

1. The creation of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice was closely linked to the incorporation of Schengen acquis to *acquis communautaire* in 1999. Implementation of free movement of people meant in one of its aspects the abolishment of border checks between Member States. Enhancing cooperation of law enforcement bodies across Europe was an obvious consequence of that step. European security architecture has been gradually developed through everyday Schengen cooperation, legal acts and political guidelines. From November 2004 when The Hague Programme was accepted by the Council, broad security concept is being created in the European Union through strengthening freedom, security and justice in Member States and Schengen Associated Countries.

Border security being a part of that phenomenon has also undergone an evolution starting from nationally focused systems underlying the sovereignty of each state to operational cooperation at the external borders. National border security systems are being complemented by a unified set of effective tools to manage potential risks at the external borders. Frontex was created particularly to integrate national border security systems of Member States against all kind of threats that could happen on or through the external border of the European Union.

2. Frontex promotes a pan European model of Integrated Border Management, which consists not only of border controls but also other important elements. Effective protection of border does not start at the border and does not finish there.

Exhaustive model of border management represents five dimensions:

- border control, including relevant risk analysis and crime intelligence,
- detection and investigation of cross border crime in coordination with all competent law enforcement authorities,
- the four-tier access control model (measures in third countries, cooperation with neighbouring countries, border control, control measures within the area of free movement, including return),

- inter-agency cooperation for border management (border guards, customs, police, national security and other relevant authorities) and international cooperation,
- coordination and coherence of the activities of Member States and Institutions and other bodies of the Community and the Union.

One of the key elements of the EU strategy to secure external borders was the creation of a body, i.e. Frontex that coordinates and enhances border security by ensuring the coordination of Member States' operational cooperation. Frontex is a community body having legal personality as well as operational and budgetary autonomy. It is governed by its Management Board, which consists of operational heads of national border guard services and 2 representatives of the European Commission.

3. In the heart of all activities of the agency is *Carrying out risk analysis*. Frontex assesses threats, looking at vulnerabilities, and weighing consequences. Thus the agency has to balance and prioritize the resources against risks so that it can ensure the right amount of protection for Member States without under-protecting, but also without overprotecting.

Frontex provides for *Coordination of operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders*. Strengthening border security by ensuring the coordination of Member States' actions in the implementation of Community measures is the main goal. To fulfil this task Frontex is seeking to introduce solutions allowing better allocation of Member States' resources.

Next issue for Frontex is *Assistance to Member States in the training of national border guards, including the establishment of common training standards*. The Common Core Curriculum developed by Frontex will form the basis of this system. This new European Curriculum will be the first common curriculum including common skills and competencies for basic training of border guards across Europe. Apart from basics, Frontex develops also specialised training tools supporting operational activities such as helicopter pilots, falsified documents, stolen cars training activities or dog handlers.

*Following up the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders* is the subsequent task of the Agency. By doing that Frontex strengthens border control capabilities of the Member States through informing them on modern technologies and products available, as well as ensuring that specific interests of border guard authorities are properly taken into account in security research.

*Assistance to Member States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders* is another Frontex mission for Frontex. In order to support Member States in exceptional and urgent situations pre-positioned and pre-structured rapid intervention packages were created with the Regulation establishing Rapid Border Intervention Teams. These corps are composed of national Border Guards having right to act on the territory of other Member States.

*Providing Member States with the necessary support in organizing joint return operations* is the last but not the least challenge for Frontex. The role of the Agency in joint returns is rather limited and concentrated on assistance to Member States. Besides, Frontex, together with the national experts, is identifying best practices on the acquisition of travel documents and the removal of illegal third country nationals.

4. Illegal migration routes to the EU countries can be divided into four main routes. One of them is international airports in all EU countries. Three others are as follows:

4.1. The Balkan route starts in Turkey and continues through Bulgaria, Serbia, BiH, Croatia and Slovenia to Central Europe. Over years it has been one of the most important land routes used by illegal migrants from countries like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and China but also from countries along the route from the Western Balkan region use this route.

The latest enlargement of the EU in the beginning of 2007 has changed the classic Balkan route, since it is now highly unlikely that illegal migrants would transit through Bulgaria and Romania to any of the neighbouring countries of the Western Balkans. As well as being a region of origin for illegal migration, the Western Balkans is also an important transit region for illegal migrants smuggled from other countries.

The main source of illegal migration in the Balkans is the UN-administered Kosovo area, where the absence of a visa regime and the very generous rules for entry and stay in Kosovo act as a pull factor for illegal migrants en route to the EU, adding to the indigenous illegal migration.

The main high-risk routes that have been identified originate in Albania and pass through either Kosovo-Serbia-Croatia or through Montenegro-Serbia-Croatia, towards Slovenia, Hungary or Italy.

The main nationalities using this route originating from the Western Balkan area like Albania, BIH, Montenegro, Serbia, FYROM or Croatia, or using the area as a transit are. Those nationals are citizens from Asian, African and to lesser extent nationals from Middle East countries.

In this regard the Slovenian-Croatian border is highly affected by illegal migration pressure, although a decrease has been noticed in the last years at this specific border section.

Airports in the area play a significant role acting both as entry, exit and transit points. They either feed the land routes or are fed by them.

In the Western Balkan area the main airports affected by illegal migration are the airports of Pristina in UN – administrated Kosovo or Banja Luka in as well as Sarajevo in BIH or Belgrade in Serbia are of concern.

4.2. At the EU borders of the Member States in the Eastern European Region illegal migration pressure has decreased in 2007, but its main characteristics have remained unchanged.

In the Central European region the Member States having a common land border with Ukraine are facing the highest migration pressure. The majority of nationalities from Asia and the CIS countries transit via Ukraine towards Slovakia, Poland or Hungary with the aim to travel on to the Schengen area crossing the Austrian or German land border.

The highest numbers of illegal migrants attempt to cross the green border with Slovakia, then towards Poland. The main nationalities detected at the external EU land borders with Ukraine are Moldavians, Ukrainians, Indians, Bangladeshis, Chinese, Pakistanis, Georgians and Palestinians. In Hungary illegal migration clearly targets the border crossing points.

The vast majority of these illegal migrants attempted to enter the EU along the green border of Slovakia, Poland, and at the border with Hungary. As a general rule, illegal migrants from Asia and the CIS countries that successfully crossed the EU borders are usually transiting towards the Schengen area where they make use, as entry points in most cases, of Austria or Germany.

The overall conclusion regarding the land borders is that illegal migration pressure - evident for many years - although slightly decreasing in overall figures remains with insignificant substantive changes, as it was described in the respective regional assessments.

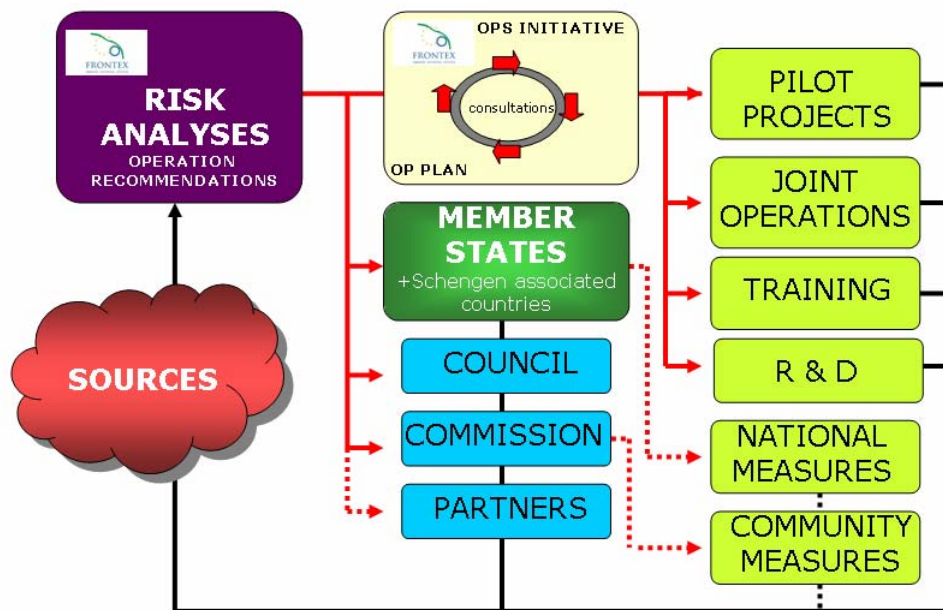
Due to the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU these nationals will no longer appear in the statistics of illegal entry and stay which will lead to a significant overall decrease in 2007.

4.3.1 The Western African route affects Spain, on its Almeria Coast. It is used by Sub-Saharan African or Maghreban migrants departing from fishing ports of Algeria or from Northern-Eastern Morocco. This route was formerly a land route affecting the BCPs of Ceuta and Melilla. After the reinforcement of the fences around these Spanish cities, the flow shifted to the North African shore where they board on little embarkations

4.3.2 The Atlantic route is used by clandestine immigrants, having boarded “*pateras*” or “*cayucos*”, originated mostly from Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Mauritania. It is worth mentioning that more and more Asian migrants, mainly from the Indian sub-continent, are gathering in Guinea Conakry and Bissau in order to wait for an opportunity to board on larger boats to Europe. Thanks to a good cooperation of Senegal and Mauritania and the implementation of Joint Operation HERA 2007 the flow incoming from his route dropped to 60 % if compared with the figures in 2006.

4.3.3 The Central African and Mediterranean route is taken by Sub-Saharan African nationals who are first gathering in Niger before crossing the Libyan desert with the help of human traffickers. After a long trip they board on shipping boats in Libyan ports of the Cyrenaica or Tripolitania coasts or from ports from North-Eastern Tunisia. This flow is affecting the Pelagic Islands (*i.e.* the Italian Islands of Lampedusa or Pantelleria) and Malta. It is less important than the previous one but difficult to thwart because of the impossibility, for the time being, to send back the illegal migrants to Libya.

5. Activities coordinated by Frontex are intelligence driven and has its specific life cycle.



6. Fundamental idea of Rapid Border Intervention Teams was to create such a mechanism that could allow, in case of urgent and exceptional migratory pressure, rapid deployment of border guards on a European level. Rapid Border Intervention Teams are intended to provide short-term assistance. The responsibility for the control and surveillance of the external borders remains to lie with the Member States.

Members of the Rapid Border Intervention Teams are officers of national law enforcement bodies responsible for border management like border guards, police officers or immigration officers. Frontex established and maintain the Rapid Pool, which is composed of all national expert pools of the Member States. The overall number of border guards to be made available by the Member States via their national expert pools for the Rapid Pool is between 500 and 600 officers.

The profiles of border guards being members of the Rapid Border Intervention Teams are composed of basic qualifications, core competences and operational skills. Members of the teams may only perform tasks and exercise powers under instruction from and, as a general rule, in the presence of border guards of the host Member State. They have the capacity to perform all tasks and exercise all powers for border checks or border surveillance in accordance with the Schengen Borders Code, and that are necessary for the realisation of the objectives of the RABITs Regulation.

Members of the teams have the power to carry out border control as defined in the Schengen Borders Code:

- border checks
- border surveillance
- stamping
- interviewing undocumented persons
- consultation of databases

The certain, concrete tasks of deployed Rapid Border Intervention Teams will be clearly defined, case by case, in the agreed Operational Plan. These tasks defined in the plan depend on the operational aim within the frame of the legal powers.

Members of the teams wear their national uniform while performing their tasks and exercise their powers. In order to be recognised they wear also a blue armband with the insignia of the European Union and Frontex on their uniforms, identifying them as participating in a deployment of the teams. For the purpose of identification vis-à-vis the national authorities of the host Member State and its citizens, members of the teams carry an accreditation document provided by Frontex.

The concept of RABITs is used by Frontex also to develop so called Frontex Joint Support Teams, which are used in regular joint operations not demanding fast reaction time.



7. Centralised Records of Available Technical Equipment (CRATE) being created by Frontex, include equipment for control and surveillance of external border belonging to Member States of the European Union, which they on voluntary basis and upon request from another Member States are willing to put at the disposal of that Member State for a temporary period. Having been created, the technical records enhance Frontex coordinated joint operations as they reduce the necessity of ad hoc requests for technical assets.

The CRATE contains equipment belonging to Member States, which they, on a voluntary basis and upon a request from another Member State, are willing to put at the disposal of that Member State. These means will always be deployed temporarily. The necessity for using the equipment will follow from an analysis of operational needs and risks carried out by Frontex. These records facilitate the operations, enabling faster deployment and more extensive technical support.

CRATE could be seen as entirety together with FJSTs and RABITs.

8. In 2007 Frontex has organised almost 30 joint operations and pilot projects at all kind of borders: air, land and maritime. There are similar plans for 2008 as an answer to illegal migrations identified by Frontex risk analysis.

9. Apart from coordinating cooperation of EU Member States, Frontex also pays attention to cooperation with third countries in line with general EU guidelines. Concentrating on third countries that share common goals in terms of border security with the EU, such cooperation is targeted to sustainable partnership. In the gradual process, in which such partnership is developed, working arrangements are concluded between Frontex and its third country partner in accordance with the relevant provisions of Frontex Regulation always precede practical measures.

Frontex coordinated operational cooperation with third countries is exercised and developed gradually and is always targeted at sustainable partnership. Each third country partner is considered individually.

Frontex activities regarding third country cooperation must always align with general EU guidelines concerning external relations. Frontex performs its duties with and in third countries that have common goals in terms of border security. Prior to taking practical measures, purely technical working arrangements between Frontex and its third country partner are concluded according to specific provisions of the Management Board.

So far Frontex concluded memoranda of understanding with Russia, Ukraine and Switzerland. The agreement with Croatia is to be signed soon, discussions has started with several other countries like: Cape Verde, Mauritania, Senegal, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Turkey, FYROM or Georgia.

10. Frontex is a facilitator and coordinator of operational coordination between border control authorities of the EU Member States. All activities of Frontex are intelligence driven. Frontex primary aim is to contribute to improvement of the professionalism of Member States' border guards, thereby enabling the Integrated Border Management to function better.