

LIMITED



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OPERATIONS DIVISION
Joint Operations Unit
LAND BORDERS SECTOR

Operational Plan

Main part

**JO Flexible Operational Activities 2017 Land
on Border Surveillance
2017/LBS/01**

Approved by

.....
Signature
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Deputy Executive Director

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Operational Plan, composed of the Main part and Annexes, was agreed with the authorities of the host Member State (MS), after consultation with the participating Member States² (MSs).

The Operational Plan, marked as [REDACTED], may only be made available to the authorities referred in each MS as "Law Enforcement". It shall be made available to other interested parties only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with European and national rules on the protection of sensitive information. Such dissemination shall be done only on a case-by-case basis.

Amendments to the Operational Plan require the agreement of the Executive Director and the host Member State, after consultation of the participating Member States.

A copy of the amended Operational Plan shall be immediately distributed by Frontex to the participating MS via Frontex-One-Stop-Shop (FOSS).

Updates to the plan of Deployed Assets Resources (Annex 7) and to the Contact Details (Annex 11) are not deemed amendments to the Operational Plan.

The Handbook referred to in the Operational Plan contains the guidelines and complementary information in regard to Frontex operational activities, services and products, reporting platforms and other joint operations' related matters. References to the Handbook are made in the Main part and Annexes of the Operational Plan. The Handbook is uploaded on FOSS.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Frontex

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency ('Frontex') has its legal base in the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation³. The Regulation contains, besides the legal basis, also the objectives, tasks and responsibilities of Frontex.

The agency was established to ensure, together with national authorities responsible for border management, including coast guards to the extent that they carry out border control tasks, the effective implementation of the European integrated border management with a view to managing the crossing of external borders efficiently. Frontex is responsible for organising the appropriate technical and operational assistance for the EU Member States and, in particular, for coordinating joint operations, deploying European Border and Coast Guard teams and technical equipment at the external borders. Frontex is also mandated to provide technical and operational assistance to Member States and third countries, in support of search and rescue operations for persons in distress at sea which may arise during border surveillance operations at sea.

2.2. Fundamental Rights

2.2.1. Frontex' obligations

Frontex guarantees the protection of fundamental rights in the performance of its tasks in accordance with the relevant EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the relevant international law, including the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, the respect for fundamental rights, in particular the access to international protection, and the compliance with the principle of non-refoulement, and taking into account the recommendations of the Frontex Consultative Forum on fundamental rights.

² For the purposes of the present document, the term "Member State" includes also the States participating in the relevant development of the Schengen acquis in the meaning of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and its Protocol (No 19) on the Schengen acquis integrated into the framework of the European Union, that is Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland.

³ Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European border D Coast Guard amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC (OJ L 251, 16.09.2016, p.1)

The European Border and Coast Guard Regulation requires Frontex to put in place an effective mechanism to monitor the respect for fundamental rights in all its activities. Frontex developed a Fundamental Rights Strategy, adopted a Frontex Code of Conduct applicable to all persons participating in Frontex activities and established a complaints mechanism. The Frontex Code of Conduct lays down procedures intended to guarantee the principle of rule of law and the respect for and promotion of fundamental rights with particular focus on unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable persons, as well as on persons seeking international protection, including the obligation of referral to national authorities competent for receiving asylum requests.

Furthermore, Frontex is obliged to ensure that all border guards and other personnel of the Member States, who participate in the European Border and Coast Guard Teams, as well as Frontex staff members, have received, prior to their participation in operational activities, a training in relevant EU and international law, including fundamental rights and access to international protection and maritime law.

Finally and pursuant to the provisions of the Article 25(4) of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, Frontex has the obligation to suspend or terminate its operational activity in case of serious or persistent violations of fundamental rights or international protection obligations.

2.2.2. Obligations of all persons involved in operational activities coordinated by Frontex

All persons involved in Frontex activities are obliged to maintain the highest standards of integrity, ethical conduct, professionalism and respect for fundamental rights. They are expected to meet obligations imposed upon them by the provisions of the present Operational Plan and are obliged to comply with the rules of their mandates. They are obliged to comply with European law, international law, fundamental rights and national law of the host Member State.

All persons involved in Frontex activities are expected to act responsibly and proportionately to the current operational objectives. While performing their duties, they shall not discriminate against persons on any grounds such as sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation. They are expected to treat every person with courtesy, respect and due consideration for the nature of any legitimate activity in which they are engaged. They are obliged to report all any alleged violation of fundamental rights that has occurred or is about to occur via the appropriate reporting channel.

The Code of Conduct can be found in Annex 1.

In addition to the obligations set forth above, all persons participating in the joint operation must act with discretion and with respect for the right to privacy of other persons. Unless explicitly authorized by the Frontex Coordinating Officer, it is forbidden to make any type of records (e.g. photos, videos) of the activities carried out under the joint operation for personal purposes.

2.2.3. Complaints Mechanism

Any person who is directly affected by the actions of staff involved in a joint operation, pilot project, rapid border intervention, migration management support team deployment, return operation or return intervention and who considers him or herself to have been the subject of a breach of his or her fundamental rights due to those actions, or any party representing such a person, may submit a complaint in writing to Frontex.

The procedures setting out the mechanism to receive and transmit to the Agency a complaint are provided in Annex 2.

3. DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

3.1. South-Eastern land borders

During 2016 a considerable decrease in the migratory pressure was reported from the Eastern Mediterranean region, including the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the land border sections. However it continues to be

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one of the most important regions for the entry of irregular migrants to the EU, mostly connected with illegal border-crossings from Turkey to Greece (sea and land borders) and Bulgaria (land border). In addition to the data reported on entry from Turkey to Bulgaria and Greece a high number of migrants were apprehended attempting to exit Bulgaria illegally to Serbia.

According to data reported in the Joint Operation Reporting Application (JORA) from 1 January until 12 December 2016 in the operational area of the JO FOA 2016 BCU (SE), a total of **15 806** irregular migrants were reported for crossing the border illegally (**2 385** migrants at the Bulgarian-Turkish land border, **10 799** at the Bulgarian-Serbian land border on exit and **2 622** migrants at the Greek-Turkish land border). The figures reported at the Greek and Bulgarian land borders with Turkey represent an **decrease of 41%** compared to the same period in 2015, when **8 522** irregular migrants were reported.

Of the total number of irregular migrants apprehended at the land borders in the operational area during the aforementioned period, **68%** were reported at the Bulgarian-Serbian border on exit, **17%** at the Greek-Turkish border, while **15%** were reported at the Bulgarian-Turkish border.

A comparison with the data reported at the Bulgarian Serbian border on exit is not possible as this border section was not part of the JO during 2015.

The special police operations in Greece and Bulgaria continued during 2016 with the same manpower deployed as during 2015. Both operations can be considered as the main factors in stemming the irregular migratory flow at these land border sections.

3.2. Western Balkans

The migration crisis, which developed in 2015, strongly affected the Western Balkan region. Because of that 2015 was an exceptional year in terms of the total number of irregular migrants apprehended along this route reaching a record high of 760 000 illegal border-crossings in 2015.

The situation in the first half of 2015 was relatively stable, but from June, a sharp rise in the migratory pressure was reported across the region. This triggered a number of high-level decisions and measures which at times caused the flow to either accelerate or displace to other border sections.

The situation also turned from a border management issue to a migration management one, as, in an attempt to avoid humanitarian problems and the pressure building up on their territories, the most affected countries began organising onward transportation for migrants which triggered an increase in the migratory flow.

After the closure of the Hungarian land border to Serbia in mid-September 2015, migration flows quickly shifted towards Croatia, where the local authorities were not able to cope with the sudden pressure posed by thousands of migrants arriving at its external border. In order to manage the migration crisis, Croatia organised bus and rail transport for these migrants in concert with the Slovenian and Austrian authorities to Germany making it possible for an estimated 300 000 migrants of unknown nationalities to enter the Schengen area without proper fingerprinting or registration.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia imposed stricter entry measures in mid-November 2015 in order to curb and stem migration flows. Thus, irregular migrants intending to transit via the Western Balkan corridor towards the EU were halted at the Greek-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian land border from travelling further north with the exception of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The need for a coordinated approach to the situation brought about several high-level meetings of regional and EU MS' officials in February 2016.

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On 22 February 2016, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia banned Afghan nationals from transiting through their country. Each meeting resulted in gradual transit restrictions at regional level culminating on 9 March with the complete closure of the transit corridor and the return to the full application of the Schengen Borders Code and legislation governing international travel. Later the conclusion of the EU - Turkey statement in March 2016 further mitigated irregular migration via Turkey to Greece and consequently to the Western Balkan region.

On account of the closure of the Western Balkan corridor, an estimated 50 000 migrants became stranded in Greece (most of them in the area close to Idomeni living in makeshift camps for several months at the Greek-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian border section). Most of these migrants were willing to continue their journey and were approached by members of people smuggling networks offering various alternatives to travel to the EU illegally. Later, due to the persisting migratory measures adopted at the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonian border the Greek authorities planned and carried out the relocation of these migrants to new/existing official camps most of which are not close to the external Greek border.

All the coordinated restriction measures and the ultimate return to the normal application of border legislation in the Western Balkans and in neighbouring EU MS greatly reduced the non-regional flow transiting the region. Specifically, the flow decreased month-on-month from 65 000 detections in January 2016 to roughly 1 000 in November 2016. However, the migration pressure along the Western Balkan route is still constant and since April it has been concentrated at the Hungarian land border with Serbia.

Since April 2016, the number of monthly apprehensions has been between 1 000 and 4 000.

It is to be noted that in reaction to the constant migration pressure, and because of the low number of migrants readmitted by the Serbian authorities, Hungary implemented a new law on 5 July 2016 permitting the authorities to escort all irregular migrants detected on its territory within 8 kilometres from the external border back to dedicated transit zones set up for this purpose.

From 1 January to 12 December 2016, more than 122 000 detections of illegal border-crossing were reported by the Hungarian and Croatian authorities at their land borders with Serbia. From January to April 2016, the number of migrant apprehensions rose steadily within the operational area of the JO FOA 2016 BCU (WB) and reached a peak during week 16, when 1 140 illegal border-crossings were reported. Since week 17 (end of April), the number of irregular migrant detections has fluctuated between 540 and 958 detections per week.

The main nationalities detected for illegal border-crossings from 1 January to 12 December 2016 at the Hungarian and Croatian borders with Serbia were Afghan 9 686, Pakistani 4 884, Syrian 2 341, Iraqi 2 186, Moroccan 821, Kosovo citizens 719 and Iranian 711, while the nationalities of 102 329 are unknown.

Thorough assessment of the situation can be found in the Annex 3.

4. OPERATIONAL AIM, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

4.1. Operational aim

The operational aim of the joint operation is to implement coordinated operational activities at the EU external land borders in order to control irregular migration flows towards the territory of the MS of the European Union (EU), to tackle cross-border crime and to enhance European cooperation.

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The operational aim will be implemented in full compliance with the relevant EU and international law, guaranteeing the respect for fundamental rights in particular the access to international protection and the compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and taking into account the recommendations of the Frontex Consultative Forum and the reports and observations of the Fundamental Rights Officer.

4.2. Operational objectives

- Enhance border security
- Enhance operational cooperation
- Enhance exchange of information, including personal data
- Identify possible risks and threats
- Establish and exchange best practices

Detailed information regarding operational objectives is provided in Annex 4.

4.3. Operational activities (concept)

The main objectives of the JO will be achieved by combining different types of operational activities, particularly:

- Border surveillance
- Gathering of information containing personal data through debriefing activities
- Supporting, screening, fingerprinting and registration of migrants

The aforementioned activities will be implemented by the deployed technical equipment and human resources (members of the border and coast guard teams), under the control and command of the structures of the Host Member States.

4.3.1. Border surveillance

Border surveillance shall be carried out by using the MS offered technical equipment. The main purpose of border surveillance is to prevent unauthorised border crossings, to counter cross-border criminality and to take measures against persons who have crossed the border illegally.

The officers of aerial assets should provide all details about occurring incidents they deal with (time and coordinates of detection and interception, numbers of migrants and possible detailed information in their possession) following the chain of reporting of the particular operation.

Border Surveillance of the land borders is accomplished by joint teams comprising officers from the border guard services of the host MSs, Members of the Teams with adequate profile to perform land border surveillance:

- to observe the border area by use of different technical means;
- to patrol the operational areas in joint teams in readiness to immediately react on detection/location following communication by the observation teams in order to prevent unauthorized border crossings, to detect and counter cross-border criminality and to take measures regarding persons who have crossed the border illegally;
- to communicate with the competent authorities of the host MSs regarding follow up measures after apprehension/detention;
- to refer persons in need of international protection, medical or other urgent assistance to the competent national authorities;
- to carry out security checks for detected migrants and belongings as well as supporting evidence collection, contributing to identification of migrants and intelligence gathering;

Commented [A1]: The non-disclosed text contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials. It contains references to the methods applied by law enforcement officers to perform border control tasks in general and to counter illegal activities in particular. Its publicity would expose the working methods applied in those activities which would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and other cross-border crime such as facilitation of irregular immigration, trafficking in human beings and terrorism. Therefore, public security will be affected. In light of the above the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

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- to provide and hand over operational video recordings and still pictures (e.g. thermo-vision recordings, airborne pictures/ videos taken by assets co-financed by Frontex) exclusively to relevant host MS authorities; any further use of such material is not allowed without the agreement of the host MSs;
- to record and report location (coordinates) of detections points and all other incidents.

The International Coordination Centre (ICC) is responsible to deal with the information received from participants and to channel it to appropriate national and/or international stakeholders. In each case, Frontex should be informed about the outcome of the actions after the information has been submitted by participant of the JO.

The participating assets perform their tasks under the coordination of the ICC (through the NO, in case of the assets of the participating MS, or the Liaison Officers (LO) if assets are deployed by other national authorities of the host MS), following the planning confirmed during the daily Joint Coordination Board (JCB) meetings.

Aerial assets should be deployed to patrol daily with a minimum of 3 hours, according to the risk assessment, flight endurance and flight range of the asset. Aerial assets should be able to perform night patrols.

Thermo-Vision Vehicles (TVV) and Patrol Cars (PC) will deliver a minimum of 8 active patrolling hours daily by patrolling or stationing themselves at locations known or perceived to be sensitive based on the risk assessment to ensure early detections. Surveillance by TVV is to be carried out using EO-IR electronic devices installed on the vehicles.

TVV and PC should have off road driving capabilities and the technical possibility to detect a single human body at a range of no less than 4 km, record and extract the image from the surveillance.

Dog Teams composed of the dog and dog handler are deployed to detect human beings attempting to cross the external borders undetected, hidden in transportation means as well as to detect drugs and other forbidden substances, to the extent possible.

Host MS must ensure participation of local officer in the joint patrols; the Host MS officer should be able to communicate properly in English or another language, which is agreed with the Home MS officers.

4.3.2. Gathering of information through debriefing activities

The debriefing experts from the host and participating MS together with an interpreter or cultural mediator, when available, will compose the Joint Debriefing Teams (JDT). Additional staff of the host MS may act as Team Leaders, responsible for coordinating and commanding all actions of the JDT.

The JDT are deployed to conduct migrant interviews. Furthermore, the JDT will receive tasks and feedback from the Operational Analyst (OA). The purposes of debriefing of migrants are to collect information based on intelligence gaps identified by the OA and the host MS with a view to ascertain the identity, involvement and modus operandi of people smuggling networks.

The JDT will be based in predefined areas according to the operational situation and will ensure a flexible response whenever incidents occur. It is of utmost importance that the JDT have full access to migrants as soon as possible after their arrival or interception.

The authorities of the host MS must ensure that if available, information related to incidents, including items and migrants' belongings found, are provided to the JDT as much in advance as possible, allowing to the JDT to prepare for the interview properly based on a sufficient background information.

In particular as regards the Bulgarian operational area the JDT deployed to [REDACTED] might perform their activities in locations nearby the place of deployment [REDACTED] upon request of the Bulgarian authorities.

Under PeDRA, personal data that are collected and reported during debriefing activities are processed by Frontex and are then transmitted to Europol as per the Operational Arrangement between the agencies.

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This systematic information exchange precludes the need for informal sharing of personal data at the local level, unless this information may be useful in urgent/emergency situations, related to various forms of crimes.

The host MS should share the relevant operational information on border control and countering cross-border crime with other EU agencies and bodies or international organizations while implementing activities in the operational area. (e.g., with EUROPOL on combating cross-border crime - THB, traffic of stolen vehicles etc.; with EASO on management of the migration mixed flows etc.).

Detailed information regarding the implementation of PeDRA is provided in the Handbook.

4.3.3. Supporting screening, fingerprinting and registration of migrants

Screening activities are intended to establish the assumption on the nationality of a migrant and are performed by screening experts from MS as defined in the profile of a screening expert. Screening Experts of host and home MS and Interpreters will compose Joint Screening Teams (JST).

The screening interviews carried out by deployed screening experts should, as a rule, only be performed in close cooperation with a screening expert from the host MS.

Frontex supports the host MSs by deploying members of the teams with the knowledge, experience and expertise in the field of fingerprinting to enhance the process of identification and registration of irregular migrants as well as contributing to return activities.

The Guidelines for screening, debriefing, fingerprinting and registration are available in the Handbook.

4.4. Vega Children - Land Borders

With the aim to support Border Guards with practical indications on how to effectively identify and refer to adequate authorities children in need of protection, the Vega Children Handbook for Land Borders Operations has been developed in cooperation with the Host MSs and other relevant stakeholders and shall be used within the framework of Land Borders joint operations and pilot project, based on the best practices already experienced in Air Borders in relation to the "VEGA Children Handbook".

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Period of implementation

Commencement			
Termination			

Commented [A3]: The non-disclosed text contains detailed information regarding the modus operandi of law enforcement officials. It contains references to the methods applied by law enforcement officers to perform border control tasks in general and to counter illegal activities in particular. Its publicity would expose the working methods applied in those activities which would jeopardize the implementation of ongoing and future operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration and other cross-border crime such as facilitation of irregular immigration, trafficking in human beings and terrorism. Therefore, public security will be affected. In light of the above the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

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5.2. Operational area

The operational activities will be implemented in two separate locations, at South Eastern external land borders and the Western Balkan area; an International Coordination Centre will be established for each of the two areas. The location of the ICC can be changed according to the operational needs with the agreement of the Host MS.

5.2.1. South Eastern external land borders

International Coordination Centre (ICC SE)

The ICC SE will be established in [REDACTED]



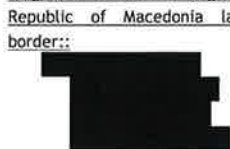
Bulgarian-Turkish land border:



Bulgarian-Serbian land border:



Bulgarian - Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia land
border::



*Members of the teams are not foreseen to be deployed to [REDACTED] These LCC's are included in the operational plan to ensure situational monitoring of these border areas. This will be achieved through JORA reporting.

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5.2.2. Western Balkans area

International Coordination Centre (ICC WB)

The ICC WB will be established in [REDACTED], in the premises of [REDACTED]

At the Croatian - Serbian land border:

At the Hungarian - Serbian land border:

Commented [A6]: The non-disclosed text contains information regarding the operational area. Ongoing operations tend to cover similar operational areas as the operations of preceding years in the same geographical area. In this regard, disclosing the location of the operational areas of previous years, would be tantamount to disclosing the current operational areas. The result of this will only be to hamper the course of the ongoing operations, by depriving them of any strategy and element of surprise during border surveillance, ultimately obstructing their purpose to counter and prevent cross-border criminality as well as prevent unauthorized border crossings. In this light, the disclosure of such information would undermine the protection of the public interest as regard to public security in the sense of Article 4(1) of the Regulation 1049/2001

Description of the tasks and specific instructions to members of the teams and other participants (Rules of engagement) are defined in the Annex 6.

5.3. Participating Member States, Third Countries and other organizations

Host MS	Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary
Participating MS	Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Third Countries	TBC

Detailed information regarding the initial plan of deployed resources is provided in Annex 7.

5.4. Operational briefings / debriefings

All participants taking part in joint operation will receive the Operational briefing and debriefing delivered by representatives of Frontex and national authorities of host MS.

Detailed information regarding operational briefing and debriefing is provided in Annex 8.

6. COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES, OTHER UNION AGENCIES AND BODIES OR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

6.1. Cooperation with third countries

The observers, who have no executive powers and who are not authorized to take any measures, will receive appropriate operational briefing and debriefing delivered by Frontex.

Observers from third countries may only advise the Members of the Teams and officers from the border guard services of the host MS. The main goals of their participation are exchange of experience and obtaining practical experience in implementation of Schengen Borders Code. Observers cannot transmit to the deploying Third Country authorities' personal data to which they had access while acting in their observer role.

In the framework of the present JO Members of the Teams may be deployed with executive powers in the territory of Third Country neighbouring the Host MS. Such deployment will only occur upon entry into force of the Status Agreement to between the Union and the Third Country and in accordance with the terms defined therein and the subsequent amendment to this Operational Plan.

6.2. Cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations

During the JO the cooperation with European Asylum Support Office (EASO), European Police Office (EUROPOL), European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-scale IT Systems (eu-LISA), Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), European Union Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) may be established and maintained.

More detailed information about cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations is provided in the Annex 9.

7. COORDINATION STRUCTURE

7.1. Partnership

Frontex is the EU coordinator of the Joint Operation initiating, promoting and facilitating the EU MS synchronized efforts to manage the external borders.

The Host MS authorities are the direct partners of Frontex and responsible for all border related activities within the Joint Operation.

The participating MS will support the achievement of operational objectives and implementation of activities by deploying their resources to the defined locations in particular periods of time.

All the activities are coordinated by the International Coordination Centres (ICC), without prejudice to the prerogatives of the national operational chain of command and control specific to each participating MS.

7.2. Main operational structures / actors and their tasks

7.2.1. Member States

- International Coordination Centre (ICC)
- Head of ICC
- ICC Coordinator
- Joint Coordinating Board (JCB)
- National Official (NO) - Officers of home MS deploying aerial assets
- Intelligence Officer (IO)
- Members of the EBCGT,
- Officers of the host MS
- Interpreters/Cultural Mediators
- Local Coordination Centre (LCC)
- Head of LCC
- LCC Coordinator
- Debriefing Coordinator
- Team Leader
- Liaison Officer (LO)
- Members of the teams
- Local staff of the hosting MSs

7.2.2. Frontex

- Frontex Coordinating Officer (FCO) - [REDACTED]
- Operational Manager (OM) and Operational Team (OT)
- Frontex Operational Coordinator (FOC)
- Frontex Support Officer (FSO)
- Risk Analysis Unit (RAU)
 - Operational Analyst (OA)
 - Personal Data Analyst (PDA)
- Special Adviser for Debriefing Activities
- Frontex Situation Centre (FSC)
 - Senior Duty Officer (SDO)
 - Frontex Support Officer (FSO FSC)
 - FOSS Service Managers
 - JORA Service Managers
- Frontex Liaison Office (Piraeus) (FLO)
- Frontex Field Press Officer (FFPO)
- Fundamental Rights Officer
- Members of the Teams seconded to Frontex

Commented [A7]: The non-disclosed text contains personal data, in particular the name of an individual. Its disclosure would affect the privacy and integrity of the individual. Therefore, its disclosure is precluded pursuant to the exception laid down in Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The general tasks and roles of operational structures / actors are defined in the Annex 10.

Contact details of main operational actors can be found in Annex 11.

7.3. Composition of the teams

The teams shall be comprised of:

- Border Surveillance Officers
- Dog handlers
- Debriefing Experts
- Screening Experts
- Interpreters or Cultural Mediators
- Frontex Support Officers
- Third Country Observers
- Host MS officers

8. COMMAND AND CONTROL

8.1. Technical equipment

Operational command of aerial and terrestrial assets of the participating MS remains with the respective MS, while the tactical command of the assets is in the hands of the ICC after consultation with the National Officials (NO).

The aerial and terrestrial assets will receive instructions from the ICC regarding zones to cover and recommendations of actions to be taken. The situation on scene will be reported to the LCC/ICC via all available communication systems.

National Officials deployed to the technical equipment are under the command and control of the respective participating MS.

8.2. European Border and Coast Guard Teams (border guards, seconded members of the teams and other relevant staff)

Command and control of members of the teams remain with the competent national authority of the host MS. The host MS nominates officers who are in command of the European Border and Coast Guard Teams

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(EBCGT). Members of the Teams will carry out their duties under the instructions of the officers of the host MS who have the operational responsibility for the team assigned.

Members of the Teams seconded to the Agency perform their tasks under the direct instructions of the officers of the host Member State, without prejudice to the Agency's prerogatives pursuant to European Border and Coast Guard Regulation.

Members of the EBCGT and Members of the Teams seconded to the Agency under FSO profile perform their tasks under the instructions and command and control of Frontex in close cooperation with the host MS.

Contact details, including names of the host MS' officers responsible for cooperation with deployed Members of the EBCGT and the locations of deployments are included in Annex 11.

8.3. Command and control scheme



Commented [A8]: The blanked out parts contain detailed information regarding the command & control scheme of law enforcement officials. Its disclosure would expose law enforcement officials engaged in the operation and harm the course of future and ongoing operations, and thus facilitate irregular migration. Therefore, public security will be affected. In light of the above, the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security

9. COMMUNICATION

9.1. Operational communication

Communication flows for operational activities in the operational area are standard and channelled via the ICC. The standard communication flow is as follows:

- Communication between the ICC and Frontex will be accomplished via videoconference, e-mail, mobile and fixed line phones as well as radio and satellite phones;
- Communication between all participants of the JO will be accomplished via e-mail, mobile and fixed line phones;
- Communication between the actors within the central (ICC) and local authorities (LCC) will be accomplished via e-mails, mobile and fixed line phones;
- Communication between all assets deployed as well as between assets and operational structures will be in accordance with the International Radio Procedure. Furthermore, any other available tool enabling communication among all participants and coordinating structures will be used;
- FOSS will be the main platform used for sharing operational-related information and maintaining situational awareness among all parties involved (Operational Plan, other operational documentation: FSC DSR, Bi/WAR, etc.); access to FOSS is granted to participants of the Joint Operation according to the FOSS access procedures. Participants will be granted access to the

webpage on FOSS after their introduction in OPERA. Other participants, who are not introduced in OPERA, will receive access after submission and authorization of the FOSS User Access Request Form. Members of the Teams seconded to Frontex will be granted FOSS access by default to the Joint Operation page on FOSS, unless otherwise requested by the Operational Manager.

- Communication, information and reporting flow at Frontex level are channelled via the FSC.

Detailed information about communication and FOSS is provided in the Handbook.

9.2. Communication with Press

Frontex is strongly committed to the principle of transparency. As a general rule, media should be granted access to operational areas.

Members of the teams are allowed to talk to the media only within the limits set by specific guidelines for the participating officers. Each member of the teams taking part in the operation shall receive a laminated card with the specific guidelines.

A network of press offices of all involved authorities will be established and all contact details shall be sent to press@frontex.europa.eu.

The communication strategy on the Border Control Operational Actions on the territory of the Host MS is common for Frontex and the host MS. Frontex and the Host MS shall nominate Dedicated Press Officers (DPO) who will be entirely responsible for coordination of all matters related to interview requests, press visits to the operational area and any other press-related matter related to JO. Press visits of international media will be facilitated by Frontex in coordination with the Host MS authorities. Frontex Press Office may arrange, upon agreement with the NCP, the deployment of a members of the teams/seconded members of the teams with the profile of Frontex Field Press Officer.

Frontex communication policy, rules and guidelines for handling media requests are included in the Handbook.

The contact details of Frontex Press Office members (Spokesperson and Frontex Field Press Officer) and dedicated press officers of national authority of the host MS are indicated in Annex 11.

10. REPORTING

10.1. Reporting and JORA

Reports regarding all border-related incidents that have occurred in the operational areas are prepared by the officers of the Host MS or members of the teams and sent via JORA. The incident reports shall contain all the necessary elements and attachments (i.e., document alerts, images, videos, etc.) gathered during the operational activity. After they are sent, the incident reports will undergo the JORA validation process to be approved by the FSC.

In addition, under PeDRA all debriefing reports will also be reported via a new online template hosted on JORA. For this reason all deployed debriefing experts will need to request access to JORA. See Handbook point 9 on PeDRA for more information.

In case the system is unavailable to users, the ICC shall immediately report the unavailability to the FSC via the chain of command. A decision will be promptly made in Frontex and communicated to the users.

Members of the teams seconded to Frontex perform their tasks under the direct instructions of the border guards of the host Member State, without prejudice to the Agency's prerogatives pursuant to Frontex Regulation.

Comprehensive information and the examples of templates of all reports on JORA is provided in the Handbook.

JORA Guidelines and the templates in Word format are available in FOSS.

The list of JORA actors, the incidents reporting structure and JORA incident template attributes list are described in Annex 12.

10.2. Reports of participants

Type of report	Description	Responsibility	To be sent to
Daily ICC Report	ICC Daily report incl. JCB Minutes and Patrolling Schedule	ICC	Shall be sent via functional email to FSC with cc to operational team functional email [REDACTED] NFPoCs of Host MSs, LCCs, participants in the JCB meeting and deployed officers.
	Screening Reports	Screening experts via FSO ICC	Shall be sent via functional email [REDACTED] and emails of respective LCCs
DAILY REPORTING PACKAGE	Technical Equipment Mission Report	NO	
	Incident reports from Reporting Units	ICC	Shall be sent via the reporting application JORA, according to the reporting timetable in Annex 12
JORA	Shift report	Deployed members of the teams performing border surveillance	Shall be sent to LCC FSO every day before 09:00
	Shift report of Focal Point Officer	Experts deployed at Focal Point	Shall be sent to LCC FSO every day before 09:00
	Weekly Screening expert report	Screening expert	Shall be sent to [REDACTED] every Friday before 17:00
Operational reporting			

Commented [A9]: The non-disclosed text contains detailed information on the means of communication used by law enforcement officials within the joint operation. Their disclosure could lead to possible abusive usage with a view to jeopardize their work and harm the course of future and ongoing operations and thus facilitating irregular migration and affecting public security. In light of the above, the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

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PeDRA	Interview Report	Information collected after each interview of the migrant	IO/TL/Debriefing Experts	Interviews will be filled in directly in JORA instead of MS Word and will not be included in the daily package

10.3. ICC Daily report

The daily report shall be prepared by the ICC FSO who is responsible for the dissemination of the daily reporting on a daily basis before 13.00 CET to Frontex (Operational Team and FSC) via functional emails [REDACTED], as well as copied to the NFPoCs of Host MSs, LCCs and participants in the JCB meeting. The ICC Daily Report must be verified by the FCO and the ICC Coordinator.

10.4. Serious incident reporting

The reporting of serious incidents (SI) must be in line with the reporting structure of the operation.

Type of report	Description	Responsibility
Initial Serious Incident Report	Serious Incident Report is an alert message that shall be reported immediately (within 2 hours after recognition) to FSC and the host MS' authorities in case an incident, natural or caused by human action, occurs which may affect or be relevant to a particular Frontex activity, the safety and security of participants in Frontex activities, the Agency's mission and reputation, or any combination thereof, having special regard to any allegation of violation of Fundamental Rights.	All participants of the JO

Formal SIR shall be reported in JORA and sent immediately via email (within 48 hours) to [REDACTED] and host MS NFPoC.

Serious Incidents Catalogue is available in the Handbook.

10.4.1. Reporting to the Management Board and to Member States

Upon conclusion of the procedure initiated with the SIR, the Executive Director reports to the members of the Management Board and to the relevant national authorities, in accordance with the provisions provided for in the respective Standard Operating Procedure.

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10.5. Frontex reports

Type of report	Description	Responsibility	To be sent
FCO Weekly Report	Feedback on performed activities in the area	FCO	Shall be sent to Frontex via functional [REDACTED]
Analytical Report	Analytical assessment of the factors impacting the situation in the operational area, trends, patterns, on bi-weekly basis	OA	Shall be sent by FSC to the following email addresses: [REDACTED]
FSC Situational Report	Overview of the operational activities related to the 24-hour period of the preceding day	FSC SDO	Will be uploaded on FOSS under the responsibility of SDO to be accessible for MS
FSO LCC Daily Report	Overview of the operational activities related to the 24-hour period of the preceding day - to be sent until 09:00 LT	FSO LCC	Shall be sent to ICC FSO with cc to respective LCC Coordinator and FCO or FOC if deployed on spot

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11. WORKING CONDITIONS AND LOGISTICS

11.1. Working conditions and working environment of the operational area

The working conditions and environment vary according to the place of deployment.

Members of the teams with the profile of Screening and Debriefing Expert, as well as the interpreters and cultural mediators may perform their tasks at the premises of the Border Control Units or at the mobile offices at the Reception Centres.

Detailed information on each location is presented in Annex 13

11.2. Logistics

Before arrival, members of the teams are advised to contact their colleagues already deployed in the operational area to arrange the transfer to the hotel. If this solution is not possible they should contact the respective Local Coordinator and FSO and ask for support.

11.2.1. Field visits

Prior to the deployment of aerial assets, it is recommended for participating MS to perform a field visit to get familiar with the operational area, local authorities and service providers. The field visit should be approved by the Operational Manager and agreed with the ICC Coordinator in advance.

The LCC Coordinator and Operational Team (FOC, FSO) will support the field visits in accordance with the ICC and Frontex instructions.

Field visit delegation of two persons will be reimbursed by Frontex.

11.2.2. Heavy equipment, firearms and ammunition

Heavy equipment is highly recommended to be delivered on the day after operational briefing and shipped back on the day before debriefing day.

Information regarding transportation of firearms and ammunitions can be found in the Handbook

11.2.3.Crew related issues

Before executing the change of crew of asset deployed, the participating MS shall inform Operational Team in due time to ensure delivery of the operational briefing / debriefing for crew members.

In case that the crew members will leave the deployment area during the days of crew rest time, it must be informed in due time before to the participating MS, LCC Coordinator and the Operational manager.

11.2.4.Diplomatic clearance and Night flights under VFR ATC clearance

The participating MS deploying aerial assets shall make the necessary arrangements in advance to obtain the Diplomatic clearance to allow the state aircraft to enter the airspace of host MS.

The participating MS should respect the time needed for issuance of flight clearance according to national procedures and submit clearance request for the diplomatic clearance in time (at least 15 working days before the foreseen starting date of flights) in order not to jeopardise the timely start of the mission.

In addition to diplomatic clearance, VFR flights shall not be operated during night without a clearance from the appropriate ATC unit.

Participating MS have to send clearance request for night flights under VFR at least 15 days before entering respective Host MS FIR to Host MS authorities: For Bulgaria via e-mail: [REDACTED], for Hungary via e-mail: [REDACTED] and to the Operational Team via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Additional information for Bulgaria:

Under the Civil Aviation Act and as per the meaning of article 62, paragraph 3 of the Law on Commerce, the state-owned enterprise "Bulgarian Air Traffic Services Authority" (BULATSA) is a legal entity that performs state functions for the provision of air navigation services in the controlled civil airspace of the Republic of Bulgaria, in line with the Civil Aviation Act and the international agreements in the field of civil aviation signed and ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria. Pursuant to article 53, paragraph. 2 of the Civil Aviation Act, the scope of BULATSA's activities encompasses all aircraft performing flights in the controlled civil airspace of the Republic of Bulgaria. Therefore MS shall send a request for clearance for operation of VFR flights during night to the above-mentioned institution having the following contact details: 1 "Brussels" Blvd., Sofia 1540, Bulgaria, Tel. 00359 02 945 9029, Fax: 00359 02 937 4795, e-mail: fdp@bulatsa.com, website: www.atsa.bg.

Clearance request form for VFR flights at night can be found in the Handbook.

11.2.5.Transport, car rental and lodging

The host MS contributes, if possible, to the local transportation and accommodation of the deployed members of the teams. The host MS, if possible, makes a cost-free pre-booking, which is directly confirmed by the participating MS.

The use of rental car is to be approved in advance by the Operational Manager and expenses should be included in the relevant financial documents. In this case, all practical/logistic issues should be arranged by participants themselves in advance.

Each participant is strongly advised to bring his/her driving licence since they could be listed as a 2nd driver on the car rental contract. The main purpose for car rentals is the transportation from/to meeting points to working places not only of the driver but also of other deployed officers without car.

Frontex (Operational team) will not make any bookings or reservations of the flights, accommodation, etc.

Information regarding accommodation can be found in Annex 14.

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12. EVALUATION

12.1. Member States and Third Countries

Reports	Deadlines
Report from Participant	Shall be submitted to Frontex within 7 calendar days after deployment via email: [REDACTED] Relevant sections of the report will be distributed to TRU. <i>Template of the report is available on FOSS and Handbook</i>
Final Report from Member State	Shall be submitted to Frontex attached to the request for final payment via functional email: [REDACTED]
Final Report from Third Country	<i>Template of the reports is available on FOSS and Handbook</i>

Commented [A13]: The non-disclosed text contains detailed information on the means of communication used by law enforcement officials within the joint operation. Their disclosure could lead to possible abusive usage with a view to jeopardize their work and harm the course of future and ongoing operations and thus facilitating irregular migration and affecting public security. In light of the above, the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

The final payment will not be processed until the Final Reports from MS and Third country are not submitted to Frontex. In case only up to two members of the teams were deployed by home MS, Report from Participant may be sufficient.

12.2. Frontex

Reports	Benchmarks
Frontex Evaluation Report	The results of the JO will be evaluated and Frontex Evaluation Report (FER) will be transmitted within 60 calendar days after the termination of the JO to the Management Board together with the observations of the Fundamental Rights Officer referred to in Article 26a of the Frontex Regulation. FER will be uploaded on FOSS. FER will be accomplished in line with the indicators of objectives defined in the Annex 4 of the OPLAN.

13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

In accordance with the applicable legal framework, Frontex will co-finance the joint operation. Frontex will reimburse eligible costs incurred by participating MS authorities in relation to deployments of human and technical resources.

Frontex will be responsible for the preparation of all necessary financial commitments and the preparation of the legal commitments. Funds are allocated by means of issuing Specific Financing Decision (SFD) with Estimated Budget and calculation for Running Expenses of Means (REM), if applicable. The Estimated Budget and REM are to be submitted by the authority participating in the joint operation. Once the SFD is issued by Frontex, the authority is obliged to send back Acknowledgement of Receipt and is entitled to request pre-financing up to 50% of SFD budget. Frontex strongly recommends its Beneficiaries to request pre-financing

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Payment of the balance, which may not be repeated, is made after the end of the operational activity based on eligible costs actually incurred in carrying out the operational activity. The request for final payment shall be submitted within 75 days after the end of the joint operation. Payments shall be remitted within 60 days from the receipt of the request for final payment, notwithstanding any suspension period due to incomplete or incorrect information provided by the Partner.

Accordingly, Frontex will co-finance the deployments of Third Country observers within the joint operation, if the Third Country has a Working Arrangement or any other similar legal basis for cooperation with Frontex. For the purposes of legal and financial commitment, Frontex and the Third Country authority mutually sign a Grant Agreement along with the Estimated Budget and General Conditions. Further co-financing details, eligible costs and payment rules for Grant Agreements are analogical to the SFD scheme for EU MS.

ANNEXES

Annex 1	Frontex Code of Conduct
Annex 2	Procedures on Complaints Mechanism
Annex 3	Assessment of the Situation
Annex 4	Operational Objectives
Annex 5	Processing Personal Data for Risk Analysis (PeDRA) for Debriefing Activities
Annex 6	Description of the tasks and specific instructions to members of the teams and other participants (Rules of engagement)
Annex 7	Initial plan of deployed resources
Annex 8	Operational briefing and debriefing
Annex 9	Cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations
Annex 10	General tasks and roles of operational structures / actors
Annex 11	Contact details
Annex 12	JORA
Annex 13	Working conditions and environment of the operational area
Annex 14	Accommodation