



EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OPERATIONAL  
COOPERATION AT THE EXTERNAL BORDERS OF THE MEMBER STATES  
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (FRONTEX)

Warsaw, 08/10/2014

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Subject : HERA– Operational Plan

### Legal Basis

According to Article 2, paragraph 1.e) and Article 8 of the Council Regulation 2007/2004 establishing FRONTEX Agency, with a view to improving the integrated management of the external borders of the Member States of the European Union, the Agency may be confronted with requests of Member States for assistance. Such a request has been already addressed to FRONTEX by Spain seeking for further assistance.

### Situation

The migration situation at the Southern Maritime Borders has certainly become an issue of increasing concern for all EU Member States. The Canary Islands, in the Atlantic Ocean, have in recent months become a prime destination point for illegal immigrants leaving Mauritania and Senegal. This route has become more utilised by the smuggling networks as a result of the “displacement effect” caused by the countermeasures taken by the Spanish Government in strengthening border security at the external Spanish EU borders in Ceuta and Melilla, the Straits of Gibraltar and Andalucía.

This new route targets the most outlying Canary Islands, mainly Tenerife, now more possible to reach following the use by the smugglers of higher performance small boats, which are made of fibreglass and provided with better communications, notably the Global Positioning System (GPS).

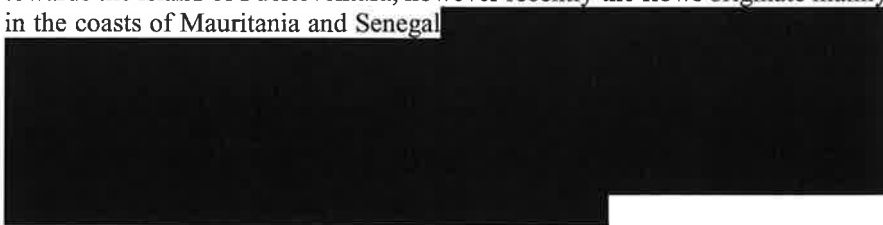
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. Additional assistance will be offered by the foreseen As the Spanish Authorities do not have sufficient available means (e.g., off-shore-patrol vessels, patrol aircrafts, helicopters, mobile radar systems as well as any other relevant surveillance techniques), it is requested to provide them for a limited period of time deployment of a FRONTEX JOINT SUPPORT TEAM. Within this context FRONTEX has addressed other Member States and Schengen Associated countries with major maritime borders to support Spain in offering their means and experts.

Within this context, a fact finding mission was sent by FRONTEX to Spain (Madrid and Tenerife) on 29 and 30 May 2006. The main aim of this mission was to hold bilateral meetings with the Spanish Authorities and travel to the region in order to explore the most important needs. Based on the results of this mission, a conference will take place in June with the aim to explore how the needs of Spain could meet with the possible contributions to solutions and means offers by other Member States. Deadline given to MS to forward their contributions to FRONTEX is the 2 June 2006.

#### Outcomes of the Fact Finding Mission

During the past years the immigration flows originated in the coasts of Morocco towards the island of Fuerteventura, however recently the flows originate mainly in the coasts of Mauritania and Senegal



The journeys take place along the coasts for security and fuel supply reasons, nevertheless the authorities cannot exclude the possibility of taking place also at the high seas, getting fuel supplies at sea, although they have no substantial evidence for this fact.

The “Cayucos” are fishing boats used by the local fishermen. For the journeys to the Canary Islands a three-member crew of experienced fishermen board them

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and trace the route by using GPS devices. [REDACTED]

According to available information, there are a lot of accidents due to the overloading of the boats with passengers and supplies. Currently, the majority of the boats' arrivals take place at the islands of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, while fewer arrivals are noticed at the islands of La Gomera and El Hierro. 99% of the boats are intercepted at sea perhaps because they seek for their own interception. Then they are escorted by vessels of Guardia Civil and the Service responsible for search and rescue, until they reach the port. Afterwards they are handed over to the National Police.

In summary, three of the main problems identified by the Spanish Authorities are the following ones:

The identification of the country of origin of the illegal immigrants in order to repatriate them [REDACTED]

The identification of facilitators.

The lack of cooperation from the African countries concerned while issuing the travel documents or taking their nationals back.

Performance of return operations and joint flights.

#### The Authorities' requests condense into:

The mission of experts with thorough knowledge of Western Africa in order to be able to identify the immigrants' nationality and countries of origin ([REDACTED]).

Transmission of every kind of information from Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Guinea Conakry, related to the issue.

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## GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Cooperation of the EU Member States, following the principles established in Hague Program of subsidiary, proportionality and solidarity together through the cooperation among the different police forces in the work of the external borders of the Members States of the European Union and FRONTEX.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

To assist Spain in dealing with the migration situation in the area of the Canary Islands

Perform additional assistance to Spain by the deployment of a support team

Detect the different means and ways of entrance used by the criminal networks trafficking with human been.

To find the right identification of the people who are under custody in Canary Islands and remove them to their respective countries.

## Organisation

Project Manager – [REDACTED]

Co-Project Manager – [REDACTED]

1st Phase – start on the 15th July 2006 – to 15th August = 30 days

2nd Phase – according with the flux of arrivals of illegal immigrants to Canary Islands costs.

90 days total – divided in several periods

Foment the exchange relationships between expert officers of the different participating countries in relation to identifications of nationals from African countries and removals and who will carry out supporting operative tasks, learning each other the different techniques applied on their home countries.

## Operational initiative

A meeting with all the Member States was held in Madrid on the 20th of June. In this meeting, chaired by FRONTEX (Deputy Executive Director) was delivered an informative paper with proposals from Member States send to FRONTEX, wishing to cooperate with Spain with Human Resources, Equipment and Intelligence and information chairing.

A formal proposal from Spain was presented to the Member States.

Urgent need of a time of experts to Canary Islands in order to identify the nationalities and countries of origin of 2100 illegal immigrants waiting in the reception centres.

The experts should have thorough knowledge of Western Africa in order to be able to identify the immigrants' nationality.

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At the meeting of 20th of June, FRONTEX proposed to Spain, a co-financing of 1,3000,000.00 euros for the overall of the project (HERA I and HERA II), and considering the MS proposals in equipment and respective daily running costs:

**FRONTEX Proposal (on the 20th June 2006 Madrid meeting)**

Equipment: 1 (one) Coastal Patrol Vessel operating 24 hours (28 days)  
                  1 (one) Open Patrol Vessel operating 24 hours (28 days)  
                  1 (one) Aircraft (28 days)  
                  1 (one) Mobile RLS (28 days)  
Human Resources: 10 (ten) experts in shifts in 3 months duration  
Promote the sharing of information and intelligence  
The Operational Plan to be elaborated by Spain and approved by FRONTEX

**Operational phase**

3.1. 1st Secondment of MS officers to Canary Islands – 15th July 2006  
Officers from Portugal, France, Germany, and Italy will be seconded  
To cooperate with the local authorities in identifying the immigrants' nationality and countries of origin.

The function of the invited officers is to make interviews of those unidentified illegal immigrants who arrive to Canary Islands when there is a massive arrival of these people in a very short period of time, collaborating with the Spanish officers who are use to do this work along the year.

The action will be focused on the development of the Operation objectives in order to fulfill them there should be taken the following actions:

Carry out interviews of the illegal immigrants made by experts on identification of people from African countries.

To establish the corresponding communications with the own databases, in case of necessity to search additional antecedents or trails about a foreigner person.

3.2. 2nd secondment of MS officers to Canary Islands – Date to define accordingly with the flux of arrivals of immigrants.

3.3 Secondment of FRONTEX expert to Canary Islands – 15th July 2006  
To cooperate with local authorities in identifying the immigrants' nationality and countries of origin  
To coordinate operational cooperation at local level and be in daily contact with project manager in Warsaw.

### **. Evaluation phase**

Project and Co-Project Manager

To receive feed-back from participants.

To evaluate the feed-back.

To evaluate the cooperation between participating States.

To evaluate the added value of the Joint Operation

RAU

To receive feed-back in view of future risk analyses.

Operational action phase: There will be established the following operational phases:

### **Participant countries**

**Portugal** - One Expert in false and falsified documents [REDACTED] - From 15th August to 15th September

**Germany** - One Expert - [REDACTED] - From 7 August to 1 September

**Italy** - One Expert - [REDACTED] - From 14th August to 31st August

One Expert - [REDACTED] - From 1st September to 15th September

**France** - Two experts - From 15th August to 15th September

**Netherlands** - Two experts - [REDACTED] - From 15th August to 15th September

### **COORDENATION**

#### **Spanish authorities are requested to:**

Send daily reports and incident reports to FRONTEX Project Manager in order to inform about operational activity and cooperate with FRONTEX coordination and evaluation.

Support at local level the MS experts, with phone and internet access

Fulfil FRONTEX minimum requirements already for Joint Operations

#### **Participating countries are requested to**

- Assure that their experts are able to make a practical and immediate check to national data-base (namely residents, asylum seekers, etc)

### **Evaluation phase**

Project and Co-Project Manager

To receive feed-back from participants.

To evaluate the feed-back.

To evaluate the cooperation between participating States.

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To evaluate the added value of the Joint Operation  
RAU  
To receive feed-back in view of future risk analyses.

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