that capability in the locations defined by the MB. During 2023 development of the evaluation criterion. During 2024 if required completion of the procurement process.	Evaluation and development of the evaluation criteria completed for the New Logistics Model pilot project. Build-up of New Logistics Model capability in the locations defined by the MB, enabled.	Achieved
Agreements with host countries	Reach all necessary agreements with defined host countries in order to setup antenna offices. Negotiations with EU MS/SAC and TC on Antenna Offices will start once the legal framework for the Antenna Offices is established.	Once the new Antenna Office concept is adopted by MB after receiving the opinion of the EC, all necessary agreements with defined host countries in order to set up antenna offices will commence.	Not achieved (postponed)

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			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. Supporting the analysis of continuous coherence between the operational needs and the business constraints (legal, financial, etc.). In 2023, Frontex ran overall 152 acquisition projects, regularly assessing operational requirements, market availability and reasons for unsuccessful procurement processes; 20% of implemented projects are ad hoc emerging needs. RES-2. Execution of the acquisition projects in line with the multiannual acquisition strategy and the implementation plan. 152 acquisition procedures managed. Taking into consideration that in 2023 there were two amendments of the Annual Procurement Plan, the Agency executed the acquisition projects in line with the Multiannual Acquisition Strategy and the Implementation Plan. Due to budget constraints, budget was reallocated during the year; nevertheless, the budget was implemented and committed to acquire Frontex own technical equipment as per the implementation plan and committed 127% of the original budget. RES-3. Manage products and contracts in accordance with the available processes and procedures. Contract and product management is strictly regulated by contractual provision, which have been followed. Only 4 cases (2.6%) led to an administrative exception.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of record of exceptions opened	≤ 5% of exceptions out of the overall number of acquisition procedures managed	2.6% Record of exceptions: 4 out of 152 acquisition procedures managed	Achieved

Number of tenders published with respect to the baseline annual procurement plan	≥ 70%	88% Initiatives in APP 2023: 24. Tenders published: 9 Tenders re-published: 6	Achieved
Timeline control with respect to the contractual baseline measuring milestones deviations	≥ 50%	50%	Achieved
Budget implementation	Financial commitments at 95%	127%	Achieved

Key Activity 3.3.2. Systems engineering for technical equipment			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. Implementation of processes for project/product/contract management based on systems engineering, quality control and risk management. In 2023, Frontex applied PM² methodology to all newly initiated projects and defined contract management processes along with mapping all workflows and document templates for it. For evolving systems, the Agency applied Product Management best practices and maintained control over the changes needed to them. Frontex applied issue, risk and quality management best practices to projects, products, contracts and corporate processes. RES-2. Consolidation of the implementation plan of the multiannual acquisition strategy through engineering analyses (life cycle cost, sensitivity, SWOT, etc.). The Agency implemented its own system engineering approach for technical equipment to ensure that complex systems operate efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of end-users. The Agency also consolidated the implementation plan of the multiannual acquisition strategy based on system engineering, quality control and risk management. RES-3. Introduction of supportability analyses to achieve improved performance at an affordable cost when operating in multiple and dynamic environments. Frontex standardised the integrated logistics support requirements in the contracts and developed a supportability analysis to be included as mandatory requirements for tenderers with a value ≥ €50 million. However, all these acquisition tenders were moved to 2024.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Percentage of designs accounting for integrated logistics support requirements (reliability, availability, maintainability, safety, obsolescence, reparability, etc.)	Presence of this section in at least 80% of the published acquisition tender dossiers	100%	Achieved
Supportability analyses as mandatory requirement for acquisition tenders with a value ≥ €50 million	Presence of this requirement in 100% of the published acquisition tenders with a value ≥ €50 million	N/A No tender of this value was published in 2023	N/A

Key Activity 3.3.3. Provide contracted services for operational needs			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. Provide interpretation services based on operational needs during the operational year The Agency provided the interpretation and cultural mediation service assuring the deployment of specialised interpreters and cultural mediators to meet specific operational needs by delivering 178 Interpreters and Cultural Mediators to 48 locations of Frontex led Joint Operations.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Percentage of the interpretation operational needs covered during the operational year	65% coverage	99% coverage in 2023	Achieved

Key Activity 3.3.4. Joint acquisition for EBCG capabilities			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. Expert forum of acquisition-related entities of the border and coast guard services and other IBM actors of MS/SAC. The Agency uses the framework of the Pooled Resources Network to present its state-of-play on the acquisition and management of its equipment and discuss opportunities to collaborate with Member States. RES-2. Framework, processes, and procedures for joint procurement. The Agency has for several years had in place Framework Contracts for maritime aerial surveillance service, the latest of which is the contract Frontex Surveillance Aircraft 2. This is an inter-institutional Framework Contract, which allows other interested EU entities to make use of the aerial surveillance services. The other EU entities that expressed their interest are the European Fisheries Control Agency and the European Union Satellite Centre. The Agency also initiated preparation of the follow-up contract to the existing Framework Contract on Personal Protective Equipment, which is the second of its kind, launched at the height of the pandemic with 48 EU entities joining in for what at the time was the biggest Framework Contract. Furthermore, following the award of grants to Member States by the Commission in response to the proposals received under the call issued under the Specific Actions of the Border Management and Visa Instrument, in late 2023 the Agency began, through the Pooled Resources Network, engaging with Member States on exploring opportunities for collaboration including joint procurement. RES-3. Standardisation and interoperability linked to operational effectiveness. The inter-institutional Framework Contracts have a standardising impact, thus strengthening interoperability. RES-4. Cost effectiveness and economies of scale principles pursued. The inter-institutional Framework Contracts demonstrate how pooling demand achieves economies of scale and generates greater interest from the market, for which the principles are the same for joint procurement between the Agency and Member States or between Member States.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status

Proposals to MS for joint sourcing procedures in the field of acquisition of services/supplies to be designed	1	2 proposals: 1. Frontex Surveillance Aircraft Services for Border and Coast Guard Functions with manned mid- and long-range aircraft for maritime surveillance / FWC in place 2. PPE and Sanitary / Proposal	Achieved
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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
Results achieved
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023: RES-1. Market research on technologies. Market research on technologies was delivered mainly through thematic I-Days, information available under 3.4.2. RES-2. Industry dialogues on technological solutions. Two general I-Days were organised in 2023: in April and December. Information on thematic I-Days is included under 3.4.2. RES-3. Pilot projects, technology demonstrations and/or prize contests. Following its launch in 2022, the Prize Contest on the Detection of Low Flying Objects has been implemented with a view to develop European Border and Coast Guard Capabilities on the detection of drones and other objects which may be used to violate border security. Organised in a simulated border environment for a range of diverse scenarios testing the capabilities of solutions submitted for the competition, the operational trial was one-of-a-kind learning exercise and capability demonstration for the European Border and Coast Guard. In mid-2023 the Pilot Project on the Conditions of Entry Questionnaire was completed. Its results were shared with Member States, together with the results of a study on mobile and remote technologies relevant for Border Crossing Points, during a technology demonstration organised in cooperation with German Federal Police, in Munich. Further new pilot projects launched in 2023 include: a pilot project to develop and test a web application for pre-registration of travellers under the Entry Exit System. RES-4. Collaboration with key institutional partners (such as DG JRC, Interpol, EU SatCen, Europol, EDA, ESA, eu-LISA) (1) and key frameworks (EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security). Frontex continued the dialogue within and permanent contribution to the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security and its participating entities, leading on the implementation of two research studies under its umbrella. Frontex held regular dialogue with Joint Research Centre on various cooperation areas. Frontex maintained exchanges with the European Defence Agency on standardisation and European Union Agency for the Space Programme exploring the potential of space technologies for European Border and Coast Guard. Frontex maintained dialogue with European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems regarding activities related to the Entry Exit system. RES-5. Arrangements for the Conference on technologies for training scheduled February 2024.

Frontex launched the preparations for the Conference on technologies for training, including the conference website, logistics, launch of the call for research papers, and call for expression of interest to relevant industry exhibitions.

- **RES-6. Based on the Terms of Reference between the DG Migration and Home Affairs and Frontex signed on 05/02/2020 on the role of the EBCG Agency in the parts of the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation which related to border security, perform the senior user role in Horizon Europe for the border management domain, including the dissemination of results of EU-funded research in order to facilitate uptake of European innovation by European users.**

Frontex was involved in the evaluations of research proposals received by the European Commission and provided user-perspective contributions to EU funded border security research projects: feedback on projects, participation in Horizon⁶ project reviews, meetings, workshops and demonstrations, facilitation of interaction with Frontex operational departments and dissemination of the projects content to the EBCG community. On 14 December Frontex organised an annual workshop where end users learned about the new EU funded border security projects: EURMARS, I-SEAMORE, ODYSSEUS, FLEXI-cross and MELCHIOR.

- **RES-7. Frontex Research Agenda for 2023-2027.**

The strategic planning document on research and innovation priorities linked to the strategic planning on capability priorities, was launched and is expected to be finalised in 2024, in order to ensure link to the capability priorities as set out in the Capability Roadmap

- **RES-8. Border security research performed or managed by the Agency, including through a Frontex Research Grants Programme.**

The Agency launched the programme with the aim to engage research institutions and research capabilities within border management. As a result four projects directly supporting the work at the border were selected for financing:

- A coastal surveillance system based on a coherent photonic radar, interoperable with existing coastal surveillance infrastructures;
- A low-cost, reliable and easy-to-operate travel document check system compatible with the False and Authentic Documents Online system (FADO) and Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS) that improves usability and efficiency;
- A combined set of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, sensors, data processing and evidence collection methodology suitable to produce court-worthy evidence;
- A fossil-free Unmanned Marine Surface Vehicle prototype integrating computational intelligence to maximise the mission time and range.

- **RES-7. Frontex Research Agenda for 2023-2027.**

The strategic planning document on research and innovation priorities linked to the strategic planning on capability priorities, was launched and will be ongoing in 2024, in order to ensure linkages to the capability priorities as per Capability Roadmap.

- **RES-8. Border security research performed or managed by the Agency, including through a Frontex Research Grants Programme.**

Following publication of Call for Proposals in 2022, in 2023 Frontex awarded and kicked off four research grants under the Research Grants Programme. This marks a step towards closer engagement with academia and non-profit research entities on European Border and Coast Guard research needs.

The following studies were completed in 2023 (launched in 2022).

- Research study on High Altitude Pseudo Satellites
- Research Study on Key Enabling Technologies and Privacy Enhancement
- Technology Horizon Scanning.

- **RES-9. An innovation lab, a research network, innovation cells and technical groups on standards.**

⁶ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

Frontex Innovation Technology Centre has been included in the planning for the new Frontex premises. In 2023 innovation cell meetings were organised in relation to specific projects' planning. Since the review Committee for Technical Standards was not established, as required by the Methodology, no technical expert groups on standards took place. In December 2023 an online information meeting for Member States was organised to brief them on the plans regarding Technical Standards.

- **RES-10. Development of Technical Standards for equipment and Common Minimum Standards for Border Surveillance.**

Frontex finalised the Guide on Common Minimum Standards for Maritime Border Surveillance and launched the work on the Common Minimum Standards for Aerial Border Surveillance. Frontex finalised a first consolidated version of the taxonomy of European Border and Coast Guard equipment, based on desk research and consultation with Member State and Agency experts.

- **RES-11. Development of conformity assessment methodology and tools.**

Frontex launched a study to identify methodologies and tools that could be used for conformity assessment. Such assessment would guarantee that the equipment in the pool is compatible and equip European Border and Coast Guard stakeholders with a tool to assess their equipment performance.

- **RES-12. Technical support to the roll-out of new technologies and policies.**

Frontex provided technical advice and support in response to requests, mainly in relation to Entry Exit System. In 2023 Frontex provided the English version of the Entry Exit System toolkit, maintained the Entry Exit System Knowledge Platform, provided support to simulation and optimisation of Border Crossing Points processes and organised four workshops developing the capacity for simulations for Member States.

- **RES-13. Conference on Innovative Technologies for Strengthening Schengen.**

In March 2023, in cooperation with EU Commission and Europol, Frontex organised the Conference on Innovative Technologies in support of the Schengen area, which attracted participation of law enforcement officers, policy officers and industry.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Average participants satisfaction measured for selected research and innovation activities	70% satisfied or very satisfied	16 satisfaction surveys were conducted in which 216 respondents took part. The average result: 96% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied.	Achieved
Number of border security research delivered, through contracts & grants	≥ 2	In 2023 Frontex delivered: (a) Technology Horizon Scanning study and two studies delivered under the umbrella of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security: b) Research Study on High Altitude Pseudo Satellites, (c) Research Study on Key Enabling Technologies and Privacy Enhancement. The research studies and their key findings are available on Frontex website. Four border management research projects were supported through research grants.	Achieved
Number of technical standards, standards/performance related reports and technical support reports prepared	4	In 2023 the following were prepared: a) Guide on Common Minimum Standards for Maritime Border Surveillance (Sensitive) b) EES Toolkit (EN) c) Taxonomy for border control equipment	Achieved

		d) new simulation models for optimisation of BCP resources, and for complementary mobile devices, to be deployed during peak times, if needed. Furthermore, the following were prepared and disseminated: a) Study on Advance Information on Land and Sea Borders b) Report on the Performance Assessment Methodology for Document Inspection Systems.	
Evaluation of border security related proposals under Horizon Europe	100%	Frontex contributed to the evaluation of all border security related project proposals submitted under Horizon Europe. Eight new border security projects were launched in 2023 and will be monitored by Frontex.	Achieved
Number of pilot projects/demonstrations/ prize contests implemented following initiation together with innovation cells	2	In 2023 Frontex implemented, finalised and disseminated the results of (a) Pilot Projects on the Conditions of Entry Questionnaire in support of EES, implemented with the host MS France (b) Prize Contest on the Detection of Low Flying Objects, where the operational trial was implemented in cooperation with the host MS Estonia. c) demonstration of solutions for pre-registration, organised in Munich Further pilot projects were launched in discussion with MS and will continue and finalise in 2024.	Achieved

Key Activity 3.4.2. Research, technology and innovation meeting specific Frontex needs

Results achieved

Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:

- **RES-1. Higher engagement in the innovation process across the agency (Roundtable for Research and Innovation).**
In 2023 the higher engagement of Frontex entities was mainly achieved through bilateral contacts and requests. No Round Table was established.
- **RES-2. Market innovation awareness is enhanced at Frontex and industries' knowledge about Frontex's needs is increased through thematic dialogue with industry.**
At the request of internal business units eight thematic Industry Days were organised supporting the requestors with market research and awareness on state-of-the-art technology solutions. The organisation of the thematic Industry Days contributed to the development of Frontex capabilities and relevant internal actions. Positive feedback was received from the business entities and the industry representatives participating in the thematic Industry Days.
- **RES-3. Increased efficiency and transparency in management of contacts with the EIBM industry for the Agency.**
The Executive Director Decision on Standard Operating Procedure on Contracts with Industry was adopted in 2023, following practical testing of the approach proposed and its comprehensiveness in prior months. Frontex entities are advised on its practical application as per request. The announcements for the thematic Industry Days as well as the reports are available on Frontex website, to ensure transparency of the process.
- **RES-4. Support the research needs of Frontex entities by delivering research studies (through desk research, grants, and contracts).**

In 2023 preparations were launched for mid-term activities supporting the development of the European Border and Coast Guard Academy in the forthcoming Human Capital Division (following the Agency's reorganisation), these included the research study on emerging training technologies and conference on innovative training technologies, both of which will be completed in 2024. The needs of Frontex entities were also considered when drafting the focus areas of the Frontex Research Grants Programme, and when providing the inputs to the EU Horizon programming.

- **RES-5. Based on the operational needs of the Agency and the capability development roadmap, deliver technology pilot projects and/or demonstrations.**
Following the requests and with the engagement of operational entities in 2023 the pilot project on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems with Vertical Take-Off and Landing capability for maritime surveillance was completed, and results shared with internal stakeholders. To enhance the preparation and implementation of innovation activities, a methodology for the evaluation of technology pilot projects was elaborated. Towards the end of 2023 two pilot projects were launched to develop deployment models for Frontex and Member States' Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems to be used during Frontex operations.
- **RES-6. Support the acquisition of the agency's equipment, delivering and updating technical standards.**
Frontex conducted an assessment on the issue of interoperability of biometric devices with national systems, with outcome expected for distribution in 2024. The drafting of a European Border and Coast Guard equipment taxonomy supports the efforts to harmonise terminology across the agency which, in turn, improves communication with external stakeholders.
- **RES-7. Support of vulnerability assessment and other tasks of the Agency delivering operational research.**
No requests were received in 2023

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of roundtable meetings organised	≥ 2	Roundtable not established due to changed priorities	Not achieved
Industry Catalogue including information on all reported Frontex staff contacts with EIBM industry	100%	288 solutions were registered in the catalogue in 2023. Advice was provided to Frontex Staff on the Industry Catalogue and related relevant procedures.	Achieved
Number of research studies delivered serving the needs of Frontex entities	≥ 1, depending on complexity	2 research studies performed: following internal request, desk research support was provided with regards to lights and sirens for Frontex vehicles deployed in operational areas. In addition, a research study on emerging training technologies was launched and will be concluded in 2024, with a view to support the development of capabilities supporting the training of SC and border guards across the EU.	Achieved
Number of pilot projects/demonstrations implemented supporting the operational needs of the Agency	≥ 1, subject to budget availability	Pilot Project Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS) for maritime surveillance was completed in 2023 and results shared with internal stakeholders. The Methodology for the evaluation of pilot projects developed in the course of 2023 has streamlined setting and reporting on indicators to measure the success of Frontex pilot projects.	Achieved

1.4. Horizontal Objective 1 - Implement and support European Integrated Border Management to ensure safe and well managed EU external borders

1.4.1. Key achievements

Connecting and Protecting - Facilitating the Union's Security and Prosperity

Six months of intensive work led to adoption by the Agency's Management Board of the second Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy in September 2023 - "A Strengthened European Border and Coast Guard, Built on Trust to Protect and Connect Europe". It arrives at a time where the security environment near the external borders is increasingly volatile. At the same time the borders need to continue to allow for safe and secure legal crossings to enable the Union to collaborate with partners around the world in the interest of mutual prosperity. The Technical and Operational Strategy translates the policy steer of the Commission's Communication on the Multiannual Strategic Policy for European Integrated Management, for the period leading up to 2027, into strategic actions to be addressed at European and national level. Once the National Integrated Border Management Strategies have been aligned, due by March 2024, Member States and the Agency will regularly monitor and report on the progress throughout the five-year policy cycle.

1.4.2. Results by activity

Focus Area 4.1. Establish and develop mechanisms for operational cooperation to implement the concept of European Integrated Border Management

Key Activity 4.1.1. Support the establishment of the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle			
Results achieved			
The Roundtable on Strategic Risk Analysis (and foresight) has coordinated the preparatory work for the drafting of the Strategic Risk Analysis 2024 report. The Strategic Risk Analysis Network (SRAN), a dedicated analytical network for foresight established in 2021, held three meetings during the year with the participation of all MS, the Commission and other stakeholders. The preparatory work for the forthcoming SRA 2024 also encompassed scoping meetings and networking for the development of an External Experts group to enrich forecasting efforts within the Agency.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Result	Status
Satisfaction Score (CSAT) level on a scale from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) of the internal and external stakeholders running processes and using the tools	75% of level 4 and 5 of CSAT	90% - the development of the External Experts group was not finalised in 2023 due to legal framework constraints and will be finalised in 2024	Achieved

Key Activity 4.1.2. Translate strategic steer provided by the Commission into Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management strategy, achieving coordination with the concept of integrated planning			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. Implementation of the revised Technical and Operational European Integrated Border Management Strategy. The Agency's MB adopted the second Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management in September 2023, six months after the Commission adopted its Communication on the Multiannual Strategic Policy. Implementation of the Technical and Operational Strategy started at once with MS commencing preparing to align the National Integrated Border Management Strategies in the six months to follow. Using the Management Board Working Group on European Integrated Border Management as the platform, discussions also commenced on the establishment of a governance mechanism.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Result	Status
Technical and Operational European IBM Strategy Implementation Plan	In accordance with the Implementation Plan	100%	Achieved

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.			
Results achieved			
Results achieved in relation to the Annual Work Programme for 2023:			
RES-1. The strategy is prepared and adopted, paving the way for its implementation. To support this, the Agency launched a series of webinars for those experts in Member States vested with this task. The Agency also began revising the corresponding training course with a view to deploying it in 2024. To complement this, development of a set of "practical guidelines" commenced with a view to going live in 2024.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Result	Status
Implemented actions against the planned ones	80% of actions implemented	100%	Achieved

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

1.5.1. Key achievements

Strengthening cooperation in the external dimension

Amid growing migratory pressure in the Western Balkans, Frontex worked to enhance the Agency's operational capacities. Based on the new-generation Status Agreement between the EU and North Macedonia, Frontex launched JO North Macedonia in April 2023. The signature of the new-generation Status Agreement with Albania in September 2023 and its subsequent entry into force will allow for the further expansion of Frontex operations.

Complementing its operational efforts, the Agency further strengthened its capacity building and technical assistance work in the EU's neighbourhood. In the beginning of the year, Frontex launched a new multi-annual project, "EU Regional Support to strengthen border security capacities in the Western Balkans". Work also continued in the framework of two ongoing projects - "EU Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Systems in the Western Balkans" and "EU4BorderSecurity" in the Southern Neighbourhood. A separate grant agreement of EUR 12 million was successfully implemented in support of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

Frontex also continued investing into dialogue and structured cooperation frameworks with key priority countries. Negotiations continued to update working arrangements with partners in the Western Balkans and Moldova and to conclude a working arrangement with Senegal. The Agency also launched negotiations with the United Kingdom and initiated the process to renew existing working arrangements with Nigeria and the United States. In support of joint operational activities, Frontex also supported the Commission in its efforts to negotiate new or updated Status Agreements and concluded Memoranda of Understanding on complaints mechanisms with Albania and Moldova.

FLO network

The Frontex Liaison Officers' network continued to effectively contribute to Frontex's strategic and operational priorities in coordination with the local stakeholders in Member States and non-EU countries, the European Commission and EEAS, as well as the European network of immigration liaison officers.

Advances in cooperation with the EU partners

After extensive three-year negotiations, the Agency concluded a new working arrangement with SatCen, which was a legal requirement for maintaining cooperation between the sides. This is essential for the continued delivery of geospatial products and services to Member States and Schengen Associated Countries. In addition, extensive preparatory work was completed in 2023, which will lead to the renewal or formalisation of structured cooperation with many partners, including with EUAM Ukraine, FRA, eu-LISA and EUAA.

1.5.2. Results by activity

Focus Area 5.1. Strengthen capacities of priority third 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 Frontex liaison officers to third countries
Results achieved Pre-accession partners The Western Balkans remained of utmost priority in the external dimension. Joint operations were launched in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Moldova, and in April 2023 also in North Macedonia. The signature of the Status Agreement (SA) with Albania in September 2023 kicked off preparations for expanding the scope of JO Albania Land to the borders with North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo,* once the agreement enters into force. To support operational activities, Frontex also worked to strengthen institutional ties and frameworks for structured cooperation. Negotiations continued with all Western Balkan partners to renew Working Arrangements with the Agency. The Agency also worked to ensure that effective complaint mechanisms underpin EU Status Agreements' implementation with all Western Balkan partners. To ensure full compliance of Frontex operations with fundamental rights, the Agency concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Ministries of Interior of Albania and Moldova. Moreover, an MoU between FRO and the Ombudsperson of Montenegro was signed. Negotiations with other pre-accession partners continued. With severe implications of the Russian aggression against Ukraine spilling over to the entire region and following a historic decision to offer Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia EU candidate status, the Agency also scaled up cooperation with those Eastern Partners. Throughout 2023 the Agency invested unprecedented efforts to aid the Ukrainian counterpart in maintaining IBM core function at the country's Western border with the EU. Moldova hosted a fully-fledged JO for a second operational cycle and became an operational frontrunner with first line-check performed by standing corps officers since October 2023. Negotiations to renew a working arrangement reached a final phase, and once concluded, the new arrangement will enable full use of Frontex's enhanced mandate in the country. During 2023 Georgia proved again to be a close partner for Frontex, hosting officers in an advisory capacity at BCPs in all three domains (land, air, sea). Africa and the Middle East Throughout 2023, the Agency continued to build dialogue and cooperation with Africa and the Middle East. In the Southern Neighbourhood, Frontex's engagements were mainly carried out in the framework of the EU4BorderSecurity project funded by the European Commission. The project delivered familiarisation and capacity building activities, further described under activity 5.1.2. To strengthen dialogue and cooperation with partners in North Africa and Middle East, Frontex organised the second Euro-Arab Border Security Conference, a flagship initiative prepared in cooperation with the Arab Interior Ministers' Council and the Ministry of Interior of Portugal.⁷ At a bilateral level, progress was made in relations with Morocco, implementing the roadmap of joint activities for 2023, among them Risk Analysis and the Vulnerability Assessment workshop carried out in March 2023. Recognising mutual interest to further strengthen this relationship, in December 2023, Frontex-Morocco Comité Mixte agreed on the next steps for 2024, among them to initiate working arrangement negotiations and for Frontex to deploy a Liaison Officer to Rabat.

⁷ Due to geopolitical developments and the resignation of the Portuguese government, the conference had to be postponed.

In West Africa, the Agency continued to strengthen cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania, for the latter in support of the Commission's efforts to conclude a Status Agreement. Trainings on Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) were provided to representatives of both countries in the Training Academy in Bruehl, Germany. The Agency also initiated negotiations with Nigeria to renew the working arrangement concluded in 2012.

Silk Route countries and Central Asia

Frontex continued to develop dialogue with the authorities of Pakistan. Following up on the visit of Commissioner Johansson, a senior level delegation visited Pakistan in February. Aiming to support Pakistani capacities for border management, Frontex held a study visit on e-gates, including sessions in Berlin and Vienna airports, and several activities on return.

As regards Central Asia, Frontex continued to support the BOMCA project to further develop the capacities of Central Asian countries for effective border management. In this context, a delegation from Central Asian countries visited Frontex in March 2023.

Strategic partners

Frontex strengthened dialogue with partners in the US and Canada, hosting a record number of high-level visits and preparing the ground for renewing working arrangements with both countries. The Agency also embarked on the negotiations of a working arrangement with the United Kingdom. It was concluded in February 2024, paving the ground for mutually beneficial exchange of information and good practices addressing shared challenges over irregular migration and cross-border crime.

Latin America

The Agency continued dialogue and exchange with law enforcement counterparts in Latin America, particularly in view of strengthening cooperation on cross-border crime. To that end, Frontex engaged with authorities through several Commission funded projects in the region, such as EUROFRONT and SEACOP.

Frontex liaison officers' networks

The Agency continued to consolidate and expand the network of Frontex Liaison Officers (FLOs) in third countries, which in 2023 reached six FLOs covering 16 third countries. In March 2023, the mandate of FLO Senegal was expanded to cover the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and The Gambia. As of July 2023, FLO deployment to Niger has been on hold due to security concerns.

Preparatory work was undertaken for the deployment of one additional FLO to Morocco - a positive Commission opinion was issued in November 2023, the Management Board designated by its Decision 51/2023 Southern Neighbourhood, with a focus on Morocco, as one of the priority regions for the deployment of FLO in 2024.

FLOs in third countries continued to support the operationalisation of status agreements, implementation of working arrangements or the negotiation of new ones and be part of the ILO Networks established at local and regional levels. They also contributed to developing the pre-frontier situational picture, in coordination with the networks of liaison officers deployed by the Member States and the Commission.

The Agency contributed to the ILO Steering Board 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.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Percentage of partners considering cooperation activities as useful/relevant	Satisfaction level in 2023 higher or equal to that of 2022	85-90%	Achieved
Number of structured cooperation instruments concluded or reviewed (e.g. working		2 MoUs signed, negotiations ongoing for 11 working arrangements and 3 further MoUs	Partially achieved

arrangements, cooperation plans or other cooperation instruments)			
Implementation of the Frontex International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2023 evaluated and new priorities for the Strategy 2024-2026 developed, in coordination with the Commission, EEAS and Member States	Development of new priorities for the Strategy 2024-2026	The Strategy was adopted in January 2024, following extensive consultations with the Commission, EEAS, MS, the Consultative Forum and other stakeholders.	Achieved
Number of regional roundtables organised	Up to 2 round table dialogues organised with the MS/SAC on priority regions	14 meetings of the EXT-TA working group, from them 8 regional or country-focused roundtables.	Achieved
Number of FLOs deployed and number of TCs covered by FLOs	Preparatory work for the deployment of 1 additional FLO in third countries	6 FLOs covering 16 third countries in 2023 compared to baseline: 6 FLOs covering 14 third countries in 2022. Preparatory work: Positive COM opinion issued, Morocco included in the priorities for FLO deployments in 2024.	Achieved
Number of FLO contributions to Frontex operational and strategic activities, including meetings, missions, analytical input etc.	Attendance level of 100% of meetings, missions and contribution to 100% of input requested	FLOs supported 100% visits of Commissioners, Frontex executive management and operational missions to the countries covered by FLOs mandates. FLOs attended meetings and missions, and provided input requested by internal and external stakeholders.	Achieved
Number of meetings of the ILO steering board attended and participation in relevant regional and local ILO meetings	Attendance level of 100% of meetings of the steering board and 90% of meetings of regional and local ILO meetings in priority regions unless conflicting calendars	The LOU back office attended 100% of the meetings convened by the ILO Steering Board in 2023. The FLOs posted in third countries attended local ILO meetings hosted by European Migration Liaison Officers and in some cases organised or participated in initial meetings at local level amounting approximately to 15 compared to 10 in 2022.	Achieved
Number of Office Host Agreements revised to cover all FLOs deployments	100% of the Office Hosting Agreements revised	No Office Hosting Agreements could be concluded due to delays in EEAS.	Not achieved

Key Activity 5.1.2. Strengthen IBM capacities of priority third countries through technical assistance and capacity building activities, implemented in close coordination with the European Commission, the EEAS and the Member States, and promote European IBM standards, including in the external dimension

Results achieved

Capacity building projects in the Western Balkans continued to complement and support joint activities in the operational theatre, while bringing WB partners closer to EU IBM standards:

- “EU Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management Systems in WB - Phase III”, implemented by Frontex since 2016 together with EUAA, IOM, and UNHCR. The project delivered five activities: a regional workshop on contingency planning, a workshop on RECAMAS and three trainings.
- “EU Regional Support to strengthen border security capacities in WB”, implemented by Frontex since January 2023 as a stand-alone intervention. The project delivered four activities: 2 inception visits and 2 workshops on FIELDs.

In the Southern Neighbourhood Frontex continued the implementation of the EU4BorderSecurity project. Twenty activities took place: 2 workshops on fundamental rights, 2 consular workshops, 2 familiarisation visits, 3 meetings of the Euro-Arab Working Group, 1 National Steering Committee Meeting, trainings on women in border management, OSH and TECC, Euro-Arab Border Security Conference (postponed), and other activities. The Agency's grant to Ukraine - project "Technical assistance to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine to enhance border security, particularly at the country's Western borders" - was successfully implemented. The EUR 12 million assistance delivered a solid technical contribution to maintaining core IBM functions of Ukrainian institutional partners until the situation stabilises. Examples of equipment delivered in the framework of the project included: patrol and special vehicles, border surveillance systems, winter uniforms for border guards, field kitchens, and portable power stations. Technical assistance support was also offered to Mauritania and Senegal (trainings on Tactical Emergency Casualty Care) and to Pakistan (a study visit on e-gates).			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Outreach of capacity building activities and their geographic coverage (number of activities; number of external participants)	Attendance level higher or equal to 2022	Western Balkans: 9 activities, involving 177 external participants Southern neighbourhood: 20 activities, involving over 200 participants Silk Route region: 1 activity, involving 15 participants from Pakistan.	Achieved
Project implementation levels against the set targets (to be reported against indicators in the project log frame per project)	Implementation at higher level than 2022	The Grant Agreement for the benefit of Ukraine: The allocation was fully consumed, with 100% rate. The financial audit confirmed that all expenses declared were real, accurately recorded, and that all receipts were declared in accordance with the Grant Agreement. Implementation of the grant agreements in the Western Balkans and in the Southern Neighbourhood was on track, in line with the project plans.	Achieved
Number of Commission funded programmes/projects reviewed, contributed to	Active engagement higher or equal to 2022 level	Contribution to the programming and/or steering of more than 10 COM funded projects in the external dimension, equal to the level of 2022.	Achieved

Focus Area 5.2. Develop the architecture for effective inter-agency cooperation on IBM at EU level, ensuring 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
Results achieved
In 2023, Frontex continued enhancing cooperation with EU partners and with international organisations. In December 2023, Frontex concluded a new working arrangement and renewed the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with EU SatCen .

To address Frontex business entities' needs, the Management Board gave its authorisation on 27 July for Frontex to negotiate working arrangements with two new EU partners: EUSPA and EUPM Moldova. Frontex **initiated or continued a number of working arrangement negotiations**, namely:

- EUAM Ukraine and FRA - in both cases, negotiations were finalised by the Agency in 2023 with the Commission's prior approval being sought. In both cases, the working arrangements should be concluded in the beginning of 2024.
- eu-LISA - negotiations were finalised between the sides in 2023 with the arrangement shared with the Commission for an informal review before seeking the Commission's prior approval.
- EUAA - negotiations are ongoing with the draft reaching an advanced stage in 2023, expected to be concluded in 2024.
- Europol and Eurojust - negotiation process was on hold due to the EDPS opinion on Frontex implementing rules on the processing of (operational) personal data, and in the case of Europol also due to the EDPS audit report. Frontex adopted its new implementing rules only in January 2024, therefore, no action on either working arrangement was possible in 2023.
- Extensive preparatory work was also done in 2023 on the first draft of the working arrangements to be shared with EUROCONTROL and EUSPA in the course of the first quarter of 2024 with negotiations progressing with MAOC (N) in 2023.
- Negotiations continued with ICAO, IOM and UNHCR, but could not be concluded due to pending agreement on the provisions related to personal data exchange that require further alignment between the EU and UN systems.

In January 2023, EEAS hosted a delegation of Frontex staff as part of the regular staff exchange, and in June 2023 Frontex hosted 10 Europol staff as part of the staff exchange programme.

In 2023, Frontex was actively engaged in all **Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network (JHAAN)** activities (WGs, regular and high-level meetings, seminars, etc.). Additionally, Frontex also took part in a pilot JHAAN staff exchange programme.

The Agency also continued its positioning in the **customs** domain, including through continued interaction with partners such as the World Customs Organisation and the Central and Eastern Land Border Team (CELBET).

In September, Frontex organised the first Risk Analysis Conference 'Growing with Partners'. Approximately 70 EU MSs' representatives participated in person and more than 50 remotely.

In September, Frontex hosted the EUNAVFOR MED IRINI Operation Commander Rear Admiral Stefano Turchetto to pursue enhancing cooperation, creating new synergies and avoiding possible duplications.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of structured cooperation instruments being negotiated or concluded (e.g. working arrangements, cooperation plans or other cooperation instruments)	20% of ongoing negotiations concluded	In case of EU partners, in 2023 Frontex was negotiating 10 cooperation instruments with 9 partners. Throughout the year, 2 cooperation instruments were concluded: the WA with SatCen (and its annexed Operational Protocol) and the SLA with SatCen. In case of international organisations, Frontex was negotiating 3 working arrangements, but none of them could be concluded in 2023 for reasons outside of the Agency's control.	Achieved for EU partners Not achieved for international organisations
Number of requests for contribution/cooperation received or sent, ratio of positive responses	Level higher or equal to 2022	In 2023, many requests for contribution/cooperation were received or sent (with positive responses, namely linked to the annual work programmes consultation of other JHA partners (equal to 2022), the organisation of major meetings (EEAS-Frontex staff-to-staff exchange amongst others - more than 2022), staff exchanges (new JHAAN staff	Achieved

		exchange introduced in 2023), JHAAN requests (more than 2022), participation in MB meetings on behalf of Frontex (such as EUAA) and the increase of two partners where structured cooperation can be pursued (with EUSPA and EUPM Moldova).	
Number of invitations for meetings received/sent, ratio of positive responses	Level higher or equal to 2022	While the Agency is not in a position to provide a specific number for this indicator, the number of invitations for meetings received/sent in 2023 increased (with positive responses) compared to 2022, in particular due to the following factors: - The substantial increase in number of requests received from JHAAN. - The introductory meetings for the new ED - The increase in new active partners, contributed by the MB's granting of prior authorisation to start WA negotiations with EUSPA. - Increased requests based on COM requests, including linked to EUROSUR (regular meetings took place for the finalisation of the revised EUROSUR Handbook) and the renewal of the Frontex International Cooperation Strategy.	Achieved

Key Activity 5.2.2. Strengthen and consolidate cooperation within the EBCG institutional network via the exchange of liaison officers

Results achieved

In January 2023 an updated Management Board decision on the rules and conditions for the deployment of Member States' liaison officers to the Agency was adopted. Pursuant to MB Decision 3/2023 an annual call for expression of interest for Member States to deploy Liaison Officers to the Agency in 2023 was sent out in March 2023. One additional MS LO, representing the Danish border authorities, was deployed to Frontex HQ in November 2023. Furthermore, two other MS indicated their intention to deploy LOs to Frontex by March 2024.

In December 2023, Frontex appointed its first liaison officer to an EU partner, specifically to Europol, which is a follow-up to the Liaison Agreement concluded between both agencies in 2020.

A new policy for the rotation of Frontex liaison officers was adopted in 2023 through ED decision 2023-67.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
MS/SAC satisfaction level measured via annual survey to MS/SAC	Level higher or equal to 2022	N/A - 2023 Annual survey n/a any longer	N/A
Rules and conditions established for the regular deployment of the MS/SAC liaison officers to Frontex. Indicator: <i>to be defined upon completion of the pilot project in 2022</i>	Full Implementation of deployment of MS LOs	MB Decision 3/2023 has been endorsed and implemented related to MS LOs deployment to FX	Achieved

Number of MS LOs deployed to Frontex	Level higher or equal to 2022	11 MS LOs are currently deployed to Frontex, with 2 more announced to join by March and April 2024.	Achieved
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1.6 Horizontal Objective 3 - Develop upgraded management system aimed at ensuring accountability, regularity and legality of all Frontex activities

1.6.1. Key achievements

Finance management

The Agency has made significant strides in finance management, including effective budget oversight and compliance. By **optimizing financial workflows**, Frontex ensures prudent resource allocation and responsible financial practices. Some examples include:

- Streamlining budget management processes.
- Upgraded Management System: A robust system has been developed to ensure the accountability, regularity, and legality of all Frontex activities. This system fosters transparency and responsible resource utilisation. This includes delegation of budget implementation powers, simplification of the delegation process for Authorised Officers (AOs) and Authorised Observing Entities (AOEs).
- Financial Verification (ex-ante): Expediting and improving financial verification procedures.

In addition, the **redesign of Mission Information Package (MIPS) workflows** has simplified Mission Request and Claim processes, reducing the time required for the mission cycle. More frequent reporting has been enabled and data quality improved. New methods are being implemented to consistently review internal processes and the effectiveness of financial approval workflows. This ensures continuous adaptation and optimal performance. These improvements have led to **better budget implementation**, ensuring efficient use of resources and increased **regulatory compliance**, strengthening adherence to financial regulations during transactions.

By comparing practices with other EU institutions and agencies, Frontex is actively seeking best practices in control and advanced reporting. These initiatives demonstrated Frontex's dedication to achieving financial excellence and operating with the highest standards of accountability and transparency.

Human resources management

In November 2023, the Frontex **HR strategy 2024-2027** was approved by the Management Board and Frontex adopted the Mobility policy and Sensitive posts policy in view of its implementation. The **rules on sub-delegation on the appointing authority powers** to statutory staff were amended, implementing the decentralisation of the decision-making processes and of certain powers in HR matters, empowering middle management.

In terms of digitalisation, Frontex **rolled out two new SYSPER modules** and new functionalities of Time Management module followed by **digitalisation of the standby declaration** process. Moreover, Frontex HR representatives participated in the development of HR Transformation programme of the European Commission 2023 as the nominated representatives of the EU Agency Network.

Frontex premises

The **newly leased premises** of ETIAS Central Unit/Alternative Office Facility were fitted out and ETIAS staff moved in at the end of July. In Wronia building, two and a half newly leased floors were fitted out and occupied in June. The **lease of Spire B building was extended** until the end of 2026. As part of the competitive dialogue for **Frontex Permanent Premises**, the selected candidates submitted the Original Solutions. At the end of October, the candidates of the merit list were requested to submit the Improved Solutions, which are under evaluation.

Security

Frontex CLEO database, a management tool for administration of personnel security clearance of Frontex staff, was made fully operational in 2023.

ICT Systems

The Agency worked towards the implementation of the ICT Strategy 2022-2027 Action Plan. Several projects were accomplished, such as the implementation of 24/7 ICT support for ETIAS, standing corps and all Agency staff, deployment of Security Operating Centre 24/7 and the upgrade of RUE core infrastructure. ICT services are data driven, fulfilling the EBCG 2.0 Regulation obligation to report near-real-time data and information.

Internal control

In 2023, Frontex Internal Control monitored and reported on the application of the Internal Control Framework. Online portals for Deviations and Corporate Risk Management were introduced with enhanced criteria and monitoring indicators. Awareness was raised among Frontex entities on monitoring and compliance in line with the Internal Control Framework and regulatory environment. Anti-Fraud Strategy 2022-2024 and AFS Action Plan in 2023 were monitored, and updates submitted to senior management on the implementation of the Anti-Fraud Action Plan and its status.

Internal Control was also active in Inter-Agency cooperation, working groups and fora, for development of common Internal Control monitoring indicators, as well as Inter-Agency consolidation and reporting of risks in the HOME Cluster. Frontex contributed to Inter-Agency networks such as EUAN/PDN and AUDITNET section including Internal Control, and was also active in the Inter-Agency working group on alignment and development of CENTRICS for EU Agencies.

The annual assessment of the Internal Control Framework for 2023 was carried out in a timely manner. The assessment demonstrates that the components of the Internal Control Framework are present and functioning in 2023.

In 2023 data collection and reporting for exceptions and non-compliance was enhanced, and key monitoring indicators were developed; statistical representation and overall presentation was improved. Also, in 2023 tracking of materiality threshold (2%) of deviations related to value of payments was included. Reporting on exceptions and non-compliance was submitted quarterly to senior management. Potentially serious issues were escalated, and ongoing updates were delivered monthly in ICO. In parallel, the online system for reporting exceptions and non-compliance was improved with quality reporting criteria requested to the end-users in a new online form used in the portal for deviations, which improved consolidation of data required for better quality analysis and enhanced reporting. Importantly the workflow for declaration of deviations was enhanced to map the financial matrix to ensure that the levels of approval for deviations matched those outlined in the matrix with regards to budgetary approval thresholds of the Authorising Officer, and the workflow respected with request that the financial initiation agent in ABAC parallels the financial initiation agent starting the deviation workflow. FIA were advised that all deviations once approved by the AO should be included in ABAC with the supporting documents as evidence and to respect the audit trail.

A new online portal was developed to centralise the Corporate Risk Register. Risks were identified against objectives and mapped to the strategic and horizontal objectives and linked to the Internal Control Framework. The Agency created a network of Risk Management Correspondents in the business entities. The Corporate Risk Register was updated quarterly by the Risk Management Correspondents and in presentations and awareness sessions were held with the internal working group on the implementation of the online Corporate Risk Management portal.

Project management office / business process management platform

During 2023 several project initiatives were consulted and reviewed by the PMO. One project was initiated with an ED decision for which PMO reviewed extensively the project documentation. PMO provided training on aspects of project management practice, programme management, portfolio management, and project planning with MS Project. The PMO plans to formulate the final approach for project review. This will involve refining project documentation and contributing to planning and monitoring processes.

With regard to the BPM platform, due to the ongoing reorganisation that began in the last quarters of 2023, the project, whose objectives included one related to selection and implementation of the BPM IT tool (BPM platform), was temporarily placed on hold. Nevertheless, for the BPM objectives in the scope of ANEAS project (implementation of the Enterprise Architecture), for the transitional period it was decided to use SPARX Enterprise Architect to map level 1 and level 2 Frontex processes.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit Capability (IAC) contributed to ensuring proper functioning of the internal control system, at its second line of control. The first assurance audit engagement on the 'Implementation of the Codes of Conduct' was conducted and culminated with six recommendations. A risk-based audit plan was developed to address risks to be addressed during 2024. The IAC's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) was issued and the audit manual to conduct assurance engagements was further elaborated. In its liaison capacity in 2023 the IAC focused on methodological and organisational support to the Agency, with the perspective of implementing and reporting on the closure of recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Service from European Commission (IAS) and European Court of Auditors (ECA).

Legal services

In 2023, the Legal and Procurement Unit continued to provide actionable advice and ensure legal representation of the Agency before EU Courts and other EU bodies. The team dealing with the public access to documents function underwent significant change, by being moved directly under the steer of the Executive Director/STRAT Division. While subject to ongoing procedures, including high-stake proceedings before the European Court of Justice, the Unit continued to successfully manage legal risks and contribute to ensuring compliance with the legal framework, all in the context of the reorganisation approved by the Management Board. While the number of requests from internal and external stakeholders continued to rise over the reporting year, high quality output was achieved, contributing to the overall satisfaction of the stakeholders with the quality of the input provided and the level of legal exposure faced by the Agency.

Fundamental Rights Office

The Fundamental Rights Office embarked on a strategic initiative to enhance its management systems by adopting the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model. Significant progress was made towards this goal:

- Review and Assessment of Current Practices: Comprehensive review and assessment of the Fundamental Rights Office's activities, processes, and mechanisms, and identification of areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
- Stakeholder Mapping and Categorisation.
- Preparation for EFQM Certification: Preparation for the "Qualified by EFQM" certification. This involved reviewing and planning quality management practices across the office's operations.

The Fundamental Rights Office drafted the technical specifications for evaluating its role in promoting and implementing the Fundamental Rights Framework within the Agency, aligning with the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, and selected an external, independent company to conduct this evaluation. The FRO contributed to the Frontex Corporate Risk Management and Register, identifying Fundamental Rights violations risks, mitigation actions.

Transition and change management

The new ED took office on 1 March 2023. A substantial file composed of background materials and detailed engagement programme for the first months in office was prepared.

Extensive organisational transformation efforts started in April 2023 based on a high-level design process and workshops held between external consultants and the Executive & Senior Management at Frontex and development of the Frontex 2027 Vision based on 5 strategic objectives.

DED Support Offices were established in May 2023 and the STRAT Division was rolled out in December 2023.

EBCG Roadmap and COM Evaluation of the Regulation

EBCG Roadmap, a consolidated summary of 2023 achievements, was presented at the 97th Management Board meeting. A few new items were introduced - a new part was added to the Roadmap, that is the ICT Annex related to the state of play of the implementation of the most relevant strategic programmes and projects under the ICT Strategy 2022-2027: ETIAS and Interoperability, EUROSUR Integrated Framework, FADO, Access to Schengen Information System (A2SIS), Return digitalisation and Frontex Secure Network.

In view of the ongoing review of the Frontex EBCG Regulation and standing corps by the European Commission, the Agency has continued its work on providing a contribution to this process, namely during the Mid-Term review, in close cooperation with COM by highlighting the challenges, risks and impacts of a number of provisions in the EBCG evaluation.

Communications and transparency

A new communications strategy and the associated action plan were being implemented. Transparency was increased through various communication activities: internally, through Town Halls, ED's blog, video updates after the Management Board meetings, as well as externally through regular updates about Frontex's activities on the website and social media. Articles were published on the intranet on a daily basis to increase staff engagement and interest in Frontex activities.

Production of graphics and videos helped in achieving a more comprehensive and appealing communication style. Increased interest among younger audiences was achieved thanks to launching Instagram account, school visit and targeted posts.

Frontex increased its participation in public events and field press officers were gradually being deployed to key operational areas. Proactive communication improved working relations with the press.

Further improvements were introduced in the processing and management of public documents. The Public Register of Documents was expanded, including with the documents released in the framework of Public Access to Documents as recommended by the European Ombudsman. The introduction of optical character recognition systems ensured more comprehensive and faster searching. As a result, the Public Register of Documents has become more accessible, transparent and user-friendly.

Since April 2023 a proactive comprehensive report on Agency's activities, a "dashboard", has been shared quarterly with the European Parliament's LIBE Committee's Frontex Scrutiny Working Group as well as CONT Committee and the Consultative Forum.

The ED's structured presence in the media was enhanced. The ED regularly participated in the European Parliament's Committee meetings and hearings as well as bilateral meetings with the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In addition, MEPs' visits were hosted by the Agency in the headquarters and in the field.

1.6.2. Results by activity

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

Key Activity 6.1.1. Further develop a structured framework for long term planning of Agency's activities with regard to its budget implementation in compliance with financial processes and full alignment with sound financial management of entrusted resources			
Results achieved			
Both budget implementation indicators demonstrate an improvement over the last year: the 2023 C1 commitment rate at 99% is at the same level as in the previous year however in terms of actual amounts it is significantly higher (> EUR 134M). The C8 Payments rate, at 86%, though below the target of 95%, shows an improvement over the previous year (84% in 2022).			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Overall budget implementation rate	Budget implementation rate is above 95%	Budget Implementation results: C1 Commitment rate: 99% C8 Payments rate: 86%	Partially Achieved
Budget deviations rate	Decreased deviations rate from the forecasted budget to the final one	2% deviation from the voted budget to final budget. Even factoring the amount returned to the EU budget as part of the global transfer exercise, the implementation rate versus the voted budget would still be above the 95% benchmark. This demonstrates effective budget monitoring and optimal use of resources.	Achieved
Amounts released	No amounts are released after the global transfer exercise is conducted by DG BUDG.	Less than 1% of the final budget equivalent to EUR 6.4M (0.8%) was released at the end of the year.	Not Achieved

Key Activity 6.1.2. Develop a human resources management system aimed at building a strong human capital through a set of modern HR policies allowing the Agency to deliver its mission			
Results achieved			
In 2023 Frontex Management Board adopted the HR Strategy 2024-2027 via MB Decision clearly indicating the implementing rules which needed to be adopted. Frontex also timely adopted new rules on working time and hybrid working in line with the EU Commission's relevant Model Decision and proceeded with their successful implementation. Finally, new rules on standby duty were put in place.			
Significant efforts continued to attract and select talents in line with the expected scale of growth of the Agency. With 367 new contracts of employment, the staff occupancy rate of > 89% was reached in December 2023. However, in view of preparations of organisational changes and restructuring, several recruitment procedures were cancelled, and the average length of recruitment procedures extended to nearly 19 weeks.			
HR to staff ratio at the end of the year dropped to 2.8% (64 HR staff vs. 2242 all staff) where, according to the established practices and benchmarking among EU Agencies, the ratio should be around 4.5%. The gap was temporarily bridged by reallocation of 22 ETIAS staff to HR (until end of 2024).			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Number of legal documents (Guidelines, implementing rules, decisions, etc.) and HR	To be implemented in line with the new provisions with the target to achieve	18 Executive Director's Decisions 6 Management Board Decisions	Partially achieved

policies defined, modified or implemented in order to achieve the needed productivity gains to meet the unprecedented growth coming from the new political mandate, as well as fitting with the deployable standing corps specificities	productivity gains that meet the unprecedented growth		
HR tools and systems fully implemented	a) Introduction of SYSPER ND (Numérisation Dossiers Personnels) module; b) Initiation of a pilot project of on-line testing tool for written tests of candidates for statutory and non-statutory staff c) Analysis for choosing the most suitable tool to process performance management procedures (annual appraisal, end of probationary period, renewal of contracts, etc.) with the objective of starting its implementation during 2023. d) A feasibility study for the introduction of HR ticketing system based on the existing Frontex ticketing tool used by DIG team e) Two new SYSPER modules rolled-out f) New functionalities of Time Management module g) A new IT platform for digital processing of standby declarations rolled-out	a) put on hold (other priorities) b) put on hold (other priorities) c) put on hold (instead, the existing system has been updated according to 2023 Frontex requirements) d) project initiation request (PIR) has been approved and project implementation started e) SYSPER modules: 65+ and RES (Resignation) were implemented f) New ED Decision on Working Time and Hybrid Working was implemented in SYSPER g) Standby tool was rolled out to Frontex in November 2023.	Partially achieved
Job offers sent to candidates within year 2023 versus the allocated vacant posts as of January 2023	Job offers are issued for at least 80% of vacant posts on January	107.5%	Achieved
Average length of selection procedures (not including EBCG officers' staff) from published vacancy notices	90% of procedures finalised in less than 15 weeks from the day of the final deadline of applications until the first appointment decision is signed	131 days	Not achieved
Managers trained in managerial and leadership skills, in line with the learning standards applicable to different management levels.	100% new middle managers undergo relevant obligatory managerial training and 80% of all managers participate in other managerial training in line with the learning standards applicable	100% of new middle managers were invited to the managerial trainings set as a standard, 71% already completed, 30% continue the courses started in 2023	Partially achieved
Ratio of staff trained at least once per year vs. total staff	At least 65%	71% of non-standing corps staff participated at least in one training in 2023	Achieved
Rights and entitlements for the staff (both in headquarters and deployed) are established and implemented in line with the Staff Regulations, including working conditions and leave entitlements	a) Documents necessary for the establishment of rights and entitlements of all newcomers (100%) are provided to Pay Master Office (PMO) within 2 weeks from the start date.	a) Financial entitlements are regularly and timely paid b) Entry documents are sent to PMO within 2 weeks from the start date.	Achieved

	b) Financial entitlements are timely paid and according to the information from NAP (new payroll system) for all statutory staff (100%).		
Ratio of expatriate services assistance cases processed vs. total number of staff.	3,500 assistance cases are forecasted to be resolved when the Agency will have 2,520 staff	3,812 assistance cases: - 650 MFA cards applications (+13 other interventions) - 300 PESEL number/address registration (+15 related cases) - 120 motor-vehicle registrations processed: (+250 related matters) - 770 tax refund invoices processed: (+117 related cases) - 112 cases of support for newcomers and leavers - 80 reviews/advice on rental contracts (+100 other cases of legal information, advice, and assistance) - 85 other interventions at public administration or private sector - 1,200 staff served during office hours	Achieved
HR to staff ratio: HR is sufficiently staffed to deliver the expected services in the transition period to the Regulation	Ratio returns to the average 4.5% margins (of 2,520 posts in EP 2023)	HR to staff ratio at the end of the year was 2.8%. The gap was temporarily complemented with reallocation of ETIAS staff (until end of 2024), bringing the ratio to 3.8% (64+22 HR staff vs 2,242 all staff).	Not achieved

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			
Results achieved			
Based on the agreement signed on 20 December 2022 for the lease of approx. 3,828 sqm for the ETIAS Central Unit/Alternative Office Facility, the fit-out works were concluded at the end of May 2023 and ETIAS staff moved in July 2023. In parallel, based on a lease amendment signed on 29 July 2022, two extra floors in the Wronia premises were fitted out and added to Frontex capacity while the 1st floor occupancy was extended to be used in its entirety by Frontex. This brought the total surface occupied by the Frontex Headquarters to approx. 33,227 sqm. In addition, the Agency extended the lease for the Spire building until the end of 2026. In relation to the tender for the Competitive Dialogue for the Frontex Permanent Premises Project (HQ Project), the Invitation to Tender Frontex/CD/1217/2021/RS-FRONTEx Permanent Premises was sent out to the selected Candidates at the end of May 2023 for submitting the Original Solutions and in October 2023 the candidates of the merit list were requested to submit the Improved Solutions. Evaluation is in progress.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Competitive dialogue in the context of the procurement process managed.	Implemented by Q4 2024	On track	Not achieved yet
Building permit is available	Implemented by Q2 2025	On track	Not achieved

Adaptability in terms of facilities available in response to the evolving business needs and the build-up of the standing corps.	Continuous	Ongoing (to continue on the basis of the roll-out of the restructuring of the Agency's organisational set-up)	Partially achieved
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Key Activity 6.2.2. Develop sound and integrated ICT systems' structure supporting the European Border and Coast Guard functions

Results achieved

In 2023, Frontex continued to carry out the Implementation Plan described in the ICT Strategy 2022-2027. The IT infrastructure was re-engineered to meet business objectives, and the life cycle for the IT infrastructure components was defined. In accordance with the life cycle, all components were replaced before the end of their life cycle.

The Agency further developed the classified communication network. Achievements in 2023 include:

- Completion of the Green Field Core 1 initiative to upgrade the core infra-structure in the RUE environment
- Implementation of the improvements to physical and cyber security agreed with ESAB in the RUE environment.
- Mitigating risks to an acceptable level for this year to achieve IATO for RUE Environment
- Implementation in RUE the digital services foreseen by Article 14 of the ECBG 2.0

One of the Agency's objectives is to build a Software Factory Capability. Software factory specialists were recruited, and the software development lifecycle processes and standards defined. Tenders were launched to establish the FWC needed for the implementation and subsequent HR sourcing to the software factory. The high-level concept of software factory was defined and internal consultations with business departments were initiated.

Finally, in 2023, 24/7 ICT support is provided to the whole Agency, most of it currently consumed by standing corps officers. 24/7 support for ETIAS for agreed ICT services was launched and is provided as agreed.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Implementation status of the ICT Strategy 2022-2027 Action Plan	Average delay less than 3 months	- Implemented 24/7 support for ETIAS and all other personnel. - Upgraded RUE core infrastructure. - Deployed central data platform in RUE and UNCLA for all business systems - Deployed SOC 24/7 - IATO for RUE has been prolonged for one year	Achieved

Key Activity 6.2.3. Ensure a secure working environment for Agency's staff, including ICT security challenges

Results achieved

The Agency continued to ensure security of Frontex premises and staff. Physical security risk assessments were executed for changing locations and for the new ETIAS Offices. Additional guards were hired to ensure security and safety of premises.

A framework contract with an external contractor was concluded for delivering a fully-fledged business continuity plan. The review of the contractor's proposal started. The development of a fully-fledged security pillar started with the elaboration of the first basic policy documents and specific documents for field security for the Agency's activities at the UA borders and more specifically in RO and MD.

Security related regulatory framework was enhanced with the adoption of the ED Decisions on handling of sensitive non-classified information, Restraint UE/EU Restricted Information, Confidential UE/EU Confidential and Secret EU/EU Secret Information and the ED Decision on security training. Further development of the Frontex Security regulatory framework is ongoing. Frontex classified communication and information systems accreditation policy is under development, technical and administrative assistance to EUROSUR Security Accreditation Board is ensured.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Level of implementation of the security strategy 2023-2025	Implementation and review of security strategy	Review and update of Frontex security regulatory framework ongoing based on new Frontex Security Rules	Partially achieved

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. Continue to develop and enhance a comprehensive system for internal control, inspection, strategic planning and reporting mechanism while contributing to make of the Agency a workplace with highest ethical standards in full alignment to the EU values and the applicable legal framework
Results achieved
In 2023, Internal Control developed enhanced monitoring and reporting and raised awareness on compliance. Two new online portals were introduced: 1) Corporate Risk Register Online and 2) Consolidated platform for registration of exception and non-compliance. Both of these portals included enhanced criteria to improve quality reporting. In parallel, workflows were enhanced to map financial matrix and applicable thresholds and reporting lines. The Annual Assessment of the Internal Control System was prepared, collecting data and mapping criteria and monitoring indicators to the Internal Control Framework followed by data analysis and preparation of the Annual Report on Internal Control in 2023. In parallel, in 2023 Internal Control was active in raising awareness agency wide on compliance and regulatory environment with targeted awareness sessions by groups and individual coaching on compliance, internal control systems and regulatory environment. Frontex was also active in Inter-Agency networks developing and reporting in areas related to Internal Control and Risk Management and compliance. With regard to anti-fraud activities, awareness was raised via dissemination of information on ICO Portal and MyFx and all staff receiving the anti-fraud strategy 2022-2024 with automated reminders to acknowledge acceptance. The implementation of the Anti-Fraud Action Plan was tracked and reporting provided to senior management and MB. All corporate documents were prepared in a timely manner including three evolving versions of SPD 2024-2026 and CAAR 2022. However, the final version of the SPD 2024-2026 was adopted late (on 23 January 2024) following multilateral discussions on two annexes related to the future needs in terms of FR monitors and the renewed multiannual cooperation strategy. Business processes mapping was on-going. The list of all Level 1 processes was finalised with 48 processes identified. Mapping of those will be finalised in Q1 2024. The SPARX Enterprise Architect IT tool was made available. However, this platform requires special training for Frontex staff. Initially, the training was scheduled for Q4 2023, however, due to the general project delay, the training will be performed in Q1 2024. Internal Audit Capability (IAC) is part of the Agency's internal control system. The year 2023 was the first full year of operation for IAC which further positioned itself in the organisation. In mid-2023, there were organisational changes in IAC that affected the timeliness of the tasks carried out. The previous Head of IAC left the Agency and a newly recruited Internal Auditor took on the role of acting Head of IAC. At the end of 2023, the IAC comprised three staff (including one Internal Auditor).

The first assurance audit engagement on the ‘Implementation of the Codes of Conduct’ was conducted and culminated with six recommendations. Recommendations along with detailed action plans were agreed with the entities responsible for their implementation. A risk-based audit plan was developed to address risks during 2024. The IAC’s Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) was issued and the audit manual to conduct assurance engagements was further elaborated. A second important task of the IAC, in addition to its assurance engagements, is to carry out and sustain a liaison function for the Internal Audit Service from European Commission (IAS) and European Court of Auditors (ECA). Given that the Agency has many open recommendations and observations issued by these entities, in 2023 the IAC focused on methodological and organisational support to the Agency, with the perspective of implementing and reporting on the closure of recommendations. The effects of these activities may be seen in 2024, in line with the dynamics of these entities. Indicators relating to this part of activities are general indicators of the Agency and IAC is responsible for their monitoring.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Corporate documents, including SPD and CAAR are smoothly adopted (without remarks and free of material errors)	100%	90%	Achieved
Periodical monitoring reports are elaborated and submitted to stakeholders	100% timely delivery of all reports set in the baseline and four per-year training sessions for the staff	100%	Achieved
By the end of 2023 (pilot year), two controls and one inspection related to the standing corps is performed contingent to staff made available to the function	2 controls and 1 inspection	0% Not achieved due to a lack of staff. Situation addressed at the end of 2023 with additional staff. First inspection visit conducted in February 2024.	Not achieved
Number of requests for support provided to the divisions in relation to visits, controls and inspections in 2023 and number of fact-finding missions and administrative inquiries assigned to ICO in 2023		100%	Achieved
Number of cases supported in the context of anti-harassment policy	100% of requests received are managed, staff supported, with the support of external mediators and/or confidential counsellors	100% 64 cases were handled by the Confidential Counsellors and the Confidential Counsellor Central Service in 2023, including 3 cases of sexual harassment and 28 cases of psychological harassment. 7 informal procedures were initiated and 8 informal procedures were concluded	Achieved
Number of recommendations from EO and OLAF received implemented within the agreed deadlines	100%	58%	Partially achieved
Degree of completeness of logs in transparency register and registry of meetings with third party stakeholders	100%	100%	Achieved
Degree of completion of ex-post control plan	100% (in line with RES-9 covering at least 10% of the overall value of paid grant agreements subject of annual control in this cycle)	10% of the overall amounts paid in the control year	Achieved

Timely production of annual Internal Control system assessment report	Target: end of March Year N+1 supported by a timely identification; assessment & monitoring of risks related to objectives. Target: EoY N and up-to-date Corporate Risk register. Target: once per quarter	100% ICS assessment to senior management in time for target end of March N+1.	Achieved
A. Completeness of the log of exceptions and non-compliance B. Timely submissions of quarterly reports C. Overall ratio (percentage) of the amount covered by the exceptions vs the total payment made during a given quarter (period)	A. 100% of overrides recorded B. End of quarter + one month C. The ratio is less than 2%	A. 100% B. 100% Quarterly reports submitted to management (registered in ARES) Enhanced statistics and monitoring indicators against # payment transactions and EUR value of payments in N C. 6% The ratio of exceptions and non-compliance at end of 2023 was above the materiality threshold which is 2%	A. Achieved B. Achieved C. Not achieved
Timeliness of the anti-fraud strategy implementation	85% of actions implemented on time	>85%	Achieved
All material project initiatives are consulted and reviewed by the PMO.	Target: 100% while projects in the portfolio are monitored by the PMO. Target: 80%	50%	Partially achieved
Degree of availability of the BPM platform for all the process managers. Degree of business processes mapping completed.	100% 80% of the processes are mapped	20% 12% (6 ETIAS processes out of 48 identified are mapped. Done earlier, only consolidated by project team)	Partially achieved
IAC's establishment activities, including recruitment of envisaged staff, completed	100%	The first audit engagement was conducted, the IAC's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme was issued and the Internal Audit manual was further elaborated. The Head of IAC left the Agency and a new Internal Auditor was recruited and entrusted with the role of acting Head. An additional assistant was recruited.	Partially achieved
Annual risk-based audit plan approved by MB	Q4 2023	The annual risk-based audit plan was completed by the acting HoO.IAC Q4 2023. It was introduced for adoption to the MB in Q1 2024.	Partially achieved
Planned audit/consulting engagement completed.	100%	The first planned assurance audit engagement was conducted in 2023, however it coincided with organisational changes in IAC. It culminated in six recommendations. The audit recommendations together with action plans were completed in Q4 2023. The second planned audit engagement was postponed to 2024 in light of staffing challenges such as change of the Internal Auditor.	Partially achieved

Periodic status reports on audit matters are timely submitted to the executive management.	100% quarterly reports	Four quarterly updates to the executive management on state-of-play of the various audit engagements in Frontex were developed and communicated appropriately, through Working Group on Budget and Accounts meetings.	Partially achieved
Indicators related to monitoring the follow-up of audit recommendations: a. Timeliness of implementation of IAS recommendations b. Timeliness of implementation of ECA observations c. Number of critical recommendations identified in the IAS audit reports	a. 80% implemented on time b. 85% are reported as implemented in the report to the Discharge Authority c. none	a. 0%; 12% belatedly b. 30% c. none	a. Not achieved b. Not achieved c. Achieved

Key Activity 6.3.2. Develop and implement a system of ensuring Frontex activities conform to the applicable legal framework			
Results achieved			
Over 2023, LPU/LEG provided a legal helpdesk service for internal stakeholders, the executive management and other Frontex entities on both operational and governance matters, achieving a high level of quality, client-oriented and timely input, with a 75% of LEG advice taken on board, thereby limiting/eliminating risks. The Sector provided quality control of Frontex decision-making processes, verifying the legal correctness of draft Management Board and Executive Director Decisions. It anticipated legal risks by monitoring the Agency's core activities, and developed risk-minimisation strategies and legal solutions ensuring the continuous delivery of the Agency's activities in compliance with the Regulation and other applicable rules. As a result, no case was lost for Frontex in legal proceedings brought before national and European courts in 2023. Over the same year, LPU/PROC advised and supported the business units in complying with the regulatory framework for procurement procedures, identifying potential non-compliance and assessing and mitigating relevant risks, with a satisfaction rate of 91%. The Sector launched 87% of the tender procedures included in the annual procurement plan and formally submitted on time, exceeding the expected target. Furthermore, procurement trainings were offered regularly to staff. The completion of the annual inventory of procurement-related templates was also achieved, and the up-to-date files were shared via intranet. Full transition to paperless procurement by 2023 was also achieved, through the establishment of PPMT as the main working tool for Frontex procedures. However, the expected decrease by 30% in the number of very low value negotiated procedures (NP1) in comparison with 2020 was not achieved. On the contrary, an increase by 7% was registered. This indicator has proven to be unrealistic, owing to the rapid pace at which the Agency is growing.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Quality and satisfaction level of business units (e.g. with the delivery of a high quality, client focused legal advice/opinions by LEG focusing on risk minimisation), within realistic deadlines	The overall satisfaction of our clients (to be measured by various means including peers review performed at Head of Legal Services Sector's level and the absence of any formal or informal complaints towards LEG's work	Overall LEG's work has been highly regarded by other entities within FX. The quality, client-oriented and timely input by LEG was appreciated. No substantive complaint was received.	Achieved
Agency's exposure to major (i.e. high level and medium level) legal risks is limited.	Below 25% of all cases where LEG advice is provided	The LEG's advice has significantly contributed to limiting legal risks in FX activities. Ca. 75%	Achieved

		of LEG advice has been taken on board, thereby limiting/eliminating risks.	
Legal correctness of the Agency's activities	No maladministration is identified before the competent authorities (i.e. the European Ombudsman) and no case is lost for Frontex in legal proceedings brought before national and European courts	No case is lost for Frontex in legal proceedings brought before national and European courts. <i>[EO cases are handled by ICO and are not shared with LPU]</i>	Achieved
Processing of applications for public access to documents	All applications for public access to documents continue to be processed within the legal timelines, maintaining a 100% timely reply rate, as well as ensuring adherence to deadlines set by the European Ombudsman (by supporting ICO) and the CJEU	All statutory deadlines were adhered to, including in the processing of public access to documents applications and related litigation and Ombudsman queries.	Achieved
Necessary advice and support by procurement sector to business units in the procurement process, in a client-oriented approach; identifying potential non-compliances to the applicable regulatory framework and assessing and mitigating relevant risks in the remit of procurement activities. The satisfaction of our clients would be measured by means of anonymised surveys.	Satisfaction rate $\geq 80\%$	91%	Achieved
Procurement training offered regularly to staff	4 sessions in 2023	4 sessions organised in 2023	Achieved
Number of published tenders included in the annual procurement plan and formally submitted on time	$\geq 80\%$	87% published	Achieved
Decrease on the number of very low value negotiated procedures (NP1)	Decrease by 30% in comparison with the data of 2020	7% increase	Not achieved
Completion of annual inventory of procurement related templates and update at the Agency level	Inventory is completed	Completed	Achieved
Full transition to paperless procurement	To be completed by the end of 2023	Completed	Achieved

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, allowing for effective follow up to the recommendations issued by the Fundamental Rights officer and the Consultative Forum
Results achieved
The Fundamental Rights Office provided advice on the compliance of the Agency's activities with fundamental rights. The Officer and the Office also actively supported the Agency in the coordination of the implementation of the Fundamental Rights Action Plan and monitoring of the progress of the respective entities. FRO proactively

implemented and initiated actions for the activities where FRO was in the lead or co-lead. Out of the 87 activities foreseen, 15 have been fully implemented, 54 have been implemented and are on-going, six are partially implemented and 12 are delayed.

The role of the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer was fully incorporated into the work of the Fundamental Rights Office and all Fundamental Rights Monitors positions were filled. All Fundamental Rights Monitors are fully operational and provide monitoring and advice.

The Serious Incident team grew from four to six case handlers. They continuously assessed incoming reports and launched enquiries into those allegations that met the criteria outlined in the Standing Operating Procedure and defined threshold in terms of reliability, severity and relevance. Investigative findings including recommendations for each closed case were shared with relevant stakeholders inside and outside the Agency. The findings fed into workstreams and products such as FRO Opinions, Operational Planning and informing decision-making processes. Concerns persisted, related to low reporting numbers by Frontex officers performing border surveillance tasks, the protection against repercussion of officers reporting violations, in addition to insufficient and delayed responses by national authorities, including denied access to information or data, remained a key obstacle to the proper investigation of Serious Incidents.

Fundamental rights training was delivered to all Agency staff and dedicated fundamental rights training and access to fundamental rights guidelines was provided for operational stakeholders to ensure all participants of operational activities have the necessary knowledge and skills on fundamental rights for conducting their tasks.

The Fundamental Rights Office issued 27 (counted per country) Human Rights Impact Assessments in 2023 and provided the impact assessments as per the FRO's due-diligence procedure on envisioned cooperation with Third Countries under the framework Status Agreements being negotiated and Working Arrangements, concluded between Frontex and TC. In addition, FRO conducted scoping visits to third countries where operational activities are being considered prior to the launch of an operation in Frontex-organised scoping visits. The FRO engaged with the European Parliament within the framework of the LIBE committee, the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group or in relation to own initiative reports of the Members of the European Parliament, in particular in relation to the following third countries: Montenegro, Senegal, Mauritania, Tunisia.

FRO ensured full cooperation between the Agency and the Consultative Forum. Consultative Forum representatives provided their experience and expertise for the VEGA deployments at several Border Crossing Points, Focal Points and airports and carried out two on-the-spot visits to JO Themis 2023, and JO Serbia Land and Coordination Point 2023 (Nikola Tesla Airport). During the three regular annual Consultative Forum Meetings (30th, 31st, and 32nd), the members discussed with the Executive Director, the Management Board Chair and the Fundamental Rights Officer issues of operational and strategic relevance. The Consultative Forum issued a number of recommendations and urged the Agency to be more systematic in what it acts on.

The FRO shared recommendations with the European Parliament (in the framework of the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group and LIBE committee, particularly under the Frontex Report to the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group 'Reporting on serious incidents category 1 to the European parliament's Frontex scrutiny working group'.

The Fundamental Rights Officer was reporting to the Management Board in an increasingly itemised manner on what it would like from the Board and what the Board has delivered on. In a similar way the Fundamental Rights Officer was following up on responses by the Agency to issued Opinions (in 2023, eight such Opinions were issued).

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Reporting obligations as set forth in the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 towards the Management Board and the general public are timely completed including issuing an annual report.	Minimum 4 MB reports per year, linked to the Management Board meetings. 1 Annual Report (published in Q2)	FRO Annual Report (2022) published at the end of June. 5 MB Reports were delivered: 36 th MB Report (Rep. period: 15 Dec 2022 - 15 Feb 2023) 37 th MB Report (Rep. period: 1 Feb - 30 April 2023) 38 th MB Report (Rep. period: 1 May - 31 July 2023) 39 th MB Report (Rep. period: 1 Aug - 31 Oct 2023) 40 th MB Report (Rep. period: 1 Nov - 15 Dec 2023)	Achieved

Relevant documents issued by the Agency include fundamental rights-relevant content	Incorporating fundamental rights content (section and safeguards and ensuring compliance with fundamental rights) in all relevant documents issued by the Agency's	Operational documents, working arrangements contain fundamental rights safeguards and applicable provisions. Training curriculum includes also fundamental content.	Achieved
Number of events and field missions logged in the reporting system and timeliness in its management (source FRO database).	30 days per monitor	During 2023, the Fundamental Rights Monitors were deployed for 1,627 days to 27 countries. 44 return flights were monitored.	Achieved
Number of SIRs, complaints and effective follow-up.	95% completion level	<u>On complaints:</u> Total of 64 new complaints. In 2023: •48 were closed (all declared inadmissible, incl. 5 cases closed in Jan/Feb 2024) •14 are pending (the assessment process has been initiated) •1 (regarding a third country) was forwarded to the relevant institution for further handling •1 was stayed In the given period, cases originating from 2021 and 2022 were also processed. Cases registered in 2022: •1 case was closed; 8 cases were discontinued; 1 forwarded to the relevant institution for further handling Cases registered in 2021: •1 case was closed; 3 discontinued <u>On Serious Incidents related to fundamental rights:</u> Preliminary assessments of initial information (possible Serious Incidents): 217 Serious Incidents launched: 55 Serious Incidents closed: 39	Achieved
Number of training sessions delivered and number of participants, including TC beneficiaries, and training evaluation implementing Kirkpatrick methodology.	50 training days	191 days of training on fundamental rights components, spread across different dedicated trainings in the framework of ETIAS FR for Multipliers, Induction, MSS, Return, Specialist Profiles, standing corps Cat 1, THB, Use of Force (no delivery, but awareness/monitoring).	Achieved
Fulfilment of the advisory role to the Consultative Forum as provided in Regulation, measured by the number of reports shared	Exchange with the Consultative Forum	During 2023, the Consultative Forum (CF) held 3 meetings with the MB Chair and Frontex Executive Management, including bilateral exchanges with the Fundamental Rights Officer and the Deputy Fundamental Rights Officer to ensure necessary exchanges on fundamental rights matters between the Fundamental Rights Officer	Achieved

		and the CF. In addition, throughout the year, several targeted meetings and information provision took place. All Fundamental Rights Officer reports to the MB were shared also with the CF.	
Number and assessment of information and responses addressing the merits of the recommendation and/or information (sufficient, insufficient and/or inadequate information/response).	Follow-up on recommendations	Recommendations are issued in most of the products of the Fundamental Rights Office - mission reports, FRO Observations to the Frontex Evaluation Reports, Fundamental Rights Officer's Opinions to the operational plans as well FRO Opinions to thematic issues and concerns related to operational activities and third country engagement. However, in certain cases, responses addressing the merits of the recommendation are not completely sufficient.	Partially achieved
Number, extent (partially or fully), and concrete actions taken by the Frontex Executive Director and the Management Board in response to the Fundamental Rights Officer's recommendations	Follow-up on recommendations	The Executive Director provided an official reply to the 8 Opinions issued by the Fundamental Rights Officer, including an opinion on Trafficking in Human Beings and Gender mainstreaming. However, concrete action has not been taken on all opinions.	Partially achieved

Key Activity 6.4.2. Design and implement the framework for legitimate personal data collection and processing throughout all Frontex activities			
Results achieved			
The Data Protection Officer (DPO) continued to perform its legally mandated tasks providing advice on DP to all relevant stakeholders. The DPO continued to raise awareness regarding data protection obligations among all business units and management and continued to liaise as the main contact point with the EDPS as necessary in relation to audits, inspections, investigations and pre-investigations. The DPO performed its obligations on top of drafting a new legal framework for the processing of personal data for the Agency, which required to suspend advisory role for one month due to lack of resources. To draft the new MB Decisions, most relevant business units needed to map their processing activities and clarify the role the Agency performed within them, which in turn contributed to raising awareness of data protection obligations. Equally, a greater awareness of data protection saw an increase in data subject requests and personal data breaches, both of more than 150% compared to the previous year. Liaising with the responsible business units to address the requests or breaches also contributed to raising awareness on data protection obligations.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
To produce at least one guideline on a data protection topic in 2023	At least 1	The DPO released as Guidelines the overview on the new Adequacy Decision on the EU-US Data Privacy Framework (DPF), which is affecting all data transfers conducted by the Agency to the USA. This is particularly relevant considering that the Agency has a high dependency on software from the USA.	Achieved
To provide three ad-hoc training sessions, one for standing corps, another for data controller in addition to the regular induction training to newcomers.	3	10 ad hoc trainings were delivered, 2 for ETIAS and 7 for Mobile Surveillance System handlers before their deployment to the field, and 1 ad hoc awareness session as part of Basic Training Programme for European Border and Coast Guard standing corps Cat.1	Achieved
DPO will be represented in all meetings organised by the EDPS and specific meetings regarding supervision of Frontex DP issues	Participation in all proposed activities	The DPO and the EDPS staff continued to meet regularly and exchange views on ongoing topics. Additionally, there was a meeting between DPO, FRO and the EDPS, dedicated to the internal investigatory mechanism triggered by SIRs and the interplay between the FRO and the DPO when concerned by this procedure. The DPO attended the EDPS	Achieved

		roundtable on Open Source Software for Information sharing and attended the regular DPO-EDPS Network meetings	
Degree of coverage in support on data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) requests received	100%	The DPO received requests for advice in relation to 6 DPIAs and responded to all 6 requests. The DPIAs are not finalised by the business units.	Achieved
Degree of DPO support coverage advising on issues related to the management of records in the public register	100%	The DPO received 42 Records for processing operations and published 34 in the public register.	Partially achieved
To issue advice, including recommendations for improvement, in implementing rules drafted by the Agency.	Advice issued	The DPO drafted the implementing rules on Data Protection, issuing advice both for business units and executive management, and explaining how the DP obligations and the EDPS recommendations have to be reflected in the text.	Achieved

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			
Results achieved			
Brussels Office reported on and attended Working Parties in the Council of the EU (COSI, COSI SG, SCIFA, IMEX-e, IXIM, FRONT, LEWP (police and customs components), JAI-RELEX Working Party (JAIEX), MOCADDEM) as well as supported the attendance of senior management in the Justice and Home Affairs Council. In cooperation with the EC, the Agency also reported on and attended the expert groups and thematic discussions organised by DG HOME, SecGen and Commissioners' Cabinets. Timely reporting was also provided on the outcomes of discussions and thematic sessions in the European Parliament (LIBE, FSWG, Schengen Scrutiny, EP Plenaries). Reports on political and legal developments were also delivered. Several meetings and events were organised by the Brussels Office i.e. Annual JHA gatherings, informal breakfasts with JHA Agencies LOs, introduction visits for Frontex Liaison Officers and specific technical visits of the Frontex HQ colleagues to EU institutions.			
Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Regular reporting on the implementation of the horizontal functions through the management coordination meetings	-	In the first half of the year, the implementation of the horizontal functions was ensured through the weekly Executive Management Briefing meetings. As of June 2023, a new set up of management meetings was introduced to increase the efficiency of the management decision-making. ED, DED, DoDs and HoU. EMB were gathering every two weeks during Strategic Briefing and Strategic Management Meetings to provide operational update and focus on business management issues. Participation of Frontex independent functions was envisaged depending on the agenda items.	Achieved
Number of MB and MB subsidiary bodies' meetings supported		18	Achieved
Number of reports on political and legal developments relevant to the Agency produced by the Brussels Office and EMB	-	467 - on average, almost 30 meetings per month were covered during the entire year, adding up to approximately 360 meetings attended and reported on in 2023. An additional 107 reports on political and legal developments in 2023 were also produced.	Achieved

Number of meetings and events organised in liaison with the Brussels Office	-	12 (1 per month)	Achieved
Number of incoming and outgoing items of correspondence registered by the Document Management Office	-	5,808	Achieved

Key Activity 6.5.2. Design and implement a comprehensive and consistent communication model, involving internal and external communication functions and providing for partial decentralisation of the Agency's functions

Results achieved

Internal communications activities such as town halls, entries on ED's blog, and updates after MB meetings helped to increase transparency when it comes to the Agency's organisation and decision-making. A high number of articles published on the intranet positively influenced staff engagement and interest in Frontex's activities.

Externally, the Agency was active on various social media channels, showcasing activity in variety of fields. The Agency launched an Instagram account to reach a predominately younger audience. Work testimonials from staff were published presenting Frontex as a positive work environment. The Agency also engaged with media outlets and organised several press field visits.

Indicator	Target (as set in the AWP 2023)	Actual result in 2023	Status
Staff satisfaction with Frontex intranet measured by means of a staff satisfaction survey	Satisfaction level: 70%	Staff satisfaction survey will be conducted in 2024 as in 2023 several other surveys were conducted by HR. However, staff satisfaction from intranet was measured as follows: 390 articles and announcements were published in 2023, a 53% increase in comparison to 2022; number of visits increased by 77% reaching 372,745; number of likes increased by 235% and number of comments by 112%, which shows a significant increase of staff engagement.	Achieved
Number of publications, videos and animations produced and their impact (how many people they reached through different channels and how often they were shared)	At least 100 publications per year (printed and digital) and at least 10 videos or animations	140 publications from across the Agency were delivered, including leaflets, reports and handbooks. 21 videos and animations were produced and shared on Frontex communication channels.	Achieved
Number of ED's interviews, press releases published on Frontex website and amplified on social media, and press briefings	ED interviews – on average 2 per month (25-30 per year); Press releases – 70 per year; Press briefings – 4 per year	ED gave around 20 interviews to international media; 73 press releases were issued; Press briefings in Finland, Italy, North Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, as well as interviews in Brussels.	Partially achieved
Number of press releases and posts on ETIAS published on Frontex social media and website	2 press releases, 10 posts	1 press release, +10 social media posts (all channels)	Partially achieved
Number of followers and impact of social media posts (engagement rate) and of users and page views for the website	Linked In/Twitter – exceed 50,000 followers on each channel; Facebook – reach 40,000 followers; Website – reach 500,000 users	LinkedIn – 75,200 Twitter – 65,000 Facebook – 47,800 Website – 1,090	Achieved

Number of field press/communication officers trained and deployed in Frontex operations	At least 1 officer per operation	In 2023, the Communications Office had 3 communications officers in major operational areas - they covered Italy, Greece and Moldova/Romania.	Partially achieved
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Part II (a) - Management

2.1. Management Board

In line with the annual planning for 2023, five Management Board meetings took place. In addition, four extraordinary meetings were organised: in July, September, October, and November 2023. Additionally, one meeting between the EU pre-accession partners hosting Frontex joint operations and the Management Board was held in November 2023.

All regular MB meetings (93rd to 97th) were held physically, no longer in a hybrid format, while the Extraordinary MB meetings were held via videoconferencing. The 93rd and the 96th MB meetings were organised by the Agency and the corresponding Presidencies of the Council of the EU in Stockholm, Sweden, and in Pamplona, Spain, respectively.

After its establishment in 2020, the Executive Board continued to convene and to assist the MB and the Executive Director with the preparation of the agendas and decisions to be adopted during MB meetings with a view to improving the Agency's efficiency and transparency. It further closely monitored the preparation of the re-organisation of the Agency to better suit future business needs, continued to analyse and discuss the Fundamental Rights Officer's recommendations and helped support the ongoing work related to the working arrangement establishing operational cooperation between the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the Home Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the adoption of MB Decisions on the rules of processing of operational personal data and general rules on the application of the data protection regulation by the Agency. 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.

In light of the extraordinary growth of the Agency's competences, staff numbers and financial resources, the Working Group on Budget and Accounts (WG B&A) continued to assist the Management Board in the discussion of the files preparing decision-making regarding budgetary and financial matters. In particular, the WG B&A devoted special attention to the Agency's HR and recruitment strategy, the discussion, and assessment of the proposed budget cuts by the budgetary authority and the implementation of outstanding recommendations from scrutiny bodies. Moreover, the Management Board, via its Working Group on Budget and Accounts, closely supervised the progress on implementation of the roadmap on the New Frontex permanent premises. To this end, the MB authorised the Executive Director to present to the European Parliament and the Council for their approval the amendment to the lease agreement extending the lease term of Warsaw Spire B until 31/12/2026.

The Management Board Working Group for European integrated border management (MB EIBM WG) which was set up in 2022, as provided for in Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896,⁸ developed a Technical and Operational Strategy for EIBM 2023-2027 which was adopted by the Management Board in September 2023. The MB EIBM WG continues to now monitor the implementation of the adopted strategy by setting up an EIBM governance model as well as an IBM practical guide. Within the MB EIBM WG the Member States also provide each other with updates on the progress in establishing their national EIBM strategies.

Following up on the work conducted in 2022, the MB continued to hold discussions and to take the necessary steps for the update of the legal framework related to the EBCG standing corps officers, their deployment and operationalisation. Among others, the following MB Decisions have been taken:

- on financing deployments of operational staff, category 3, and category 4, of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps
- on adopting the profiles to be made available to the EBCG standing corps for 2024,

⁽⁸⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard (OJ L 295, 14.11.2019, p. 1).

- on adopting the rules on the secondment of category 2 of the EBCG standing corps,
- on adopting the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps annual planning for 2024 and indicative multiannual planning of profiles
- on adopting rules relating to technical equipment, including the Minimum Number of items of Technical Equipment as well as the Rapid Reaction Equipment Pool to be deployed during operational activities coordinated by Frontex in 2024
- on amending Management Board Decision 5/2023 adopting the profiles to be made available to the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps for 2024
- on adopting the Multiannual Strategy for the Acquisition and Management of the Agency's Equipment
- on adopting the modus operandi of the rolling operational plan

The operational activities of the Agency, including return operations, were regularly discussed during the meetings of the MB. Resulting from the Pilot Project "Centurion" a new chain of coordination was decided by the MB to particularly increase the efficiency of the standing corps management. The developments and challenges resulting from the conflict in Ukraine and the increased migratory flows along the Western Balkan Route as well as the Central Mediterranean Route were closely overseen. Furthermore, the Management Board monitored the progressive entry into operation of the Entry Exit System and the Agency's support in this regard.

In 2023, the MB also adopted a Frontex Disciplinary Board for staff members subject to the disciplinary authority of the Management Board and the MB Decision on working time and hybrid working, which allows Frontex to further promote a modern, digital, and flexible working environment, to protect staff health and wellbeing, enhance efficiency and improve work-life balance. For those purposes, it was necessary to adapt the rules on working time and set out a new legal framework facilitating hybrid working, where both in-office work and telework are considered equivalent. Additionally, the MB adopted the Frontex's HR Strategy 2023-2027.

Another milestone achieved in 2023 was the adoption of the new organisational structure of the Agency. The new organisational structure reflects Frontex's core business processes and fundamental activities. This logical, streamlined structuring better serves the creation of optimal value streams, synergising interdependencies and leading to achieving value-adding end results, ultimately expressed in the heightened ability to support the Member States in addressing the current and forthcoming challenges at the external borders.

The Fundamental Rights Officer regularly reports to the MB about developments in the area of fundamental rights. The MB 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. The MB is following that at least 40 fundamental rights monitors, as provided in Article 110(6) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 are supporting the Agency's Fundamental Rights Officer. Finally, The Management Board is also further following recommendations given by the Agency's Consultative Forum and the Fundamental Rights Office. One crucial action was that the MB thoroughly analysed the Consultative Forum recommendation on the potential impacts of Frontex's aerial surveillance services on fundamental rights of migrants and shared its opinion about the matter with the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs.

Throughout 2023, 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 MB conducted regular monitoring of their implementation by the Agency.

The list of all decisions adopted by the Frontex's Management Board in 2023 is provided in Annex IX.

2.2. Major developments

The year 2023 was one of critical changes in Frontex in both the internal and the external dimension, with a number of key legislative developments having a substantial impact on the Agency.

Internally, a highlight of 2023 was the operationalisation of the **new Executive Director's office** as of 1 March 2023, following his appointment by the Frontex Management Board in December 2022. With this important development, preceded by almost a year of transition, the Agency enhanced its commitment to a respectful management culture, increased accountability and transparency towards its stakeholders as well as commitment to fundamental rights, values that are essential to upholding European standards within the European Border and Coast Guard Community. In 2023 Frontex further reinforced the protection of fundamental rights. The procedures were strengthened with the adoption in March 2023 of the joint FRO and ED Decision on Standard Operating Procedure on Roles and Responsibilities of Fundamental Rights Monitors in Frontex operational activities.

Frontex also continued to emphasise open and transparent communication with the European Parliament, by proactively reporting - since April 2023 - on its ongoing activities. A **new comprehensive quarterly report** was shared with LIBE Committee's Frontex Scrutiny Working Group as well as with CONT Committee and the Consultative Forum, including detailed information on ongoing operational activities, overview of SIRs and the state of play on the implementation of recommendations of scrutiny bodies. Regular participation in hearings and meetings organised by European Parliament's Committees was also ensured.

On the organisational level, based on the identified setbacks as well as feedback received from the European Border and Coast Guard community and given the need to re-shape Frontex to better respond to future challenges in the volatile migratory landscape and to align with its mandate and the EBCG Regulation, in April 2023 the Executive Director decided to undertake key processes that resulted in the elaboration of **2024-2027 Frontex Vision** and corresponding organisational structure. The vision for the Agency assumes that by 2027, Frontex shall evolve into:

- a. a reliable and adaptable partner, delivering value-adding operational effects.
- b. an intelligence-driven Agency with priority-based decision-making.
- c. an Agency performing as an European law enforcement organisation for border and coast guard, fully acknowledging the mandate of Regulation 2019/1896, pioneering in building integrated competent workforce.
- d. an Agency leading in setting standards, delivering (digitally enabled) innovation and integrated capabilities towards more interoperable and futureproof EIBM.
- e. a desired employer, attracting the best EU talents, leading and enabling its staff and offering integrated career development within the EBCG community.

This high-level design process culminated with the adoption of the corresponding **new organisational structure** at the 97th MB meeting in November 2023. Implementation of the organisational changes already begun in December 2023, with the roll-out of the newly established entity - Strategy, Governance and External Relations Division - consolidating core strategic functions of the Agency. The central element of this transformational effort is to structure and organise the Agency's processes in a way allowing to achieve the core activity outcome in terms of operational results. Also, it is designed to enable the Deputy Executive Directors to implement their respective mandates - assisted since May 2023 by Deputy Executive Director Support Teams - with the Executive Director keeping responsibility for strategic management, including the strategic level of the Agency's intelligence-related work.

In 2023, Frontex also undertook several steps to ensure the growing portfolio of its own equipment and services. In September 2023, the MB adopted the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management 2023 - 2027, whose aim is to implement the political direction provided by the EU institutions ensuring that EIBM policy established at EU level is translated into the

national strategies for EIBM drawn up by Member States. In September 2023, the MB has also adopted the Multiannual Strategy for the Acquisition and Management of the Agency's Equipment. It sets out a plan for how the Agency's own technical capabilities are to be developed taking into account the Multiannual Strategic Policy Cycle for European Integrated Border Management.

In 2023, a new approach to operational support was tested within the **Frontex Chain of Command (FC2) project with the Operational Pilot Project Centurion** launched in June 2023 in Romania to test new operational modalities and decentralisation of command-and-control functions to operational areas. By decentralizing functions previously performed in the HQ to the field, FC2 brought additional flexibility and efficiency of the operations, with both of these aspects being clearly recognised by the participating officers and by the host country. The FC2 was also considered good practice by FRO, who suggested a roll-out in other operational areas.

In 2023, the Agency also continued the implementation of activities for setting up the ETIAS Central Unit. This includes the recruitment and onboarding of the third wave of ETIAS Operators, update of the training course for ETIAS Central Unit staff, drafting of the content of the ETIAS public website, and further development of standard operating procedures for application handling and carrier support. Due to the delays in the overall ETIAS programme, 131 operators were temporarily re-assigned to support other entities in the agency from 01/11/2023 until end 2024. Due to resignations, the number of ETIAS operators temporary re-assigned decreased to 128 by end of 2023. They have been re-assigned to the following entities:

Entity	No. of ETIAS operators re-allocated
OFFICES	5
STRAT	4
CBD	12
DMD	18
ECRet	16
FDS	15
GSC	24
ORD	17
SAM	17
Total	128

Table 1. Number of ETIAS operators temporarily reassigned to other entities.

Frontex has also taken a series of actions to strengthen the **data protection framework**. Following the EDPS opinions, Frontex's Data Protection Officer coordinated the process of re-drafting the relevant Management Board Decisions in consultation with the EDPS. The revised MB Decision adopting implementing rules concerning the tasks, duties and powers of the Data Protection Officer was adopted in March 2023.

The continuous work done throughout the last years by the Agency to implement its extended mandate was presented under the form of the **EBCG Roadmap**, a single, clear and coherent document where all activities can be easily consulted and their progress monitored. Progress towards implementation of the Roadmap was presented for the second time at the 97th MB Meeting in November 2023, including the ICT Annex related to the state of play of the implementation of the most relevant strategic programmes and projects under the ICT Strategy 2022-2027: ETIAS and Interoperability, EUROSUR Integrated Framework, FADO, Access to Schengen Information System (A2SIS), Return digitalisation and Frontex Secure Network.

Throughout 2023, the European Commission has continued carrying out **the evaluation of the EBCG Regulation and its standing corps**, thus the Agency has continued its work on contributing to this process, namely during the Mid-Term review, in close cooperation with COM by highlighting the challenges, risks and impacts of a number of provisions in the EBCG evaluation.

In the external dimension, a number of Union policy developments in the area of migration and home affairs had a significant impact on the Agency throughout 2023. Firstly, the negotiation process of the

New Pact on Migration and Asylum that peaked with the political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2023. The Pact reflects the complexity of managing migration and asylum at EU level and its implementation will present the biggest challenge for Frontex and other Home Affairs Agencies. It also provides Frontex and Member States with the tools to better manage irregular migration: uniform rules for screening, a common database for unauthorised movements, more effective return and asylum procedures, and tools to deal with the “instrumentalisation of migrants”. On the other hand, the implementation of the Pact can be an opportunity for Frontex and particularly its standing corps to demonstrate its added value by becoming more effective in the implementation of the new EU Acquis.

Another critical legislative development impacting the work of the Agency in 2023 worth mentioning is the New Migrant Smuggling EU legal framework introduced by the European Commission. Migrant smuggling is a multifaceted criminal enterprise, with perpetrators applying different levels of sophistication and poly-criminality across different networks that requires a coordinated EU approach towards its detection and prevention. This upgraded legal framework requires the Agency to adapt to new responsibilities and cooperate closely with Member States, European Commission and EU Agencies, namely Europol, which requires further alignment and increased cooperation in this domain in terms of their respective mandates, tasks and competencies at the external borders.

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	829,352,752	822,957,126	99%	459,202,425	55%
C2 Non-automatic carry over	-	-	0%	-	0%
C4 Internal assigned revenue	1,534,863	816,061	53%	60,799	4%
C5 Internal assigned revenue carry over	290,301	280,770	97%	274,555	95%
C8 Automatic carry over	341,335,081	292,610,044	86%	292,526,976	86%
Sub-total:	1,172,512,997	1,116,664,001	95%	752,064,755	64%
R0 Earmarked expenditure	30,892,893	15,926,570	52%	12,693,680	41%
Total:	1,203,405,890	1,132,590,571		764,758,435	

Table 2. Summary overview of 2023 budget implementation per fund source.

The initially adopted budget of EUR 845.4 million was amended once during the year, resulting in the final budget of EUR 829.3 million. In 2023, 99% of the final C1 appropriations were committed and 55% of those committed were paid.

EUR 364 million was carried forward to 2024 as C8 funds. These commitments will be paid during 2024 upon the final delivery of the goods or services and the completion of operational activities. EUR 334.4 million (92%) of the funds carried forward to 2024 are related to title 3 of the budget, ‘Operational Expenditure’ with EUR 161.7 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 30.2 million for Return Operations, EUR 19.8 million for Digitalisation, EUR 12.4 million Horizontal Operational Support, EUR 5 million for Situational Awareness Monitoring, EUR 2.5 million for Strengthening Capabilities, EUR 1 million for ETIAS and EUR 407,000 for Fundamental Rights Activities. EUR 24 million (7%) of the funds carried forward concern title 2 ‘administrative expenditure’ and EUR 6 million (2%) - title 1 ‘staff expenditure’.

EUR 341.3 million was automatically carried over from 2022 to 2023. At the end of December 2023, the payment level of those funds reached 86%. The remaining amount of EUR 48.8 million had to be released, 92% of which came from title 3: EUR 19 million from acquisition and leasing of technical

equipment, EUR 13.7 million from deployment of standing corps, training and financial support to MS/SAC, EUR 3.7 million from horizontal support, EUR 3 million from digitalisation, EUR 2.5 million from return activities, EUR 2.3 million from situational awareness and monitoring, EUR 172K from fundamental rights activities, EUR 164K from strengthening capabilities and EUR 76K from ETIAS.

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 1.5 million (C4), 63% was committed and the rest was carried over as C5 funds. Recovery orders which were carried over from 2022 (C5) amounted to EUR 290,301 of which 97% was committed and 3% was cancelled.

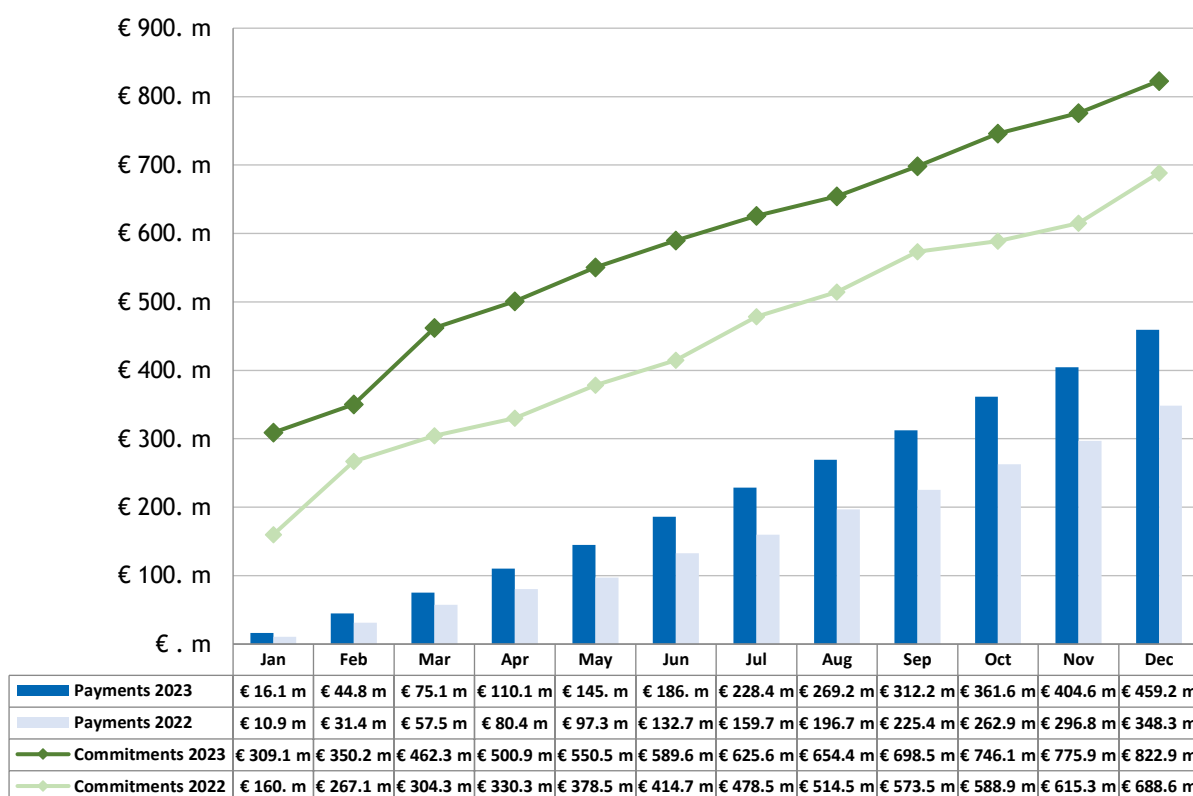
Fund source	Budget (EUR)	Total Commitments (EUR)	Ratio	Total Payments (EUR)	Ratio
	A	B	C = B/A	D	E = D/A
A-1 Staff	195,397,836	193,282,738	99%	87,294,735	96%
A-2 Other administrative expenditure	59,700,470	59,135,405	99%	35,049,182	59%
A-3 Operational activities	574,254,446	570,538,981	99%	236,858,510	41%
	829,352,752	822,957,124	99%	459,202,427	55%

Table 3. Regular budget (C1) implementation per budgetary title.

	2023	2022
Commitments C1	99%	99%
Payments C1	55%	50%
Funds carried forward to the following year	44%	49%
Funds cancelled	1%	1%

Table 4. Performance comparison of the 2023 budgetary year versus 2022.

In 2023, 99% of the final C1 appropriations were committed, the same level as in 2022. The payment level increased by 5 percentage points, reaching 55% in 2023. The percentage of funds carried forward from 2023 to 2024 is 44%, and 1% of the budget appropriations had to be cancelled.



Graph 1. Comparison of C1 funds (commitments and payments) in 2023 and 2022 in EUR million.

2.3.2. Information on transfers and budget amendments

In 2023, one **budget amendment** was made. On 23 October 2023, the MB took a decision (no. 36/2023) to amend the Single Programming Document 2023-2025 (in particular, the annual budget 2023 and the annual work programme 2023). The rationale and objective for this amendment was to release part of the Agency's budget to the EU general budget in the Global Transfer Exercise. Following agreement with the European Commission, Frontex released EUR 15 million to the EU general budget. The transfer consisted of appropriations in Title 3: Operational expenditures. The return of EUR 15 million to the EU budget required a proportionate decrease in the financial contribution from the Schengen Associated Countries (SAC) to Frontex's budget 2023 by EUR 1.08m.

Twelve budget transfers amounting to EUR 84.5m were adopted by the Executive Director in 2023:

- 1) On 27 April 2023, to ensure financing for:
 - Return activities - EUR 12.8m was transferred to the budget specifically for return operations and voluntary return by scheduled flights and for Deployment of European Return Liaison Officers, Joint Reintegration Services and for supporting MS in addressing gaps in national RECAMAS (including business analysis) and Interlinkage between IRMA and national RECAMAS.
 - Information Fusion Centre - EUR 2.4m additional requirement for the Specific Agreements 2023 with SatCen and EMSA besides the need for subscriptions to Lloyds and Stratfor online portal.
 - Training - EUR 134k was additionally transferred. Additional budget required for financing the organisation of additional specialised training activities for MS, SAC and third Countries, including Advanced Level Documents Officer course (ALDO), Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model, training activities in the framework of EU Hub Moldova (Firearms detection, ALDO), Forced Return Escort and Support Officer, Forced Return Monitors and Entry Exit System for Multipliers.
 - Additional funding of EUR 295K required for operational missions related to specialisation training courses and the quality assurance processes for standing corps category 1 training.
 - Additional funding of EUR 171K required due to increase in the estimates for reimbursement of costs for meetings, funding for organising the Conference on Innovative Technologies for strengthening Schengen on DG Home request and Entry Exit System workshop in Rome.
 - Miscellaneous operational activities - EUR 100k was additionally transferred for costs related to the engagement of host Member States staff during deployments.
 - Additional budget of EUR 16k required for standing corps preparedness specifically for consultancy on the physical fitness test evaluations.
- 2) On 4 May 2023, EUR 60k to ensure financing for additional Covid testing owing to the extension of the yellow phase by 2 months (July-August 2023) due to the envisaged timeframe of return to office/workplace.
- 3) On 29 May 2023, to ensure financing of EUR 35K for three seminars for management scheduled to take place in June, September and November 2023
- 4) On 2 June 2023, EUR 2.2m to ensure financing for payroll payments for annual leave travel allowances and shift work.
- 5) On 20 June 2023, EUR 700k to ensure financing of reimbursements for additional costs for staff towards the Warsaw Accredited European School.
- 6) On 8 August 2023, EUR 1.2m providing additional funds required for Warsaw Accredited European School.
- 7) On 11 August 2023 to ensure financing for:
 - Category 3 - Short-term deployments - EUR 3.7m was transferred to the budget for costs related to the short-term deployments which were higher than initially foreseen resulting from the new higher rates specified in Management Board Decision 4/2023

- Acquisition and leasing of technical equipment - EUR 7.4m of additional funds required after reassessment of costs related to operational needs as follows:
 - new FWC for Provision of Aerial Surveillance FSA II and additional needs for FSA I Land/Coastline,
 - acquisition of off-road vehicles adjusted to operational requirements and costs,
 - Mobile Office Containers and Car Rental Services at several operation sites,
 - borescopes, spectrometers and various technical equipment like for vehicle inspection,
 - ballistic vest/helmets/armour package - protection level III,
 - replenishment of stock of various garments, boots, belts, thong fastenings, bags and back packs.
 - Return activities - EUR 5.0m, was additionally transferred for financing return operations and voluntary return by scheduled flights and by charters, deriving from increased number of the services ordered by German and Italian institutions.
 - Risk analysis - additional funding of EUR 30k required to finance scenario consultancy for Forecasting, as the use of their methodology was not planned at the beginning of the year.
 - Events - EUR 149,686 was additionally transferred for costs related to the team events.
- 8) On 9 October 2023, EUR 8.0m - to ensure financing for ICT related expenditure.
- 9) On 8 November 2023, to ensure financing for:
- Acquisition and leasing of technical equipment: + EUR 4.9m. Additional funds required after reassessment of costs related to chartering services under FWC to order aircraft for return operations.
 - Category 3 - Short-term deployments: EUR 3.5m was transferred to the budget. The additional funding required for costs related to the short-term deployments which were higher than initially foreseen resulting from the new higher rates specified in Management Board Decision 4/2023
 - ICT related expenditure: + EUR 2.9m
 - Expenditure related to EMB Other meetings, visits, and representation: + EUR 510k.
 - Deployment of MS/SAC technical equipment: + EUR 500k. Additional budget required for financing planned deployments of heavy technical equipment.
 - Border management research, technology innovation and capacity development: + EUR 411k.
 - European Travel Information and Authorisation System: + EUR 373k. Additional funding required for ensuring the planned expenditure for ETIAS consultancy services.
 - Expenditure related to transport equipment: + EUR 300
 - Expenditure related to Media and public relations: + EUR 86k.
 - Development and integration of mobile APP (APP4EES)
- 10) On 4 December 2023, for additional needs than initially anticipated, specifically:
- Information Fusion Centre: +EUR 800k - for financing Specific Agreement No.3, under FWC OP/498/2020/AH, with SAS Institute Sp. z o.o.
 - Deployment of MS/SAC technical equipment: +EUR 350k - for financing deployments of heavy technical equipment in the deployment period 12 and initial days of the deployment period 13.
 - ETIAS: +EUR 165k - for financing translation services of the content of the ETIAS Official website to multiple languages as specified in the Regulation (EU) 2018/1240.
 - Border management research, technology innovation and capacity development: +EUR 96k - for financing higher than initially estimated costs of (i) licences for the implementation of the Pilot Project Application for Entry Exit System, (ii) Pilot Project Tactical Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems in North Macedonia and Romania (iii) refinement of one of the work packages in the study on emerging training technologies
- 11) On 8 December 2023, for additional needs than initially anticipated, specifically:
- Category 3 - Short-term deployments: +EUR 2.6M - Following the grant monitoring round and revision of deployments in Opera Evo by MS/SAC, additional needs were identified. The grant

monitoring was scheduled between 10 Nov -24 Nov 2023 for grants covering deployments of standing corps Cat.3 and the host MS/SAC resources.

- Operational automation and information processing: +EUR 1.9M - for financing software development and product development for the Agency's business entities
- Miscellaneous operational activities: +EUR 1.6M - for financing higher than initially estimated costs of host Member States human resources and light technical equipment operational deployments

12) On 21 December 2023, for additional needs than previously anticipated, specifically:

- Acquisition and leasing of technical equipment: +EUR 4.4M - for financing the purchase of 4 additional Mobile Surveillance Systems (Lot 3) and for the extension of the implementation period of 2 ongoing specific contracts (SCs) for Frontex Surveillance Aircraft (FSA 1 mid and long range) including purchasing additional hours and relocations. Further, needs to cover the order of 34 pickup trucks as patrol vehicles. These together will cover the estimated operational needs as well as ensure the contingency for the availability of MSS.
- Operational automation and information processing: +EUR 2.5 - for financing an additional project and covering cancellations in C8.
- Border management research, technology innovation and capacity development: +EUR 12K - to purchase licence subscription necessary for the implementation of the App4EES Pilot Project

#	Description	Transaction number	Date	Title 1 - Staff Expenditure	Title 2 - Other Administrative Expenditure	Title 3 - Operational Expenditure
1	Transfer Decision N1	FRO.30635	27.04.2023	-7 359 935	0	7 359 935
2	Transfer Decision N2	FRO.30659	04.05.2023	0	0	0
3	Transfer Decision N3	FRO.30680	29.05.2023	0	0	0
4	Transfer Decision N4	FRO.30687	02.06.2023	0	0	0
5	Transfer Decision N5	FRO.30698	20.06.2023	0	0	0
6	Transfer Decision N6	FRO.30778	08.08.2023	1 223 136	0	-1 223 136
7	Transfer Decision N7	FRO.30744	11.08.2023	2 155 130	-2 867 376	712 246
8	Transfer Decision N8	FRO.30855	09.10.2023	0	8 000 000	-8 000 000
9	Transfer Decision N9	FRO.30861	08.11.2023	-2 905 854	2 664 314	241 540
10	Transfer Decision N10	FRO.31047	04.12.2023	-1 930 146	845 425	1 084 721
11	Transfer Decision N11	FRO.31157	08.12.2023	-2 576 161	- 75 329	2 651 490
12	Transfer Decision N12	FRO.31238	21.12.2023	-1 538 334	- 300 274	1 838 608

Table 5. Budget transfers in 2023.

2.3.3. Implementation of appropriations from 2022 carried forward to 2023

The amount carried forward from 2022 to 2023 (C8 funds) amounted to EUR 341.3 million out of which 86% was paid. The remaining amount of 14% (EUR 48.8 million) was cancelled.

Title	Budget (EUR)	Total Commitments (EUR)	Ratio	Total Payments (EUR)	Ratio	Cancelled
	A	B	D = B/A	C	E = C/A	
A-1 Staff	4,804,370	3,325,153	69%	3,320,953	69%	1,483,417
A-2 Other administrative expenditure	21,940,677	19,375,700	88%	19,301,638	88%	2,639,039
A-3 Operational activities	314,590,034	269,907,916	86%	269,904,385	86%	44,685,649
	341,335,081	292,608,769	86%	292,526,976	86%	48,808,105

Table 6. Implementation of appropriations carried from 2022 to 2023

2.3.4. Late payments – interest paid to suppliers

In 2023, the total value of transactions processed reached EUR 538.6 million and was higher than in the previous year (EUR 411.4 million). Late payments constituted 18% of the total in terms of value, compared to 20% in 2022. The interest paid on late payments amounted to EUR 14,853 in 2023 compared to EUR 107,336 in 2022.

Late Interest paid in 2023		
GL Account	Description	Amount (EUR)
65010000	Interest expense on late payment of charges	14,852.78

Table 7. Late interest paid in 2023.

2.3.5. Procurement procedures

New procedures finalised in 2023 (excluding NP1s, orders and contracts issued under existing framework contracts and amendments)	Number value	No in %	Value
Open and restricted tenders	18	33%	242,258,757.00
Negotiated procedures with min 5 candidates	19	35%	2,322,200.00
Negotiated procedures with min 3 candidates	7	13%	295,386.25
Exceptional negotiated procedures (Point 11)	10	19%	1,991,811.00
Total	54	100%	246,868,154.25

Table 8. New procurement procedures finalised in 2023 (excluding NP1s, orders and contracts issued under existing framework contracts and amendments).

List of contracts awarded by Frontex in 2023 on the basis of Point 11 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation - Exceptional negotiated procedures					
Contract number	Subject	supplies/ services	Contractor	Signature date	Value (EUR)
2021/1187	Digital Assets system in Frontex (LENS)	services	ZETICON NV GASTON CROMMENLAAN 8 bus 5, 9050 GENT, Belgium	15/02/2023	385,025
2022/1091	Express Route interconnection	services	COLT TECHNOLOGY SERVICES GMBH Gervinusstrasse 18-22, 60322 Frankfurt am Main, Germany	24/07/2023	136,040
2022/1373/ Lot2	Provision of fuel cards services and associated services for Frontex Vehicles in Albania (Lot 2)	services	KASTRATI Group LGJ N. 14, Shkozë, Prane Gjykatës se Apelit, Durrës, Albania	14/04/2023	400,000
2023/0083	Provision of legal services for the preparation of the Agency's defence in EU General Court case T-595/22	services	Wagenbaur SC SPRL Avenue de Cortenberg 66/11, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium	10/03/2023	11,560
2023/191	Provision of fuel cards services and associated services for Frontex Vehicles in Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Moldova	services	UTA Sp. Z o.o. BONIFRATERSKA 17, 00-203 Warsaw, Poland	14/07/2023	800,000
2023/206	Provision of legal support in relation to a case opened in Estonia	services	ADVOKAADIBUROO SORAINEN AS	21/02/2023	30,000

			Rotermanni 6, 10111 Tallin, Estonia		
2023/318	Provision of legal services for the preparation of the Agency's defence in case T-787/22 TT against European Border and Coast Guard Agency submitted before the General Court	services	EU LEGIS AVOCATS Rond Point Schuman 6 1040 Brussels, Belgium	20/03/2023	18,000
2023/1340	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	services	Lampedusa Airport Handling Company - AST Aeroservizi S.p.A. (Handling Company), C/da Cala Francese, Aeroporto Lampedusa 92031 - Lampedusa (AG) Italy	26/09/2023	46,200
2023/1605	Office rent in Ioannina, Greece	services	Chatzimichail Stamatia Leoforos Dimokratias 319, PS 68132, Greece	14/12/2023	135,000
2023/1775	Telecommunication services for FLO in Piraeus and Hotspots on Greek islands	services	OTE - HELLENIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION SA KIFISIAS 99, 15124, MAROUSSI, Greece	13/12/2023	29,986

Table 9. List of contracts in 2023 on the basis of Point 11 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation - Exceptional negotiated procedures.

2.3.6. Control results

Ex-ante controls

All actors involved in the financial workflow are subject to the ED Decisions on financial management of the agency, namely the ED Decision 2020-192, amended by the ED Decision 2022-166 on delegating and sub-delegating the powers of budget implementation to the staff of the Agency and the ED Decision 2020-188 on the financial circuit in Frontex.

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 are published on the intranet portal of Financial Services.

A complimentary platform was created through the ex-ante policy adopted in 2020. ED Decision 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.

Ex-post controls

In 2023, ICO proposed to simplify and standardise the planning and reporting of grant controls. This allowed to ensure that risks related to the award of operational grants are covered by the control plan in the medium term perspective and that none of the Member States (MS) or Schengen associated countries (SAC), which are contributors to our operational activities and the main beneficiaries of operational grants, is omitted.

During the first quarter of 2023 the controls included in the 2022/2023 plan, i.e. Denmark and Hungary, were completed. Afterwards, the new ex-post control plan 2023 based on the updated rules implemented by ED Decision No 2023-103 on ex-post control policy started to be implemented.

Controls foreseen in the ex-post control plan 2023 covered EUR 18.7 million which constitutes 9.86% of the total payments for grant agreements signed in 2021. At the moment of reporting for the CAAR 2023 (February 2024), the state of implementation of the ex-post controls plan 2023 was as follows:

- Closed controls: Sweden, Switzerland;
- Ongoing controls (at various stages of the control procedure): Poland, Portugal (HRD and HTE grants), Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden;
- On-going control on grants related to the support in the development of human resources to secure Member States' contributions to the standing corps, in relation to category 1, 2 and 3 of the standing corps (art. 61 of the 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). MS/SAC under control include Portugal for SC cat. 1, Poland and Slovenia for SC cat. 2, Slovakia and Switzerland for SC cat.3.

In 2023, the Inspection and Control Office also carried out a control on the periodic validation of user access rights granted in ABAC.

Recording of Deviations in 2023 - Register of exceptions and non-compliance

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 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 authorising officer. The authorising officer is presented with the request for deviation by the actors in the workflow, including the entity responsible for the procedural area breached and the responsible manager for the business entity. The authorising officer subsequently takes a reasoned decision whether to proceed or not with the deviation.

In 2023, information on deviations was gathered and monitoring indicators and statistics were prepared in quarterly reporting. Four quarterly reports on Exceptions and Non-Compliance were delivered to senior management. In parallel, significant breaches were escalated immediately to the Head of the Inspection and Control Office. Weekly meetings took place with the Head of the Inspection and Control Office with updates on deviations.

In 2023, deviations were recorded in the register of exceptions and non-compliance. The threshold monitoring indicator was introduced as a ratio of deviations to payments. In 2023, the ratio of deviations to all payments was 6% which is above the materiality threshold of 2%. The table below presents the tracking of deviations by quarter in N compared to N-1.

2022 Deviations	EUR / #	2023 Deviations	EUR / #	Difference
Q1 2022	15,134,762.14 €	Q1 2023	5,954,629.19 €	-9,180,132.95 €
Q2 2022	21,684,228.00 €	Q2 2023	6,298,180.80 €	-15,386,047.20 €
Q3 2022	23,004,125.00 €	Q3 2023	17,193,406.99 €	-5,810,718.01 €
Q4 2022	16,809,077.00 €	Q4 2023	13,738,382.38 €	-3,070,694.62 €
Total to end Q4 2022	76,632,192.14 €	Total to end Q4 2023	43,184,599.36 €	-33,447,592.78 €
# Q1 2022	45	# Q1 2023	63	18
# Q2 2022	48	# Q2 2023	71	23

# Q3 2022	70	# Q3 2023	53	-17
# Q4 2022	81	# Q4 2023	66	-15
Total # to end Q4 2022	244	Total # to end Q4 2023	253	9

Table 10. Comparison of deviations in 2023 and 2022⁹.

As shown in the above table, deviations in 2023 had a total value of EUR 43,184,599.36, and within that amount, the agency declares individual deviations over EUR 1 million. In 2023, the total value of individual deviations over EUR 1 million in the reporting year accounted for over 50%, in monetary terms, of all deviations declared in 2023. The list of such deviations is provided in the table below.

RMS ID	Subject	Area	Amount
R-EXC-2023-6	Grant Agreement 2022/178/FOU, Hellenic Coast Guard, deployment of Host Assets under JO Poseidon 2022, during period from 21/04/2022 till 13/07/2022. The grant agreement was signed on 17/05/2022. The Final Deadline for the Submission of Request for Final payment was due on 26/09/2022 and was prolonged to 26/10/2022. Request for Final Payment was submitted on 29/11/2022. Amendment to the grant agreement was signed on 27 January 2023 increasing EUR value. Final Payment was done on 23 February 2023.	Grant Management	2,418,417€
R-NC-2023-66	The FWC Frontex/OP/301/2019 (FWC OP301) signed on 26 November 2019 as the result of procurement procedure prepared in pre-COVID era and working intra-muros. 2023 Amendment of FWC terms and conditions introducing the possibility to provide the T&M services from outside of Frontex premises ("Extra muros" / telework).	Framework Contract	14,800,000€
R-NC-EXC-2023-99	Grant Agreements for financial support in relation to category 3 of the EBCG standing corps with reference to Article 61 Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 were issued for operational year in line with decision of the respective Authorising Officer. The agency for all its grants defines year N as the operational year. However, as per the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2020/1567 of 26 October 2020, grants under article 61 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, the definition of year N refers to the calendar year.	Grant Management	1,666,108.25€
R-NC-EXC-2023-137	FWC - Frontex/OP/694/2020/JL/MS - On 27.7.2021 Frontex signed the Frontex/OP/694/2020/JL/MS FWCs with 3 companies to provide aerial surveillance for Frontex operational activities with manned mid-range (Lot 2) and long-range (Lot 3) aircraft. The duration of these contracts was two years with possibility to extend it with two years more. Frontex signed these contracts prior to Brexit, thus the regulatory framework allowed and the Agency included in the list of contractors a UK based Contractor. Frontex planned to use the OP/694 FWCs for 4 years. However, in March 2023, it became apparent that there are substantial legal risks of extending them further due to the amended regulatory framework for EU procurements and due to the presence of the UK based Contractor in the Contractors' list. In April 2023, Frontex decided not to extend these contracts, but to recompetete them. Furthermore, to ensure business continuity and in compliance with the applicable procurement rules, i.e. prior to the expiry date of the FWC - 26.7.2023, Frontex signed 7 additional Specific Contracts (SC) with two Contractors (including the UK based one).	Framework Contract	6,444,375€

Table 11. Deviations over EUR 1 million in 2023.

⁹ Payment statistics are sourced from biweekly reporting on budget implementation issued by the Financial Unit.

2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation

In accordance with Article 41 of the Frontex Financial Regulation, the ED, as the Authorising Officer (AO), may delegate his/her powers of budget implementation to the staff of the Agency. Those so empowered may act only within the limits of the powers expressly conferred upon them. The delegate may sub-delegate the powers received with the written approval of the ED.

By the end of 2023, the Agency had 14 AO by delegation (AOD) who had powers of budgetary implementation up to the authorised appropriations on the specific budget items as prescribed by the ED Decision 2022-166. These AODs had sub-delegated their powers to 84 AO by sub-delegation (AOSD).

The review of the delegation and sub-delegation of budgetary powers to the staff members of the Agency is performed on a periodic basis in line with Article 5 of the ED Decision 2020-192. The threshold of the budget implementation and access to budgetary titles follows the provisions of Article 4 of the ED Decision 2022-166.

The maximum thresholds and the budgetary title access of the delegates and sub-delegates are indicated in Annex I to the ED Decision 2022-166, following the standardised approach on delegations and sub-delegations put in place by the ED Decision 2020-192 which foresees thresholds on budgetary Titles I to IV based on the AO function covered by the staff within the Agency. Thresholds are applicable to the following transactions: commitments, payments, recovery orders and budgetary transfers.

For the purposes of implementation of the Agency's budget, the Deputy Executive Directors are given no-threshold powers in the absence of, and whilst deputising for, the Executive Director (ad interim), in line with ED Decision 2022-166 of 12 October 2022.

In the absence of an Authorising Officer by delegation or sub-delegation, the financial threshold of the Authorising Officer in question applies to the person deputising, with the exception of team leaders who keep their threshold in line with ED Decision 2022-166 on 12 October 2022.

The threshold of the deputising Authorising Officers is only increased on demand when the deputizing Authorising Officer has an urgent transaction to sign, the request has been sent directly to relevant services, and provided the deputisation mode is in place and has been duly communicated.

Each Authorising Officer by delegation or sub-delegation is required to sign the following declarations in ARES before he/she can perform their role as the AOD or AOSD:

- 1a. Charter of task and responsibilities of Authorising Officers by delegation
 - 1b. Charter of task and responsibilities of Authorising Officers by sub-delegation
 - 2a. Delegation of the powers for budget implementation
 - 2b. Sub-delegation of the powers for budget implementation
 3. Declaration of absence of conflict of interests
 4. Reporting duties towards the Executive Director
- Declarations 1a - 2b are also countersigned by the ED.

The Agency uses the financial 'decentralised circuit with central counterweight', where the operational initiation and verification functions, as well as the financial initiation function, are executed within each division. The ex-ante financial verification is centrally performed by the financial services within the Financial Services Unit.

There are two different financial circuits in place at Frontex: a standard circuit, and a simplified circuit allowed for payments up to EUR 15,000.

To ensure an adequate system of internal control, financial circuits are complemented by the strict application of the four eyes principle. Each financial transaction has to be divided into two steps: initiation and verification/validation, done by two persons.

In line with Article 5 of the ED Decision 2020-192, the Head of Inspection and Control Office (ICO) carries out periodical, at least annual, control of correctness for rights encoded in the financial management system (ABAC) and shares results of the control with Head of Financial Services Unit and Head of Digital Services Unit.

Since 2022, the Agency re-introduced provision of regular ABAC training for financial actors and agents with an external trainer.

2.5. Human resources management

2.5.1. Human resources developments

In November 2023, Frontex's HR strategy 2024-2027 was adopted by the Management Board.¹⁰ The strategy is to be implemented by a gradual adoption and review of key HR policies and rules, optimisation of the HR processes, as well as development and implementation of new digital tools for HR management. Following the adoption of the Strategy, Mobility policy and Sensitive Posts policy were finalised in 2023. Further implementation of the Strategy will take place throughout the period 2024-2027 in accordance with the roadmap.

A new organisational structure of the HR Unit was adopted, establishing three Sectors within the Unit. However, the HR vs. all staff ratio did not improve in 2023 (as reported in more detail in Section 1.6).

Recruitment in 2023 focused on the following key areas:

- Recruitment of new Fundamental Rights Monitors (8 recruited; overall 46 engaged/in service);
- Recruitment and onboarding of one external and one internal class of the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) standing corps (65 new contracts);
- Recruitment and onboarding of ETIAS staff (95 new contracts);
- In summer 2023, the third recruitment campaign was launched for new EBCG standing corps to be engaged in 2024, attracting nearly 6,000 applications.

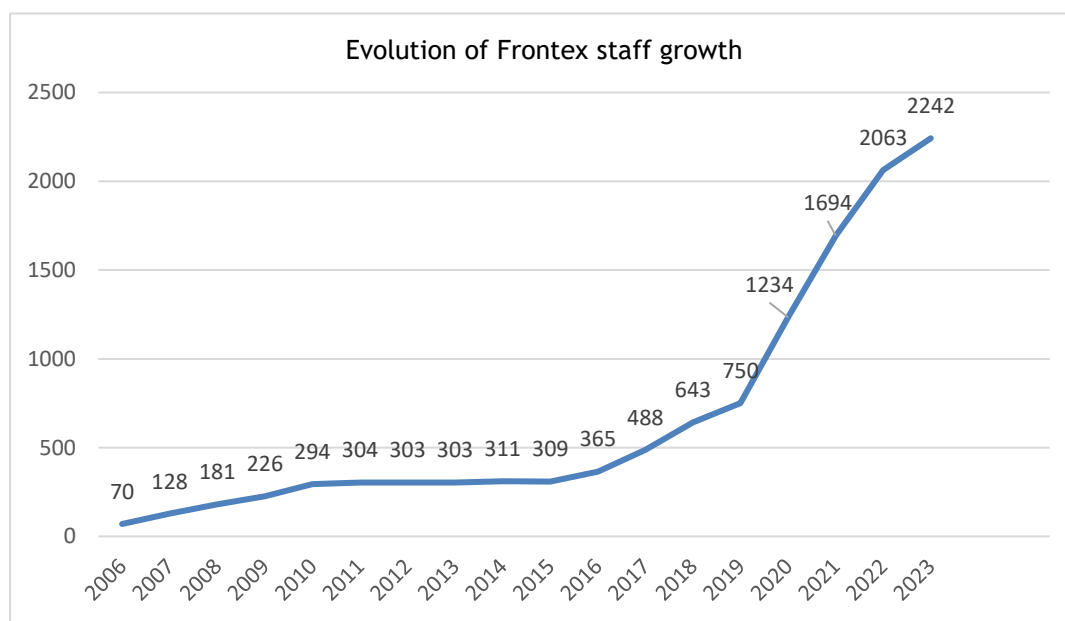
Process	2021	2022	2023	Additional comments
New external recruitment procedures concluded	44	28	28	Several procedures covered more than one post to be filled
Recruitments completed - number of newcomers joining Frontex	432	753	367	Figure refers to recruitments completed, including staff members assigned to a new position after having successfully participated in external recruitment process

Table 12. Recruitments in 2023.

The net increase in staff numbers was 179, with 2,063 staff at the beginning of the year and 2,242 posts and positions filled at the end of the year (temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts). A total of 367 newcomers were recruited, with internal turnover of 93 and external turnover of 95.

Since the entry into force of the current mandate in December 2019, the Agency's staff has grown by 199%. Such a strong growth put significant pressure on HR services facing challenges both in terms of number and the diversification of staff to serve e.g. the standing corps.

¹⁰ Management Board Decision 44/2023 of 22 November 2023 adopting the Frontex Human Resources Strategy 2024-2027.



Graph 2 - Overview of Frontex's growth from inception.

The Agency also implemented the Blue Book traineeship programme, which allowed 39 new trainees to get their first professional experience in the Agency in 2023. In parallel, the Agency contracted interim services with 159 average monthly FTEs of external employment agency workers.

The Agency also progressed with the digitalisation of HR management. In Q3 2023 Frontex rolled out two SYSPER modules: 65+, facilitating extension of contracts beyond the age of 65/66 for non-managers and RES (resignation) module to manage resignation requests of Frontex staff. Additionally, new functionalities of the Time Management module were set based on a new working time and hybrid working Management Board decision, applicable to all Frontex staff members. The standby declaration process was digitalised. Moreover, Frontex HR representatives continued to be involved in the next phase of development of the HR Transformation programme of the European Commission as the nominated representatives of the EU Agency Network.

2.5.2. Implementing rules adopted in 2023

In 2023, the Agency adopted implementing rules on working time and hybrid working, establishing a new approach towards working arrangements. Staff members are allowed to partially work from home (up to 60% of their working time). There are also options for teleworking from outside of the place of employment (up to 10 days, for a prolonged period in exceptional cases).

In line with the principles outlined by the Management Board Decision delegating powers of the appointing authority, a reviewed Executive Director Decision implementing sub-delegation of 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 in 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. Administrative decisions related to standing corps category 1 were delegated to the Heads of Sector within the DMD.

In 2023 a mobility policy was adopted which outlined the rules for staff members' transfers within the Agency and between the agencies. New rules on standby duty were also adopted which significantly influenced the process and its organisation. Additionally, the detailed rules on the implementation of schooling social measures for SNE were introduced to clarify the process.

The list of all implementing decisions adopted in 2023 is included in Annex IV.

2.5.3. Job screening

The standardised job screening exercise (classifications of posts into the roles of administrative support, coordination, neutral and operational) is done according to the guidelines defined by the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) 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 2023. The outcome of the exercise is aligned to the previous year, and is detailed both in numbers and in percentages in the table below.

TYPE/ROLE AND CATEGORY		Posts filled		Posts vacant		Total posts	
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT		219	8.68%	49	1.94%	268	10.62%
	RES DIR/HOA	0	0.00%	1	0.04%	1	0.04%
	DOC	10	0.40%	0	0.00%	10	0.40%
	HR	86	3.41%	13	0.52%	99	3.92%
	IA	23	0.91%	6	0.24%	29	1.15%
	ICT	30	1.19%	17	0.67%	47	1.86%
	LOG	70	2.77%	12	0.48%	82	3.25%
COORDINATION		79	3.13%	30	1.19%	109	4.32%
	GEN COORD	26	1.03%	11	0.44%	37	1.47%
	COMM	13	0.52%	8	0.32%	21	0.83%
	LEGAL	40	1.59%	11	0.44%	51	2.02%
NEUTRAL		48	1.90%	4	0.16%	52	2.06%
	FIN/CONT	48	1.90%	4	0.16%	52	2.06%
	LING	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
OPERATIONAL		1896	75.15%	198	7.85%	2094	83.00%
	TOP COORD	15	0.59%	6	0.24%	21	0.83%
	EVAL	115	4.56%	18	0.71%	133	5.27%
	GEN OPER	1596	63.26%	150	5.95%	1746	69.20%
	PGM M/IMPL	170	6.74%	24	0.95%	194	7.69%
	GEN COORD	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
		2242	88.86%	281	11.14%	2523	100.00%

Table 13. Results of job screening exercise in 2023.

2.5.5 Services to Expatriate staff

In-house assistance is provided to all expatriate statutory staff (TAs/CAs) and SNEs at Frontex for matters related to living in Poland. Such services include representation before Polish authorities, assistance with the implementation of privileges and immunities as defined in the Headquarters Agreement (HQA) between Frontex and the Republic of Poland and informing expatriates about developments in Poland that may affect their everyday life.

In particular, the following support is provided:

- Issuance of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) special/diplomatic identity cards
- Issuance of PESEL (personal identification number) and temporary address registration (optional)
- Resettlement: contacts to relocation companies and issuance of duty exemption certificate (if required)
- Information on districts in Warsaw and real estate market
- Motor-vehicle registration procedure and insurance contact points
- VAT and excise tax refund procedure
- Information on access to public healthcare system
- Information on access to local child benefits
- Information on banks, telecom providers and public transport
- Contact details to car dealers and information on their special offers for Frontex staff
- Information on Polish and EU laws and regulations

- Any other official matters

The number of particular services offered in 2023 is provided in Section 1.6.

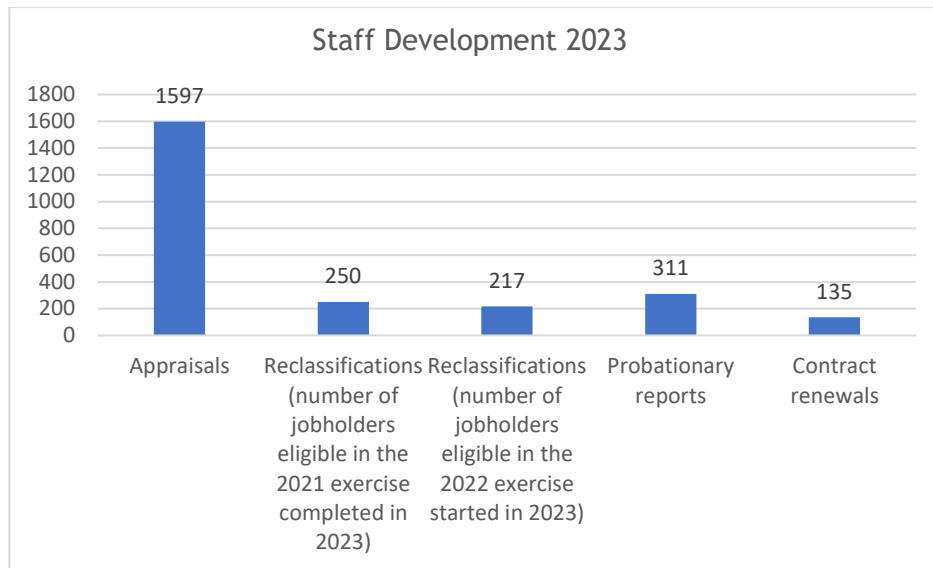
Besides direct assistance, Frontex expatriate staff has access to a database of articles on living in Poland. Newcomers also receive a Welcome Pack with practical information.

2.5.6. Staff development and training

In 2023, the number of annual appraisal reports processed reached 1,597, an increase of 36% compared with 2022 due to the growth of the number of staff. The number of probationary periods decreased by 55%.

Process	Quantity	Additional comments
Appraisal	843 appraisal reports processed of non-standing-corps staff started in 2023; 754 appraisal reports processed of standing corps staff started in 2023	In this exercise, 99% of appraisal reports out of 830 reports launched for HQ staff and 99.6% out of 751 reports launched for standing corps were completed by 30 October 2023. The remaining 1% of reports in HQ and 0.4% among SC would be finalised as soon as possible (for instance after the jobholder's return from a long-term leave). Some of the reports were cancelled during the year.
	The number of reports increased by 36% in comparison to the previous year due to the increase in the number of staff.	No complaints under Article 90(2) EUSR.
		There were 17 appeals filed by the closing date (appeal within the appraisal procedure as per Article 7 of the appraisal rules).
Reclassification	250 jobholders (123 TAs and 127 CAs) eligible for the 2021 reclassification exercise.	The 2021 reclassification exercise was finalised in October 2023.
	217 jobholders (125 TAs and 92 CAs) eligible for the 2022 reclassification exercise.	The 2022 reclassification was started in December 2023.
Probation	247 probationary periods of non-standing corps staff started in 2023.	So far one contract that was concluded in 2023 was not confirmed during or at the end of the probationary period (some probationary periods that started in 2023 are to be finalised in 2024). Dismissal concerned member of non-standing corps.
	64 probationary periods started in 2023 for standing corps category 1.	
Contract renewal	135 contract renewal procedures for contracts ending in 2024 were launched in 2023. The number of processes increased by 75% in comparison with 2022.	A contract renewal process is launched approximately 12 months prior to the end of a given contract of employment. Out of 135 processes started, 131 were completed in 2023. The remaining 4 processes were launched according to schedule at the end of 2023. They are pending the Appointing Authority's decision. Contract renewal concerned member of non-standing corps.
		No complaints under Article 90 (2) EUSR.

Table 14. Staff development statistics in 2023.



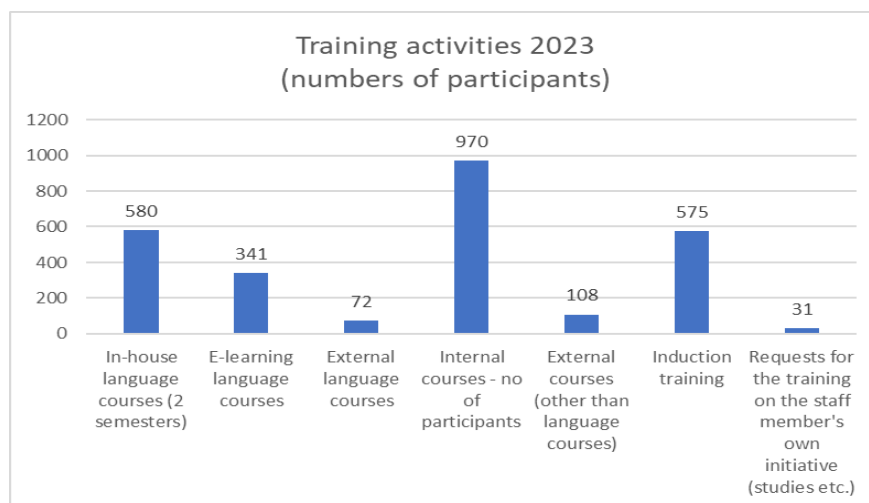
Graph 3. Staff development 2023.

In 2023 Frontex staff benefited from 178 internal training courses with 970 participants in total. Staff also benefited from trainings offered by the European School of Administration and the European Commission DG HR. Courses addressed the needs identified through the learning needs analysis.

A significant part of the 2023 training portfolio addressed skills in the areas of financial systems (ABAC, MiPS), IT literacy, project & process management, writing and communication skills (including intercultural awareness courses). Courses supporting well-being, resilience and performance were also provided.

The scope of specialised courses delivered on request from Frontex entities was extended in 2023 with the delivery of trainings focused on business process management and architecture, design thinking, diplomatic protocol, IT security risk management and others.

The onboarding of a growing number of newcomers was also supported. In 2023, 129 induction days were organised, with customised versions for non-standing-corps staff, standing corps and ETIAS CU staff.



Graph 4. Training activities 2023.

The offer of languages courses was also extended. Access to the new e-learning platform was provided to 341 staff members. In 2023, 580 staff members participated in the in-house language learning opportunities.

The volume of requests for the recognition of the staff members' ability to work in a third EU language increased in 2023. The number of requests increased from 24 in 2020 to 175 in 2023, growth of 700%. The Agency expects a further increase in 2024.

2.6. Strategy for efficiency gains

Actions to achieve efficiency gains in 2023 encompassed activities in all entities within the Agency. The main areas of focus were:

- Use of synergies between the Agency and the external stakeholders at all levels, maximising the benefits provided by all resources available, such as specialised subnetworks within the EU Agencies Network (EUAN).
- Establishment of policies and processes, and notably analysis and implementation of better processes in the operations of the Agency
- Introduction of IT tools
- Application of sound financial management principles for better and more efficient use of the funds
- Improvement of staff knowledge and expertise through training, mentoring and on-the-job training.

The activities already identified in the programming document for 2023-2025 included:

- The adoption of a new organisational structure empowering decision-making at different levels of the organisation while assigning accountability. Two newly created divisions (Strategy, Governance and External Relations Division, EIBM Intelligence Division) report directly to the Executive Director while the portfolio of each of the three Deputy Executive Directors was better defined and cross-divisional cooperation streamlined. In December 2023 the roll-out of the new structure commenced and it is expected to be completed by mid-2024.
- Developing a state-of-the-art digital environment, digitalising business processes, improving efficiency of staff-led processes and productivity. This objective was translated into the implementation of additional paperless processes related to financial and corporate services, as well as the extension of online (self-paced) learning opportunities for staff.
- Continuing the introduction of SYSPER modules to digitalise HR processes, as outlined in more detail in segment 2.5.1 on Human resources management.
- Further improvements in the Public Register of Documents (PRD). Gradual introduction of optical character recognition systems ensures more comprehensive and faster searching. The PRD has become more accessible, transparent, and user-friendly. The process of document handling was further automated and optimised to ensure timely uploads on the webpage. By the end of 2023, over 2,400 documents have been published.
- Full adoption of PPMT, ABAC Legal Commitments and ARES (including E-signatory) resulted in full transition to paperless procurement at limited costs (as these tools have been developed by the European Commission) and reduction in the number of errors and omissions.
- 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 digital

tools for budgeting planning and control and the use of ARES system. This has been applied in areas such as budget, delegation of budget implementation powers for AOD's and AOSD's and financial verification matters. Also, MIPS workflows have been redesigned to simplify the workflows of mission requests and claims, reducing the time for the full mission cycle.

- 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.
- A new online ticketing system was introduced, supporting service delivery. It allows end users to log requests online and by mobile phone in an automated, predefined manner with direct access to instructions, guides, status request etc. facilitating monitoring of internal service level agreements, workload, and speed up escalations.
- Developing, improving and maintaining IT tools supporting the growing workload of Corporate Services, enabling automation of certain tasks, better management of performance, resources and stocks. New tools: parking booking tool, branded items requesting tool. Improved tools: sport and transport reimbursement tool, lending library. Maintained tools: visitors' register, stationery e-shop, collectomate (device for exchanging parcels among staff), room booking system. Tools under implementation: office space booking system, ticketing system.
- In view of the design and construction of the Frontex permanent premises and to limit investment in the current Frontex HQ leased properties, the strategy will be to maximise the utilisation of existing space. Additional space taken on by the Agency in the interim period before the permanent premises are ready is fitted out in accordance with an activity-based workplace concept. In contrast to the previous mainly closed office layouts, the concept allows for more flexibility. For example, desk sharing is easily applied, 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 Capability (IAC)

The IAC's first full year of operation was 2023. The IAC focused on carrying out the first assurance engagement indicated in the Annual Audit Plan 2023, as well as on developing a methodical procedure for assurance engagements. Priority was also given to methodical and organisational support for the Agency in its attempt to implement the numerous recommendations and observations made by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The IAC also built relationships with external partners such as IAS and ECA for drawing on good practices.

Mid-year the IAC faced deep organisational changes. In July 2023, the Head of IAC left the organisation, and in August 2023 newly recruited Internal Auditor took over as acting Head. Business continuity was ensured, however this organisational challenge affected the full performance of planned tasks.

In line with the Annual Audit Plan 2023, the IAC conducted its first assurance audit engagement on 'Implementation of the Frontex Codes of Conduct'. The objective was to determine if the Agency adequately implements the officially endorsed Codes of Conduct by assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control systems put in place to ensure compliance with their provisions and requirements in the framework of Frontex operations and activities to implement its mandate as foreseen in the EBCG Regulation, as well as to attain its strategic objectives. The audit was performed by the Head of IAC, according to the Frontex Internal Audit Charter, and the International Professional

Practices Framework promulgated by the Institute of Internal Auditors. The Head held interviews, carried out desk review and performed an audit survey to obtain feedback from Frontex staff regarding their knowledge, awareness, training, experiences, and views around key processes built around or affected by the Frontex Codes of Conduct. After completing fieldwork, the Head left the Agency. The acting Head issued findings and respective recommendations together with action plans which were fully agreed and validated by the auditees.

Given the above staffing changes, the audit on 'Health & Safety, Wellbeing and Welfare risks, initially foreseen for 2023, was postponed to 2024 to benefit from the established new organisational structure and rely on an almost fully operational IAC.

Further progress was also achieved on the methodical organisation of the IAC activities. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency, maintain compliance with professional standards, and to continuously improve the quality of services provided, the Frontex IAC Quality Assurance and Improvement Program (QAIP) was introduced to the MB in June 2023. Moreover, to standardise the assurance audit engagements and make the process more transparent as well as to ensure work in accordance with internal audit standards and define the rights and responsibilities of the IAC and auditees, the IAC started developing the Internal Audit Manual determining rules for planning, executing and reporting on internal audit assurance engagements expected to be adopted in Q1 2024.

2.7.2. Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In 2023, the Internal Audit Service (IAS) launched, performed and/or completed the following audit, follow-up audits and exercises:

- Audit on 'Management of Returns' was launched in September 2023, with the preliminary survey phase completed in October 2023, fieldwork completed in January/February 2024, and the final report planned to be issued in June 2024. The objective is to assess the adequacy of the design and the effectiveness of the procedures implemented by Frontex for the management of returns, including the mechanisms supporting the Agency's compliance with fundamental rights provisions and principles during return operations.
- Three follow-up audits of open recommendations from the past audits¹¹ were undertaken to assess the state of implementation of specific recommendations in the original audits. As a result, the IAS concluded that two recommendations were adequately and effectively implemented and therefore were closed and one recommendation was re-opened (more details are provided in section 2.8 (a))

2.7.3. 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 2023 was not available at the time when the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 was being prepared. The main points from **ECA opinion on Frontex' accounts for the year 2022**¹² are provided below, as this sheds 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 2022 present fairly, in all material respects, Frontex's financial position as at 31 December 2022, 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

¹¹ Ref.Ares(2023)6935871-12/10/2023; Ref.Ares(2024)548878-24/01/2024; Ref.Ares(2024)737202-31/01/2024.

¹² [Annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2022 | European Court of Auditors \(europa.eu\)](#)

The Court refers to Note 1.3, “Certification of the accounts”, where the accounting officer declares, for the second year in a row, that they were not able to validate the accounting system because of missing information relating to an IT system, owned by the Commission, which supplies accounting data.

The Court draws attention to Notes 3.2.1, “Operating revenue”, 4.0.3, “The financing sources of the budget” and 4.4 “Budget outturn account” where the Frontex accountant explains that the contributions from Schengen associated countries (SAC) are not correctly calculated. Consequently, the contribution made by the EU to Frontex’s budget is also incorrectly calculated. For 2022, the EU contribution is overstated by €3.2 million, and the SAC contributions are understated by the same amount.

Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts.

In the Court’s opinion, the transactions underlying the annual accounts (revenue and payments) for the year ended 31 December 2022 are legal and regular in all material respects.

Other matter

The Court notes that in Frontex’s annual activity report for 2022, in his declaration of assurance, the current Executive Director, mentions that he has taken note of the reservations expressed by the former Executive Director and the former Executive Director ad interim (in annex 12 of the annual activity report) but is not in a position to provide an opinion on these reservations. These relate a) to the management of different contracts for travel services for the Standing Corps and b) the management of a grant for training activities of the Standing Corps category 1. In relation to point a) ECA refers to 2021 annual report, paragraph 3.30.13.

Observations on the reliability of the accounts

3.30.11. Frontex overestimated the accrued charges incurred in 2022 for its mission costs by €4.7 million of a total of €213.5 million of accrued charges.

3.30.12. Frontex does not have a formalised guidance or procedures to ensure consistent calculation of accrued charges (2022: €213.5 million). As a result, the estimated amount varies, depending on the unit responsible for preparing the computation of the accrual.

Observations on the legality and regularity of transactions

3.30.13. In October 2021, Frontex signed a service contract with a contractor for psychological screening for new European Border and Coast Guard officers. The contract had an initial value of €79 000. Frontex intended this contract to be a “bridging solution” between the framework contract for psychological services that had ended in 2021 and a new one, for which an open tender procedure was being prepared. Due to delays in the new procedure, Frontex amended the contract four times, increasing its value to €502 900, or 536% more than the initial value. Frontex registered these occasions in the registry of exceptions and non-compliance events. Article 172(3)(a)(iii) of the Financial Regulation allows an increase of the contract value of up to 50% in such situations. The total payments for this contract amounted to €502 500 of which €384 000 are irregular.

Observations on management and control systems

3.30.14. In May 2019, Frontex signed a framework contract with a total value of €30 million in relation to travel services, including accommodation. We found that the invoices issued by the travel agency for the accommodation were not supported by the actual invoices of the hotels. Instead, the underlying invoices provided by the travel agency had been issued by a travel agency’s subsidiary. The internal controls put in place by Frontex regarding the implementation of the contract were not sufficient as they did not provide evidence on the actual costs incurred. This is a critical weakness, entailing a significant risk of overcharging.

3.30.15. Frontex uses the Commission’s system for managing its travel-related costs. ECA found that the information in the system does not reconcile actual costs paid with the travel agency’s costs, which are reported and processed separately from those paid by the staff on mission. This is an internal control weakness which exposes Frontex to the risk that payments related to the travel agency’s costs may not be correct.

3.30.16. In July 2022, Frontex introduced new ceilings for authorising officers by delegation in relation to payments, recovery orders and budgetary transfers. The decision was effective immediately, from the day it was signed. However, there was a delay in implementing those ceilings in the IT system. As a result, between July 2022 and August 2022, when the system update was completed, eight authorising officers by delegation authorised 17 payments over the new ceiling, amounting to €10.9 million. This contravenes Article 41(1) of the Framework Financial Regulation. We note that this significant internal control weakness was registered in Frontex’s registry of exceptions and non-compliance events.

3.30.17. In one recruitment procedure, ECA found that the selection committee had added up its members' individual assessments, instead of applying a consensual method stipulated by Frontex's internal rules. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear standards or instructions to selection committee members on how to assess the individual selection criteria. Finally, the chair of the selection committee declared a direct hierarchical relationship with the recruited person, without any evidence that there were mitigating measures to address the potential conflict of interest. These weaknesses undermine the principles of transparency and equal treatment of candidates in recruitment procedures and may expose Frontex to reputational and legal risks. ECA made a similar observation in paragraph 3.30.14 of our 2021 report.

Observations on budgetary management

3.30.18. Schengen associated countries co-finance Frontex's activities. Their share of Frontex's budget is based on the proportion of the size of their economies (expressed as either GDP or GNI) to the size of the EU economy. However, the agreements between the EU and these countries which serve as legal basis for calculating their contributions to Frontex's budget, are unclear and allow divergent interpretations.

As ECA observed in 2020 report, ECA considers Frontex's interpretation flawed, because it leads to Schengen associated countries contributing around €3.5 million (7%) less to the Frontex's budget than the size of their economies, in relation to the size of the EU economy, would dictate. This distortion of proportionality is caused by the fact that Frontex calculates the contributions of each Schengen associated country by dividing the size of that country's economy over the combined size of the economies of the EU and all Schengen associated countries taken together, and then by multiplying that fraction, or 'contribution ratio', by the EU budget's subsidy for Frontex (and not by the whole budget of Frontex, including both the share of the EU budget and of the Schengen associated countries).

No new **performance audits** or reviews were announced/launched by ECA in 2023. The follow-up audit of Special Report No 22/2020 'Future of EU agencies-Potential for more flexibility and cooperation' was launched in November 2023 and was ongoing at the time of writing of the CAAR 2023. The follow-up audit of Special Report No 24/2019 'Asylum, relocation and return of migrants' (launched in October 2022) concluded in July 2023. As a result, three recommendations were closed:

- Recommendation 4. a) b) c) Adjust Frontex's return support and experts' deployment in the hotspots
- Recommendation 6. a) Support further national return procedures
- Annex III - Follow up of the recommendations on hotspot approach - 3.2 Expert deployments by Member States should be long enough and in line with profiles requested to make the support provided by Frontex, EASO and Europol to Greece and Italy sufficiently efficient and effective.

2.8.(a) Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits

Recommendations from IAS

At the beginning of the 2023, Frontex had in total 17 recommendations open from IAS audits from the previous years. There were no new recommendations issued by IAS during 2023. As a result of three follow-up audits, IAS concluded that two recommendations were adequately and effectively implemented by the Agency and therefore were closed and one recommendation was re-opened:

- **Recommendation No 1 (very important): monitoring of compliance with fundamental rights** from the audit on 'Governance, stakeholder management & external communication' (2021) - closed. Frontex developed comprehensive working methods for conducting investigations relating to potential violations of fundamental rights and established a procedure that outlines how the fundamental rights officer (FRO) should carry out and document the preliminary assessment in case of incidents regarding fundamental rights. A new working procedure has been introduced to incorporate guidelines for effectively engaging with national authorities during investigations. Frontex also established a permanent agenda point in the Management Board meetings to provide

regular updates on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the FRO by different stakeholders.

- Recommendation No 1 (important): recognition of the contract management function from the audit on 'Contract management' (2018) - closed. Frontex established a 'Central Contract Management Team' and set up its mandate, objectives and expected contribution. The roles and responsibilities of the contract managers were set. Frontex implemented the new 'Contract Management Manual' which includes detailed mapping of the contract management-related processes; a detailed description of those processes; and a set of templates applicable to specific processes.
- Recommendation No 1 (downgraded to important): IT governance and project management framework from audit on 'Information technology governance and project management in Frontex' (2019) - re-opened. Out of four sub-points of this recommendation, Frontex has implemented three:
 - the definition and adoption of an Information Management framework and the ICT strategy 2022-2027 with the definition of the respective governance structure;
 - the establishment of an IT maturity measurement model with a baseline and key metrics which are monitored;
 - the development of an IT risk register with a clear indication of which risks are to be raised to the corporate level, and which ones are managed on the ICT or project level

The remaining open sub-point concerns the definition of an enterprise architecture. Frontex has made significant progress in defining and implementing a framework for operating enterprise architecture practices (governance structure, roles, responsibilities, policies) with a clear project plan on related activities for 2024. However, the actual AS-IS and TO-BE enterprise architecture still needs to be defined and validated (by IT & information governance bodies). Due to the key role of enterprise architecture in aligning business processes, information systems, and technology with the overall strategic goals of the organisation, the risk remains significant enough to keep the recommendation open and to maintain the priority of the recommendation as 'important'.

Implementation progress for critical and very important IAS audit recommendations

There are no critical recommendations issued by IAS. The table below presents progress in implementation of open very important recommendations.

Audit Title	Recommendation No. and Title	Original/ revised implementation date	Implementation progress
HR Planning, Allocation & Recruitment	1: Strategy and monitoring	30.06.2021 / 31.03.2024	- Human Resources Strategy 2024-2027 adopted. - Procedures for the key process of staff planning and allocation - the concept has been developed within the HR 2.0 project. Job Architecture Policy drafted and circulated for adoption. - Sensitive functions policy adopted. - Monthly reporting on recruitment and planning provided to the executive management.
	2: Staff allocation process	31.12.2021 / 30.06.2024	- Competency Framework to be adopted. - Quantitative needs analyses & workload analysis of the more repetitive tasks - all Frontex entities to apply a standardised approach based on Human Resources Strategy - to be applied after the full implementation of the new organisational structure. - Thorough justification of the request for new posts and the documenting staff allocation process are implemented.
	3: Attractiveness as an employer and grading	31.03.2021 / N/A	- Requirements of this recommendation covered by the Human Resources Strategy. <i>'Ready for review'</i> request made on 22.02.2024
Governance, stakeholder management & external communication	2: Decision-making and internal coordination	30.06.2023 / 30.06.2025	- A significant milestone achieved with the establishment of the Business Process Management (BPM) practice. The next anticipated milestone is the establishment of the BPM framework. - Mapping of all processes in the organisation is ongoing. - Development of process-based performance indicators and performance measurement methodology delayed due to Agency's reorganisation and due to delays in Enterprise Architecture project. - Standard Operating Procedure for Registration and Tasking adopted. The rules of procedure of the Operational Board drafted and awaiting the approval. - All documents signed by the members of the executive management registered in ARES. - Log of delegations and sub-delegations created and regularly updated.
	3: Stakeholders' management and external communication	31.12.2022 / 31.12.2024	Draft strategy on stakeholder management ready, however the adoption and the implementation of the strategy postponed due to organisational changes within the Agency that will affect the processes for internal stakeholder governance. Frontex Communications Strategy adopted.

Audit Title	Recommendation No. and Title	Original/ revised implementation date	Implementation progress
Recruitment, training and deployment of the standing corps	1: Standing corps' mission orders	30.06.2023 / 31.03.2024	- Handbook for European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps Officers on Mission Orders and Statement of Expenses adopted. - Time-bound performance indicators created and monitored. - Management Board to endorse the ED decision about the derogation from the reduction of DSA applicable to standing corps category 1 and 2.
	2: Recruitment of Standing Corps - psychiatric and psychological evaluation	31.12.2023 / 30.06.2024	Provider for psychological assessment contracted. Psychological assessments ongoing including the candidates' follow-up assessment. By the end of 2023 24 out of 69 reassessments completed.
	3: Operational initiation and planning process	31.12.2023 / 31.12.2024	Methodology for attribution of priorities in operational response adopted and Operational Prioritisation 2024-2025 set. Guidelines on standing corps redeployment are being elaborated. Deadline extended due to reorganisation of the Agency and related re-allocation of roles and responsibilities.
	4: Supportive and monitoring functions	31.12.2023 / 30.06.2024	At the beginning of 2023 the initial proposals on task definitions and job profiles based on Article 54(7) of the EBCG Regulation on supportive and monitoring function were collected. The consolidated draft outcome was put on hold pending the Agency reorganisation. In December a new assessment launched in view of reorganisation of Frontex. The revised consolidated figures together with the proposal will be submitted to the executive management for decision.

Table 14. Progress in implementation of open very important IAS recommendations.

Open significantly delayed recommendations

Based on the IAS note on contribution to the 2023 Consolidated Annual Activity Report process of Frontex¹³, there are six very important significantly delayed recommendations. IAS considers recommendations as significantly delayed if they are still open more than six months after the original expected date of implementation. The delays are indicated in months, as of 31.01.2024.

¹³ Ref.Ares(2024)1570025-29/02/2024

Audit Report Title	Recommendation No and Title	Category (Critical/Very Important/Important)	Original implementation date	Delay (months) at 31.1.2024	Revised date of implementation
HR Planning, Allocation & Recruitment	Recommendation No 1: Strategy and monitoring	Very Important	30.06.2021	31	28.02.2024
Unmitigated Risk: If the implementation of the HR strategy is not followed up, monitored, and not updated in time, the actions expected from HR management and staff and the resources assigned to them may not be directed towards the right tasks (wrong priorities, loss of common perspective) or prove inefficient. Inadequate or unclear procedures may blur the lines of responsibility, decrease the accountability of the actors involved and lead to incoherent working practices. This may negatively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. Without proper monitoring of the recruitment milestones and status of recruitments, the processes may be ineffective and put the achievement of the objectives at risk. Neglecting to measure performance by a set of pertinent indicators reduces the comprehensiveness of information and hampers informed and timely decision-making on corrective management action.					
HR Planning, Allocation & Recruitment	Recommendation No 2: Staff allocation process	Very Important	31.12.2021	25	30.06.2024
Unmitigated Risk: In the absence of a clear justification of when staff allocation departs from the breakdown of posts in the LFS, there is a risk that resources are allocated to tasks that had not been requested by the legislative authority, but based on some other preference, logic or needs analysis. Without clearly disclosing such a logic, monitoring the staff allocation process is a difficult and time-consuming task. Ultimately, stakeholders may not be properly informed about how the Agency plans to implement its priorities. Should inconsistencies occur, through potentially imbalanced or inadequate staffing, the Agency may not reach its objectives, or may deviate from them. In the absence over several years of a common framework and of a documented process to allocate its (new) human resources, consistency cannot be ensured among the approaches followed by different organisational units. This can lead to work backlogs, imbalances and staff dissatisfaction.					
HR Planning, Allocation & Recruitment	Recommendation No 3: Attractiveness as an employer and grading	Very Important	31.03.2021	34	28.02.2024
Unmitigated Risk: The Agency may not be able to properly analyse and address the recruitment challenges it faces if it considers 'attractiveness' as their sole root cause. By not setting separate clearly identifiable objectives (i.e. to be an attractive employer, achieve reasonable geographical balance among staff and adjust grades based on its needs), it may fail to make progress in these areas. Applying a grading policy without a sufficient analysis of all implications, without placing it in an overall HR strategy and without checking its coherence with other pillars of this strategy, may have negative side effects and unintended consequences, and ultimately prove to be ineffective. Publishing vacant posts at grades such as AD 9 that are only allowed on an exceptional basis without proper justification does not comply with the rules of the Staff Regulations and may harm the achievement of HR objectives in terms of staff motivation. Not carrying out assessments regarding the grading of positions for clerical or secretarial tasks, as requested by the Commission, entails reputational risks and does not allow pursuing the objectives those assessments are intended to achieve (ensuring a more coherent grade structure and subsequently, the staff overall satisfaction and motivation).					
Governance, stakeholder	Recommendation No. 2:	Very Important	30.06.2023	7	01.04.2024

Audit Report Title	Recommendation No and Title	Category (Critical/Very Important/Important)	Original implementation date	Delay (months) at 31.1.2024	Revised date of implementation
management & external communication	Decision-making and internal coordination				
Unmitigated Risk: The lack of rules of procedures and workflows supporting inter-divisional coordination may lead to inefficient and ineffective assignment of tasks within Frontex and in the corresponding reporting lines. Moreover, this may result in a silo approach, undermining Frontex's capacity to work effectively and efficiently on European integrated border management. Inadequate operationalisation of the new organisational structure may hamper Frontex's capacity to achieve its objectives. In addition, it may create bottlenecks resulting in delays, which may ultimately negatively impact the effectiveness of the decision-making processes and pose reputational risks.					
Governance, stakeholder management & external communication	Recommendation No. 3: Stakeholders management and external communication	Very Important	31.12.2022	13	30.06.2024
Unmitigated Risk: The lack of a stakeholder management and external communication strategy and guidelines for its effective implementation, including the assignment of related responsibilities to specific entities, may negatively impact the Agency's planning of activities and achievement of its objectives. Ultimately, this may result in non-compliance with the EBCG Regulation and consequently damage the Agency's reputation. In this overall complex environment, where many actors need to constantly liaise and exchange information, not only within the Agency, but also between Frontex and the national authorities, ineffective and/or insufficient processes concerning external communication may ultimately undermine the proper functioning of European integrated border management.					
Recruitment, training and deployment of the standing corps	Recommendation No. 1: Standing corps' mission orders	Very Important	30.06.2023	7	31.03.2024
Unmitigated Risk: A derogation to the standard rules and internal guidelines not duly endorsed by the MB and not consistently implemented may result in a reputational risk for the Agency, which is of particular concern in view of mission orders' material impact. Inadequate or incomplete instructions on calculating and validating mission orders' statement of expenses, notably as regards leaves and absences, may lead to inaccuracies and inconsistencies in this process, which may in turn result in financial and reputational risks for the Agency. Should the Agency not process and approve statement of expenses of standing corps staff in a timely manner, the latter may need to finance deployment-related expenses from their own funds, which may end in frustration and lack of motivation to perform operational tasks and ultimately may negatively impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the standing corps.					

Table 16. Progress in implementation of significantly delayed very important IAS recommendations.

Follow-up on ECA observations from previous years

This follow-up is based on a table annexed to the ECA specific annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2022 (Chapter 3, point 3.30). The table provides an overview of the actions taken with the latest update of 07.02.2024 provided to ECA. During 2023 ECA closed six (6) previous years' observations.

Year	Summary of ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and /or other relevant developments (summary)	Open / Closed
2015	States participating in border operations declare costs incurred using cost claim sheets. In our special report 12/2016, we recommended that agencies should use simplified cost options whenever appropriate to avoid such inefficiencies.	The heavy technical equipment (HTE) unit costs were approved are used in grant agreements and payments as of July 2023 since the concerned assets participate in Frontex joint operations.	Open
2016/2018	The level of carry-overs and cancellations was high. Frontex should strive for more precise cost estimates and budget forecasts	The level of carry-overs stabilised between 45-48% although for 2023 it decreased to 41%.	Open
2018	The ex-ante verifications were ineffective. Frontex should work on the development of a simplified and transparent financing scheme that also covers equipment-related costs.	The heavy technical equipment (HTE) unit costs were approved are used in grant agreements and payments as of July 2023 since the concerned assets participate in Frontex joint operations.	Open
2018	Frontex should adopt and implement a sensitive post policy.	MB Decision 1/2024 on the policy on identification and management of Frontex sensitive functions adopted on 12 January 2024.	Open
2018/2019	Frontex did not reach the required occupancy laid down in the staff establishment plan. Frontex should improve the guidance given to selection committee members and verify the candidates' financial entitlements for salary payments more closely.	There has been a clear improvement over the last three years in respect of the occupancy rate as follows: 2020: 61.1%; 2021: 77%; 2022: 82.4%; 2023: 89%. This means that Frontex came very close to its planned target of 90% occupancy rate at the end of 2023.	Open
2020	Declaration by a national authority of unannounced return operations 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 with its Financial Regulation.	Monitoring and forecasting of costs in Frontex Assisted Returns (FAR), a financial component was implemented in FAR Scheduled Flights as of October 2022. A new financial module, the grant management module (GMM), will be fully introduced in Q2 2024. Since 2020 increased efforts in getting a more effective MS' monitoring of costs under ECRET grants - out of 143.6 million paid to beneficiaries in the period Jan 2020-Dec 2023, only EUR 300,000 (0.2%) were registered as irregularities related to ex-post commitments.	Open
2020	Ombudsman opened two inquiries: (a) In November 2020 it assessed the effectiveness and transparency of Frontex's complaints mechanism and the role and independence of Frontex's fundamental rights officer and issued on 15 June 2021 nine suggestions; (b) in March 2021, it investigated how Frontex complies with its fundamental rights obligations and ensures accountability in relation to its new enhanced responsibilities. There are also two ongoing investigations: (a) from OLAF, concerning allegations of harassment, misconduct and migrant pushbacks concerning Frontex and (b) from the European Parliament, concerning possible allegations of violations of fundamental rights in Frontex.	To address all the recommendations, Frontex developed a comprehensive action plan (altogether 115 actions). The progress in implementation of recommendations is regularly presented to the management board.	Open

Year	Summary of ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and /or other relevant developments (summary)	Open / Closed
2020	Delay in the recruitment of the required 40 fundamental rights monitors poses a serious risk to the operations and reputation of Frontex.	At the end of 2022 the Agency filled 41 posts of fundamental rights monitors (1 x AD7, 28 x AD5 and 12 x AST4).	Closed
2020	Frontex was exposed to reputational damage and litigation due to offers for AD7 posts sent to 47 advanced-level candidates (instead of the approved AST posts), in anticipation of the Commission's reply on the posts. The 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, in February 2022 offered AD7 posts to those candidates who have accepted the offer in 2021. No legal case has been launched for this matter.	Closed
2020	The four Schengen Associated Countries' contributions in Frontex initial budget are understated as they made up 6.9% instead of 7.4% of the budget. There is a need for horizontal guidance from the Commission to EU bodies on how to calculate contributions from non-EU countries consistently.	The Agency reviewed its method of calculation and the Management Board during its 86th meeting concluded that currently used methodology to calculate SAC contributions is in line with the existing legal framework and the governing agreements and will remain unchanged.	Open
2020	When Frontex's accountant calculated the Agency's performance indicators for the accounts, they treated the reductions to the budget not as amending budgets but as acts of budget implementation which contradicts the decisions by the Management Board.	Agency follows the same methodology for budget implementation than all the other EU Agencies and this is foreseen by DG BUDG. The approach of the Agency has not changed. A budget amendment decided by the MB is treated as a budget amendment by FIN in the reports on the budget implementation. The new accounting officer agrees with the Agency's approach that these are budget amendments and not budget implementation acts	Open
2021	We found several issues in the evaluation of the technical-professional capacity and the economic and financial capacity in a procurement procedure for a framework contract for the provision of travel services. In February 2022, Frontex suspended the contract and in May 2022 the contract was terminated.	This observation is no longer applicable, the contract which gave rise to the observation in question was terminated in May 2022.	Open
2021	In the audited recruitment procedures, we found that the selection committees applied different method for the quantification of the individual assessments than the one foreseen in the internal guidelines. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear standards on how to assess the individual selection criteria.	Frontex has changed its internal scoring/evaluation procedure where there is only one final evaluation report agreed between the Selection Committee (SC) members and where no individual scorings of SC members are used.	Open
2021	The authorising officers had not formally accepted the conditions of Executive Director's Decision on delegations. Moreover, they had not formally declared their compliance on the declaration of the absence of conflicts of interest.	Since 2022, the delegation and sub-delegation of powers are signed via Ares for all authorising officers, including declaration of absence of conflicts of interest.	Closed
2021	Frontex signed a framework contract for personal protective equipment and sanitary items without a standard price but with a maximum gross margin for every item ordered. However, when implementing the contract, it did not carry out systematic checks on the gross margin.	Frontex checked the gross margin on a risk-based sample and did not find discrepancies.	Closed
2021	We found the following weaknesses in two procurement procedures: a) a significant delay in publishing the award decision and b) for the assessment of the economic and financial capacity it requested turnover twice the maximum amount allowed.	Frontex adopted internal procedures to ensure the on-time publication of the award decision and the proper justification when a deviation occurs in the criteria for the assessment of the economic and financial capacity.	Closed

Year	Summary of ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and /or other relevant developments (summary)	Open / Closed
2021	In three audited grant agreements the beneficiaries did not respect the 75-day deadline to request the final payment. Frontex also did not make the final payment within the deadline of 60 days.	There is a decrease in the delayed submissions and grant payments in 2022 in relation to 2021. The teams concerned monitor the situation and register where necessary the appropriate suspension to the payments. Furthermore, Frontex reinforced the staff, in order to improve the timely managing of the tasks that are required to make the payment on time.	Closed
2021	An overall analysis of the payments in 2021 showed delays in the payments process which are a serious deficiency in Frontex's internal controls.	The percentage of delayed payments in all entities in 2023 has improved in terms of volume, that is 14% decrease from 2022. Slight decrease also in terms of amount of 1% from 2022 to 2023. The value of the delayed payments in 2023 totalled €100 million, i.e. 13% of all payments, an improvement since 2022 (17%).	Open
2022	Frontex overestimated the accrued charges incurred in 2022 for its mission costs by €4.7 million of a total of €213.5 million of accrued charges.	The methodology for carry-over of the deployment expenses has been approved and was implemented for the carry-over procedure 2023.	Open
2022	Frontex does not have a formalised guidance or procedures to ensure consistent calculation of accrued charges (2022: €213.5 million). As a result, the estimated amount varies, depending on the unit responsible for preparing the computation of the accrual.	The Agency will formalise the agency-wide methodology in Q2 2024 to ensure consistent calculation of accrued charges. Finance Unit will analyse the most significant transactions, to collect further information that will be required for the methodology to be established.	Open
2022	Frontex signed a service contract with a contractor for psychological screening for new European Border and Coast Guard officers. The contract had an initial value of €79,000. Frontex amended the contract four times, increasing its value to €502,900, or 536% more than the initial value. The total payments for this contract amounted to €502,500 of which €384,000 are irregular.	The "bridging solution" contract is not in use anymore. Since July 2022 Frontex is using the new OP/Frontex 0062/2022 Lot-1 for psychological pre-recruitment assessment. <i>This observation is no longer applicable, the contract which gave rise to the observation is not in use anymore.</i>	Open
2022	Frontex signed a framework contract with a total value of €30 million in relation to travel services, including accommodation. Invoices issued by the travel agency for the accommodation were not supported by the actual invoices of the hotels. Instead, the underlying invoices provided by the travel agency had actually been issued by a travel agency's subsidiary. The internal controls put in place by Frontex regarding the implementation of the contract were not sufficient as they did not provide evidence on the actual costs incurred. This is a critical weakness, entailing a significant risk of overcharging.	The new tender procedure was cancelled due to lack of eligible, technically acceptable and valid offers at the stage of award. Frontex intends to join the Commission's upcoming inter-institutional FWC for travel services, however the future contract would only cover short term missions and events. For the SC missions Frontex will continue with the self-bookings of flights and accommodations and will tender separately duty car rental services.	Open
2022	Frontex uses the Commission's system for managing its travel-related costs. We found that the information in the system does not reconcile actual costs paid with the travel agency's costs, which are reported and processed separately from those paid by the staff on mission. This is an internal control weakness which exposes Frontex to the risk that payments related to the travel agency's costs may not be correct.	The Agency acknowledges that indeed there are discrepancies between the costs with the travel Agency in MiPS and in ABAC. These are created by the fact that invoices from the travel Agency can come months after a mission has been finished and the staff member has been paid. However, in the Agency's opinion this does not pose a risk of making payment with a wrong amount. Regarding the travel	Open

Year	Summary of ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and /or other relevant developments (summary)	Open / Closed
		agency's costs, all invoices are checked and certified correct, and only then are processed in ABAC fully complying with the applicable financial rules. The ECA M1 2023 additional verification of 27 missions related payments did not confirm the risk.	
2022	Frontex introduced new ceilings for authorising officers by delegation in relation to payments, recovery orders and budgetary transfers. The decision was effective immediately, from the day it was signed. However, there was a delay in implementing those ceilings in the IT system. As a result, between July 2022 and August 2022, when the system update was completed, eight authorising officers by delegation authorised 17 payments over the new ceiling, amounting to €10.9 million. This contravenes Article 41(1) of the Framework Financial Regulation. We note that this significant internal control weakness was registered in Frontex's registry of exceptions and non-compliance events.	Considering the lessons learnt following the implementation of the Executive Director Decision (EDD) 2022/125, a disclaimer was included in the new EDD 2022/166, regarding the thresholds, being applicable 15 days following the entry into force of the EDD. Since introduction of the EDD 2022/16 there was no delays in implementing the ceilings in the IT system.	Open
2022	In a recruitment procedure, the selection committee had added up its members' individual assessments, instead of applying a consensual method stipulated by Frontex's internal rules. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear standards or instructions to selection committee members on how to assess the individual selection criteria. The chair of the selection committee declared a direct hierarchical relationship with the recruited person, without any evidence that there were mitigating measures to address the potential conflict of interest. These weaknesses undermine the principles of transparency and equal treatment of candidates in recruitment procedures and may expose Frontex to reputational and legal risks.	Frontex has changed its internal scoring/evaluation procedure where there is only one final evaluation report agreed between the Selection Committee (SC) members and where no individual scorings of SC members are used. Frontex also acknowledges ECA's observation on the potential conflict of interest but considers that it has taken measures (e.g., members of the Selection Committee from outside Frontex, internal procedures) to ensure that this risk is sufficiently mitigated. In the disputed case there was a selection committee member from HR and one independently appointed selection committee member representing the Staff Committee (and from another division) as mitigating measure.	Open
2022	Schengen associated countries co-finance Frontex's activities. Their share of Frontex's budget is based on the proportion of the size of their economies to the size of the EU economy. However, the agreements which serve as legal basis for calculating their contributions to Frontex's budget are unclear and allow divergent interpretations. As we observed in our 2020 report, we consider Frontex's interpretation flawed, because it leads to Schengen associated countries contributing around €3.5 million (7%) less to the Frontex's budget than the size of their economies, in relation to the size of the EU economy, would dictate. This distortion of proportionality is caused by the fact that Frontex calculates the contributions of each Schengen associated country by dividing the size of that country's economy over the combined size of the economies of the EU and all	The Agency reviewed its method of calculation and the Management Board during its 86th meeting concluded that currently used methodology to calculate SAC contributions is in line with the existing legal framework and the governing agreements and will remain unchanged.	Open

Year	Summary of ECA's observations	Corrective action taken and /or other relevant developments (summary)	Open / Closed
	Schengen associated countries taken together, and then by multiplying that fraction, or 'contribution ratio', by the EU budget's subsidy for Frontex (and not by the whole budget of Frontex, including both the share of the EU budget and of the Schengen associated countries).		

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 2021 the Court issued the emphasis of matter by which it drew 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.

For the financial year 2022 the Court issued the emphasis of matter by which the Court draws attention to Notes 3.2.1, “Operating revenue”, 4.0.3, “The financing sources of the budget” and 4.4 “Budget outturn account” where the Frontex accountant explains that the contributions from Schengen associated countries (SAC) are not correctly calculated. Consequently, the contribution made by the EU to Frontex’s budget is also incorrectly calculated. For 2022, the EU contribution is overstated by €3.2 million, and the SAC contributions are understated by the same amount.

The Agency reviewed its method of calculation and the Management Board during its 86th meeting concluded that currently used methodology to calculate SAC contributions is in line with the existing legal framework and the governing agreements and will remain unchanged.

2.8.(b) Follow up of recommendations issued following investigations by OLAF

In 2023 OLAF concluded five cases which were followed up with administrative, disciplinary or financial recommendations. Concerning three (3) cases the pre-disciplinary procedures are ongoing and as regards one (1) case the recovery of the amount is in progress. With regard to a case where an administrative recommendation was issued, the implementation report was consolidated and its follow up is monitored in each Management Board meeting.

2.9. Follow up of observations from the discharge authority

On 10 May 2023 the European Parliament voted to grant the discharge to the Agency for the financial year 2021 and adopted a Resolution forming an integral part of the Decision on the discharge. In September 2023, the Agency reported to the European Parliament on the state of implementation of observations contained in this Resolution.

The observations reported as completed/implemented:

1. Regarding the level of commitments
2. Regarding development of structures of cooperation, information-sharing and the exchange of best practice
3. Regarding the assessment of the results of the pilot phase of the deployment of Liaison Officers from Member States to Frontex
4. Regarding the procedure on incidents involving use of force
5. Regarding involvement in the activities related to the Lithuanian legislation declared incompatible with Union law by the CJEU
6. Regarding documentation including the FRO opinion of 1st September 2022, SIRs from 2021 and 2022 as well as information about the investigation into the case of the Agency’s cultural mediator that was forcibly expelled to Turkey
7. Regarding possibilities to coordinate and share resources with other agencies, in particular with the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies
8. Regarding assessment of harassment cases and information about the results of the reopened investigation with regard to the tragic death of a staff member in 2020
9. Regarding the implementation and use of the Transparency Register tool

10. Regarding the outcome of the two pending whistleblowing cases from 2021
11. Regarding the results and follow up to the study “The Green Deal and the European Border and Coast Guard”
12. Regarding integration of SYSPER in the Agency’s management of its human resources
13. Regarding reporting to the discharge authority on the progress in the implementation of recommendations of the Ombudsman, Working group on Fundamental Rights and Legal and Operational Aspects of Operations in the Aegean Sea and the European Parliament’s Frontex Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG)
14. Regarding the call for the immediate access of Members of Parliament to final reports [from OLAF] once finalised, as well as of all executive staff of the Agency
15. Regarding enhanced cooperation with the Agency’s Management Board

The observations reported as ongoing:

1. Regarding request to provide in the future to the discharge authority more elaborate justifications for budgetary amendments
2. Regarding efforts to strive for more precise cost estimates and budget forecasts
3. Regarding the approval of the travel management system by the Accounting Officer
4. Regarding the finalisation of the revision of the SIR SOP
5. Regarding RECAMAS model
6. Regarding the implementation of Recommendation 1 of the Court’s Special Report 8/2021
7. Regarding improving gender balance
8. Regarding further recruitment of FROMs exclusively at AD level
9. Regarding investigation into the implementation of existing procedures against sexual harassment, and action plan with measures ensuring zero tolerance towards sexual harassment
10. Regarding occupational safety and health and staff well-being measures
11. Regarding the information about the contract for Interpreters and Cultural Mediators
12. Regarding the tender procedure for the travel agency services
13. Regarding a new code of conduct ensuring full transparency and good management
14. Regarding increased transparency and accountability, as well as full respect for and protection of fundamental rights
15. Regarding the implementation of improvement actions following the assessment of Internal Control System in 2021
16. Regarding high amount of non-compliance events in the domain of contract and grants management
17. Regarding the implementation of IAS Recommendations
18. Regarding the adoption and implementation of a sensitive post policy
19. Regarding the implementation of the business continuity plan
20. Regarding Fundamental Rights Action Plan implementation, equipping the FRO office with the appropriate resources, implementation of the recommendations of the FRO and to ensure that the recommendations of the FRO and the Consultative Forum presented to the management board are shared with the discharge authority
21. Regarding a deeper analysis to ensure there are no structural problems [related to OLAF report on misconduct and non-compliance with procedures by individuals]
22. Regarding the call upon the Agency’s management board to further strengthen internal oversight structures, and constantly review and control the activities of the management team, towards the timely identification and resolution of any mismanagement situations, as well as to implement the standard operating procedures to withdraw the financing of, or suspend or terminate, or not launch Agency’s activities where such risks arise
23. Regarding the revision of the Management Board decisions on the data processing rules
24. Regarding commitment towards fully implementing necessary reforms

25. Regarding stepping up efforts in reporting relevant performance information to the Union citizens and general public in clear and accessible language; to ensure greater transparency and public accountability by utilizing media and social media channels
26. Regarding actions needed to ensure full respect of Union standards, in particular in the field of budgetary and financial management, fundamental rights, organisational culture and transparency.

Further details on the actions taken by the Agency on the above-mentioned observations are provided in the Frontex's [follow-up report](#) available on the European Parliament's website.

2.10. Environmental management

In the long-term, Frontex aims to implement an environmental management system based on the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). The Agency has the long-term objective to work towards EMAS certification.

In the Single Programming Document 2023-2025, Frontex committed to certain measures aiming to achieve environmental targets in the short and medium term, thus improving its environmental performance. The first step was to embed environmental management activities and tasks into the structure of the Agency and allocate human resources to carry them out.

Due to the overall growth of the Agency, the environmental footprint is anticipated to grow in the upcoming years as a direct result of increasing number of staff, technical equipment, geographical spread, and intensity of operational activities. However, Frontex commits to undertake steps aimed at decreasing its environmental impact per used unit, while ensuring operational capabilities are sustained, as it has been reflected in a number of Management Board Decisions adopted in 2023.¹⁴ Moreover, environmental awareness is raised during daily operations and trainings. By embedding activities and responsibilities related to environmental management into the organisational structure, the Agency will work towards achieving consistent oversight of the environmental impact of its operations.

As a next step, Frontex will work towards setting up an adequate remit for its environmental programme by defining its scope, expected outcomes, governance, etc. and by ensuring training for the allocated human resources. Subsequently, an overall environmental impact assessment of the Agency's activities is planned with the support of external experts, to gain a good understanding of the Frontex activities with the highest environmental impact. In addition, the baseline carbon footprint of the Agency will be calculated so that clear, measurable targets can be established and monitored. First measures in this field have already been introduced at the operational level, in the area of deployment of human and technical resources as well as returns.

In Annex VII, decentralised activities to improve environmental performance are described in more detail.

2.11. Management assessment

The CAAR describes the main achievements and activities of the Agency in 2023, including further offering its support to MS and third countries, assisting in the area of returns, optimising its internal processes.

The year 2023 was a particularly demanding one for the Agency as it was facing the most significant levels of irregular migration since 2016, responding to the important changes in the EU legal framework on migration and asylum and implementing its Agency-wide transformation efforts.

¹⁴ Management Board Decision 24/2023 of 21 July 2023 adopting the modus operandi of the rolling operational plan.

Management Board Decision 28/2023 of 15 September 2023 adopting the Multiannual Strategy for the Acquisition and Management of the Agency's Equipment.

Management Board Decision 30/2023 of 20 September 2023 adopting the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management 2023-2027.

Despite numerous challenges, Frontex continued playing a crucial role in protecting the EU's external borders.

The Agency's operational and support activities in 2023 were carried out in accordance with the work programme for the year, with the necessary guidance and support from the Management Board.

The year 2023 was mainly about robust transformational efforts, evidenced by the elaboration of the Frontex 2027 Strategic Vision. In accordance with its key objectives, the Agency is to become a true partner in border management, embracing innovative approaches and intelligence-led operations to strengthen its efficiency and effectiveness at the EU external borders. With these strategic foundations set, a corresponding revised organisational structure reflecting the core business processes and fundamental activities of the Agency has been already adopted in November 2023 and significant milestones achieved in the first weeks following its entry into force - with the establishment of the very first Strategy, Governance and External Relations Division. During this transformational phase, the Agency's staff and senior management have proven their resilience by efficiently embracing change and putting significant efforts to minimise disruptions and ensure business continuity.

The Agency has also made progress towards the implementation of the observations and recommendations from Internal Audit Service of the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors, albeit with delays in some areas. The implementation of outstanding recommendations will be given priority in 2024.

The Agency has continued to make progress in HR Management, with the adoption at the 97th Frontex Management Board of the Frontex HR Strategy, which will guide the management of HR matters in the coming years. The Agency has also made progress in recruitment, completing processes including the recruitment of 46 Fundamental Rights Monitors, as foreseen by the Regulation as well as the recruitment and onboarding of the new batches of EBCG standing corps.

Besides, the Agency has further progressed in the area of finance management by optimising its budget management processes, which has contributed to more effective budget implementation, efficient use of resources and enhanced regulatory compliance.

The Agency enhanced its focus on the aspects of transparency and accountability by reinforcing its communication with the European Parliament by sharing reports on its ongoing operational activities, implementing the new Communications Strategy, enhancing the transparency function at strategic level of management and prioritising open dialogue with the public and its key stakeholders.

Part II b - External evaluations

Evaluation of the design and functioning of the networks of liaison officers

An independent evaluation of the design and functioning of the networks of the FLOs was commissioned to an external contractor - the consortium composed of Ramboll Management Consulting and Tetra Tech International Development. The evaluation was completed in October 2023.

The table below summarises the **recommendations and steps taken** following the evaluation.

Recommendations concerning the internal dimension of the FLOs Network	
Recommendation	Steps taken following the evaluation
1 To increase the number of FLOs deployed in TC to cover more regions of strategic importance for the EU's effective response to migration and security challenges.	The recommendation is being implemented in line with the International Cooperation Strategy and the necessary consultations with the relevant third countries, EEAS, and the Commission.

3	To revise the FLOs monthly report structure and content (output) to increase their relevance and quality.	Internal consultations launched.
4	To consider the feasibility of increasing the administrative support for FLOs to alleviate their administrative burden allowing them to focus on their tasks.	Additional staff at the HQ is providing additional support to FLOs.
5	To institutionalise information exchange and networking among FLOs.	The HQ supports more information exchange between FLOs, and it convenes FLO meetings.
11	To set up a monitoring system (taking into consideration both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of FLOs' activities) to better monitor activities and outputs of FLOs.	This recommendation, which is connected with No. 3, will lead to the development of some qualitative and quantitative indicators. In addition, FLOs performance has been assessed through monitoring missions.
12	To systematise the recruitment, training, and handover processes for the (re)deployment of FLOs, especially to Member States, as part of the rotation policy.	The ED decision on rotation policy for FLOs in MS as a Pilot process is being implemented and an overarching policy applicable to all FLOs is being drafted. Pre-deployment trainings are also being implemented.
Recommendations concerning the external dimension of the FLOs Network possible implications for the Member States		
Recommendation		Steps taken following the evaluation
2	To revise the current clustering of FLOs in the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries to ensure a more balanced and strategic distribution of countries per cluster.	Consultation with the MS is envisaged to redefine the FLOs clusters and align them to the new operational environment. As a result, MB Decision 14/2017 might need to be amended and with it relevant MoUs concluded with relevant MS. (TBC)
6	To organise more frequent internal knowledge sharing between FLOs and Frontex to ensure FLOs receive information in a timely manner.	Regular meetings have been already organised between FLOs, the Executive Affairs Office and line managers to keep FLOs informed on latest developments.
7	To support regional activities/events between MS/SAC to enhance regional cooperation.	FLOs to explore the interest of MS in the organisation by Frontex of any kind of meetings at regional level. Frontex to report back to the MB on the interest of MS for this type of multilateral meetings. (TBC)
8	To further strengthen cooperation and information sharing between the FLOs and EU services (i.e., EU Delegation/EMLOs) to reduce duplication and strengthen data collection.	FLOs have been requested to increase cooperation within EU Delegations and EMLOs. EU Delegations requested to exchange more information with FLOs and invited them to regular migration related meetings. Guidelines will be developed to streamline reporting and cooperation.
9	To ensure FLOs use the European Migration Network Information Exchange System (EMN IES) as per the ILO Regulation.	ILO mapping tool is being updated to reflect FLOs postings. HQ staff is attending EU ILO Steering Board meetings on the implementation of the ILO regulation. Some FLOs' reports are being uploaded on the platform.
10	To continue working together with other EU entities to find a solution for MS to implement Protocol (No) 7 of the TFEU for LOs.	Recent visit to EUAA took place to discuss their approach. The Management Board of EUAA included in an MB Decision an article on the Status of the Liaison Officers, referring to the privileges and immunities provided for in Protocol 7, followed by ongoing negotiations for additional agreement with each MS reinforcing the implementation of Protocol.

Table 17. Progress in implementation of recommendations following FLO network evaluation.

Part III - Assessment of effectiveness of internal control systems

3.1. Effectiveness of the internal control system

3.1.1. Methodology

The Authorising Officer, in the scope of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR), reports on the achievement of the strategic and horizontal objectives outlined in the Single Programming Document (SPD). The Authorising Officer is required to declare his or her assurance on the achievement of the objectives in line with article 30 of Frontex Financial Regulation. The assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Internal Control System is based on Frontex Internal Control Framework (ICF),¹⁵ in line with the European Commission Implementation Guidelines.

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.
II. Risk Assessment	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.
III. Control Activities	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.
IV. Information & Communication	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.
V. Monitoring Activities	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.

Table 18. Frontex internal control framework.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system, based on the Frontex Internal Control Framework, is carried out, pegging monitoring indicators, which are composed of soft indicators (SI 25%) and hard indicators (HI 75%), mapped to the ICF. Data is collected and subsequently analysed via surveys, reports, audit and evaluation results, review of exceptions and non-compliances, complaints, risks, opportunities, ex-post evaluations and other sources of information analysed within

¹⁵ Management Board Decision 32/2021 of 22 November 2017

the scope of the agency mandate, regulatory and geopolitical environment, to draw conclusions. Additionally, the exercise maps results from previous years to establish a trend and visibility on areas which are performing better or lagging year on year, while calculated with reference to the maximum possible scoring: no deficiencies. It is important to consider the level of deficiencies in context while allowing for the level of maturity of the agency, as well as its growth trajectory, since these elements are important in the overall assessment of the internal control system of an agency. Take for example conditions in which Frontex is evolving rapidly, working in line with its mandate and strategic and horizontal objectives, in a demanding geopolitical climate which should be considered in the overall assessment.

The assessment process follows a planned workflow and approval structure, and is performed according to the following steps:

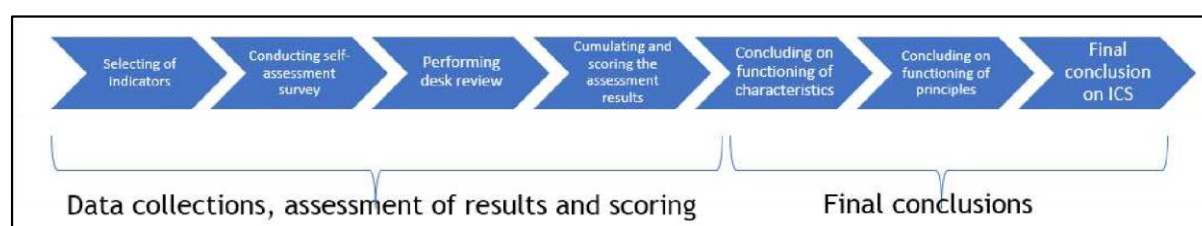


Figure 1. Process of the ICS assessment exercise.

The ICF **assessment matrix** is a tool which Frontex Internal Control uses to map the Internal Control Framework with over 50 queries linked to the components, principles, and characteristics of the ICF to the soft and hard indicators which results in a grading of monitoring indicators which is categorised and represented by scoring out of maximum of 12 with related percentage and level of deficiency.

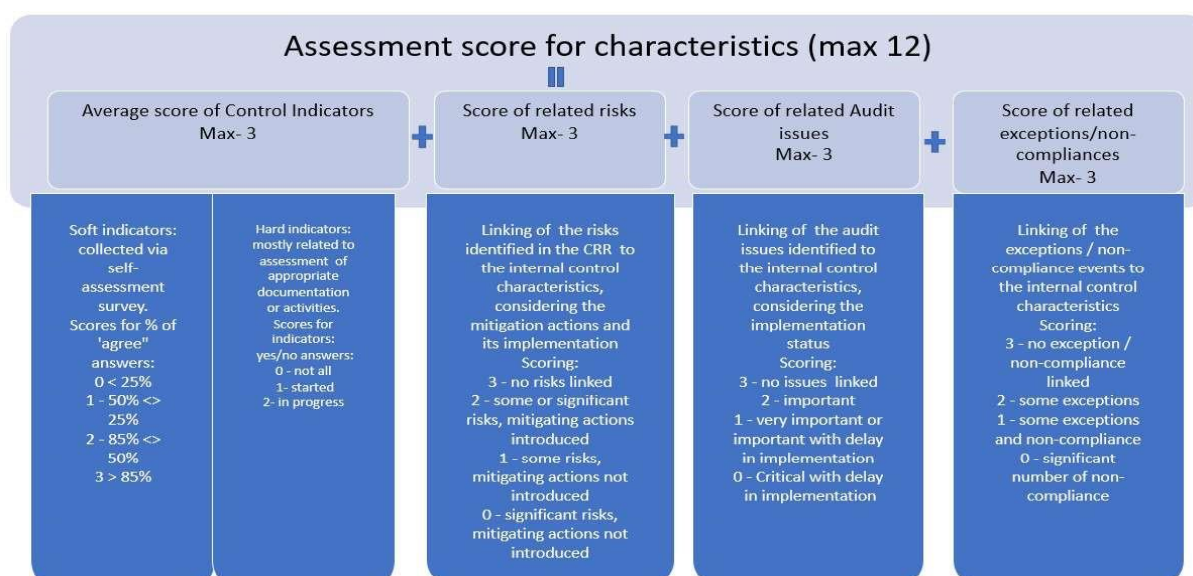


Figure 2. ICS Assessment Indicators

The resulting Internal Control Assessment Report 2024 - Annual Report on Internal Control in 2023 is therefore an extensive document which explains the background, the methodology, and scoring, and gives a statistical representation of the monitoring indicators mapped to the Internal Control Framework for the reporting year 2023 and contributes to this Consolidated Annual Activity Report. The Annual Report on Internal Control includes a comparison with previous years, with follow up on the action plan set out for 2023, followed by conclusions.

3.1.2. Assessment of the Internal Control System in 2023

The assessment for 2023 reveals the presence and functioning of the Internal Control System and shows an overall improvement compared to 2022. However, in the scope of continuous and ongoing

improvement, actions need to be carried over from 2023 to 2024. The responsibility of management for Internal Control actions related to their areas, in the scope of the three lines of defence model, should be highlighted.

All five components are present and functioning, each scoring in Category 1, which indicates that components are present and functioning well, and minor improvements are needed. The summary table below shows the final scores per ICF component.

While the components of the Internal Control Framework are present and functioning, it should be noted that there are still areas for improvement; it is important to note that there are actions which were not fully implemented in 2023 and will require further attention.

In 2024 the Agency will concentrate on the collection and submission of evidence to support the implementation of outstanding audit recommendations, which are prepared for closure.

Implementation of the Internal Control Action Plan 2023

In the ICS assessment 2022 improvement actions were proposed to strengthen the controls. At the end of 2023, certain actions were still ongoing and therefore their implementation will also be tracked in 2024¹⁶ as outlined in the Annual Report on Internal Control in 2023.

Actions which were not implemented in 2023, but are ongoing:

-Related to IAS Audit on Governance, Stakeholder Management and Communication:

- ✓ To adopt and implement (internal) corporate information management strategy. (Recommendation is Open)
- ✓ To adopt and implement an external communication policy, including stakeholders' management. (Recommendation is Open)
- ✓ Establish and Maintain a Business Process Management Framework (Recommendation is Open)
- ✓ Develop and implement Project Management Methodology (Recommendation is Open)
- ✓ Monitor periodically Frontex's projects at corporate level by developing a dashboard (presenting projects' KPIs) addressed to executive management. (Recommendation is Open)
- ✓ FISROP kept up to date to reflect the structural changes and ensure the correct division of the responsibilities between staff. (Recommendation is Open)

It should be noted that in 2024, the Agency will focus on the timely implementation of audit recommendations.

3.1.3. Implementation of the Agency's anti-fraud strategy

Frontex has in place an Anti-Fraud Strategy 2022-2024 and Anti-Fraud Action Plan which is monitored regularly and updated annually. Reporting on the status of achievement of the milestones in the Anti-Fraud Action Plan is submitted regularly to senior management. The most recent status update was submitted for the Management Board meeting on 22-23 November 2023.

The Anti-Fraud Strategy 2022-2024 is available on the Inspection and Control Portal. In parallel, all newcomers receive training on Ethics and Integrity delivered by the Head of the Inspection and Control Office. [Frontex Anti-Fraud Strategy 2022-2024](#) is also available for public access in English and EU Languages.

The mailbox whistleblowing@frontex.europa.eu is available for either anonymous or identifiable declarations. The mailbox is monitored daily by the Inspection and Control Office acting as the point of contact for Frontex with OLAF on fraud investigations.

¹⁶ Internal Control System Assessment 2024 - Annual Report on Internal Control in 2023 (Ares) 2024 1741966, 06/03/2024

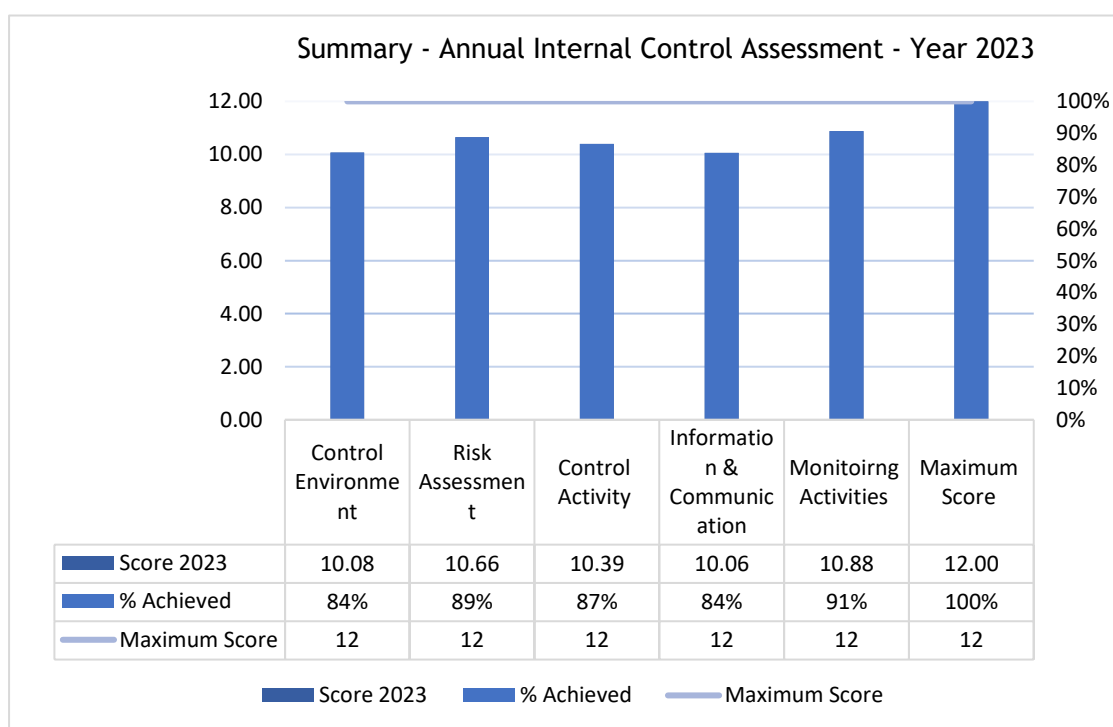
3.2. Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The Internal Control Assessment for 2023 reveals that the application and functioning of the Internal Control System show an overall improvement compared to 2022. It is noted that in the scope of continuous and ongoing improvement actions need to be carried over from 2023 to 2024. The importance of the management's role in Internal Control related to their areas, and as a collaborative effort with the Internal Control Function should be highlighted.

All five components of Frontex ICF are present and functioning, as below:

- I- Control Environment - at 10.08 (Category 1), - Present and functioning well, **minor** improvements are needed.
- II- Risk Assessment - 10.66 (Category 1) - Present and functioning well, **minor** improvements are needed.
- III- Control Activities - 10.39 (Category 1) - Present and functioning well, **minor** improvements are needed.
- IV- Information and Communication - 10.06 (Category 1)- Present and functioning well, **minor** improvements are needed.
- V- Monitoring Activities - 10.88 (Category 1) - Present and functioning well, **minor** improvements are needed.

In conclusion, the system of internal controls was effective in 2023. This should be taken in consideration of analysis and remarks outlined in this report, as well at the related comparison to previous years.



Graph 5. Summary % Achievement, Maximum Score 12

3.3. Statement of the Head of Inspection and Control Office

I, the undersigned,

Head of Inspection and Control Office, manager in charge of risk management and internal control within Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, 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 2023 and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.

Electronically signed

Michael Juritsch,

25/03/2024

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 for fundamental rights.

The Agency's Internal Control Framework is based on standards laid down by the European Commission. Frontex has in place measures to ensure legality and regularity, such as financial matrix, ex ante verification; the ex-post controls and evaluations, Inspections and Controls, systematic registration of exceptions and non-compliance; delegations of the powers and segregation of duties, all embedded in the different areas of the Frontex activities. The accountant checks legality and regularity and annual statement of accounts. With regards to scrutiny there is Frontex Internal Audit Capability, as well as Internal Audit Service and European Court of Auditors scrutiny. Fundamental Rights Officer exercises oversight on fundamental rights. In parallel, the Data Protection Office is in place, as are the results of the self-assessment on Internal Control, and the opinions expressed in the final reports and by internal and external auditors. Annual self-assessment is also carried out on the presence and functioning of the components of the Internal Control Framework.

It can therefore 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 2023.

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 Deputy Executive Directors and 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, confirm that the state of internal control in their division during 2023 was duly reported, and the information provided and represented in this Consolidated Annual Activity Report is accurate and complete.

Following these statements, and the outcome of the overall internal control assessment process for year 2023, it can be concluded that the internal control standards are present and functioning effectively.

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 while some areas for improvement were identified, notably the level of exceptions and non-compliance as a ratio to payments could be improved.

Part V - Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned, the Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency since 1 March 2023, 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;
- Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the Agency.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment of the Internal Control System, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, the Internal Audit Capability of Frontex, and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report of Frontex for the financial year 2023 and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, and on the basis of the assurance given to me, accurate and complete.

Electronically signed
Hans Leijtens
Executive Director

18/04/2024