



Press Release

Luxembourg, 30 January 2020

Frontex's performance probed by EU Auditors

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has launched an audit to examine whether the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) has so far provided effective support to Member States in the implementation of European Integrated Border Management.

Today, the auditors have published an audit preview on Frontex. Audit previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited.

Frontex (from the French “frontières extérieures”) was set up in 2004 to manage operational cooperation at the EU’s external borders. Its establishment was considered a crucial step towards the development of integrated border management in the EU and its role, budget and resources have grown progressively since. After the 2015 peak in migration, its powers were bolstered and the agency effectively became the European Border and Coast Guard. Its yearly subsidy from the EU budget has grown considerably, from €137 million in 2015 to €322 million in 2020. At the same time, the European Commission gave the “new” agency the green light to recruit 1 000 people by 2020.

New rules, which entered into force in December 2019, are set to boost the agency’s powers further. They also propose to lift its budget to €11 billion for the 2021-2027 period – mainly to set up the 10 000-strong standing corps of border guards from Member States and to purchase new equipment – and increase its own staff numbers to 3 000 in the next few years.

“Frontex plays a pivotal role in achieving integrated management of the EU’s external borders and has become an important actor in migration management on the European stage,” said Leo Brincat, the ECA Member responsible for the audit. “Our audit will ascertain whether it is carrying out its tasks effectively.”

The auditors will examine whether Frontex’s primary activities support EU integrated border management effectively, in particular whether:

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ audit preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.

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- its monitoring of the situation on the EU's external borders enables swift and well-targeted responses to border incidents;
- its risk analyses and vulnerability assessments of Member States' capacities to manage their borders are useful tools for protecting EU borders;
- its operational response contributes to the development of an EU integrated border management.

The audit report is expected to be published in 2021.

Notes to editors

The EU has over 42 000 km of coastline, almost 9 000 km of land borders and around 300 international airports.

Since the Schengen convention entered into force in 1995, the EU has aimed to create an area of freedom, security and justice. The goal was to do away with internal border checks, while at the same time addressing serious cross-border threats and challenges, such as crime and migration, through an integrated external border management strategy.

Frontex carries out four primary activities which should contribute to the implementation of integrated border management: situation monitoring, with which it attempts to give an up-to-date picture of the EU's external borders and migration situation; risk analysis and assessment of the Member States' capacity to manage their borders; operational response, to curb illegal immigration, combat cross-border crime and enhance coast guard cooperation; return support for third-country nationals.

The ECA recently issued special reports on [Schengen border control systems](#) and [migration management](#) in Greece and Italy, and will audit return support in the near future.

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