



## **EPN HORIZONTAL PROGRAMME**

### **EPN- HERMES 2010**

**2010/OPS/10**

**OPERATIONS DIVISION  
JOINT OPERATIONS UNIT  
SEA BORDER SECTOR**

**FER 2010**

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## **PART I: Summary (public document)**

### **1. Background information**

According to Frontex assessments and the evaluation of Frontex coordinated joint operation Hermes in the previous years, Sardinia is subject to seaborne illegal migration flows from Algeria. The migration pressure originates from various departure points in north-east Algeria.

The criminal networks as well as migrants themselves exploit the proximity of the Algerian coasts to Sardinia, mainly in the summer period that mild weather conditions prevail.

According to the incidents reported and relevant data provided by the Italian authorities, there was a decreasing migration trend in Sardinia, in 2010, compared to the previous 3 years. The reasons that most likely explain this trend are the following:

- The tightening of inland measures on illegal stay by several MS; especially Italy adopted amendments to its Penal Code last year, in order to discourage illegal stay;
- The prolonged detention of illegal migrants in Italy's detention centres, in combination with the focus on the identification of their real nationalities and the repatriation to their countries of origin;
- The strengthening of border controls, also via the implementation of the JO Hermes since 2007, aiming to the reinforcement of sea borders management on the specific operational area, the detection and interception of illegal border crossers;
- The use by Algerians of other routes to reach the EU, namely by low cost flights from major North African airports to Istanbul, to cross illegally the Greek – Turkish land or sea borders, or by boats from the north-west coasts of Algeria, to cross illegally the sea borders of Andalusia;
- The financial crisis and the recession which affected most EU MS, significantly hampering or reducing the job opportunities in these countries;
- The amendment of the Algerian Penal Code in August 2009, considering the illegal exit from Algeria as criminal offence, foreseeing penalties of up to six months imprisonment to illegal migrants and up to ten years to facilitators.

The Joint Operation EPN-Hermes 2010 took place in order to increase the capacity of border control on persons attempting to enter the Schengen area illegally by sea, using small boats from Algeria. It was implemented in predefined operational sea areas south of Sardinia.

#### **➤ Phases/Duration**

The joint operation commenced on 14 June 2010 at 12.00 UT and lasted until 29 October 2010 at 10.00 UT. The operation was initially foreseen to start on 1 of June but had to be postponed until 15 June.

#### **➤ Participation**

Host MS for the JO was **Italy**.

Beside Italy other 5 EU MS took part in JO EPN-Hermes 2010:

#### **Participating MS:**

- France

- Latvia
- Luxemburg
- Slovakia
- Spain

## 2. Achievement of the objectives

For the Joint Operation EPN-Hermes 2010, the objectives were set and agreed upon between Frontex and the Member States as mentioned below:

- To focus on the border surveillance activities in the operational areas enabling detection of all contact of interest within the mentioned area, in order to intercept persons attempting to cross the external borders illegally;

**Partly achieved** – The participating means detected and intercepted targets at sea, those which were not detected at sea were finally intercepted on land. According with the data gathered in the International Coordination Center, half of the total number of migrants (49, 15%) was detected in the operational areas. In a total of 19 incidents reported since the beginning of the JO on 14 June, 10 incidents were detected inland (82 migrants) and 9 incidents were detected at sea (213 migrants);

- To increase the quality standards of the reporting system enhancing the management of the information regarding the detection and interception of contacts of interests in the defined operational areas;

**Partly achieved** - There were inconsistencies in the flow and quality of the IO reports, especially in the first weeks of the JO, nevertheless, after the provision of guidelines to the IO by the Analyst Support Officer (ASO), the situation improved considerably.

- To increase the information gathering – to establish best practices on debriefing of persons to obtain intelligence improving the risk assessment for realizing steering processes on operational activities, including identification of facilitators and the dismantlement of the criminal networks;

**Partly achieved** – The quantity and quality of the information gathered increased in comparison with 2009, however operationally was less useful than in 2008 when the IO provided with very important operational information to International Coordination Center. Some credible and useful information was received, especially by interviews of migrants, on the trends and patterns of the illegal migration situation of Algerians towards Sardinia. There were strong indications on the involvement of facilitators in some cases.

- To increase the capacity of the permanent structures- to develop further the EPN working concept supporting the set up of National Coordination Center (NCC)/Regional Coordination Center/s (RCC)/ Local Coordination Centers (LCCs)/ Focal Points (FPs);

**Partly achieved** – In regard to RCC/LCC in Sardinia, this objective was already achieved in 2008. The NCC was officially established by Italy in January 2009 but ever since there is no further development in operational term.

- To increase the number of repatriated third country nationals in order to measure the effectiveness. The hosting MS should provide Frontex with this information during the evaluation phase;

**The level of achievement of this objective cannot be measured** as the Italian authorities are not in a position to provide the number of migrants who were detected in Cagliari in 2010 and then were repatriated to Algeria, due to the fact that the detention period in Italy

lately increased from 2 to 6 months; in any case this latest development is satisfactory, since longer detention periods are considered as a deterrent factor to would-be migrants.

### **3. Results – outcome – impact on the joint operation**

- It has been a permanent contact among Frontex Coordinators, the ICC duty officer and the participants, improving the level of coordination and exchange of information;
- The Frontex coordinated activities envisaged the cooperation between the Member States, in particular among the deployed experts exchanging the know-how and best practices and learning about the national procedures from each other;
- 19 incidents occurred during the operation, 8 of them within the operational area (49, 15% of the total number of intercepted migrants) whereas 13 out of the operational area . 249 migrants were disembarked on the Italian territory. Some of the incidents out of the operational area were part of the same arrival;
- The number of the detections and interceptions within the operational areas increased in comparison with last year;
- The flexibility and cooperation of the participating Member States in the deployment of guest officers and patrolling means have been very helpful for the better implementation of the operation, even though, there is room for improvement regarding the flexibility of patrolling performance;
- The participation of the cultural mediators working along with the participating experts increased the quality of gathered information;
- The training sessions for the experts from hosting and participating MSs, organized by Frontex prior to their deployment, was successful, providing them with specific knowledge concerning the operation;
- The exchange of experience among the officers from different Member States as well as the exchange of contact details will be positive for the hosting and participating MSs;

### **4. Budget**

The budget was **3,280,109.44** EUR. Whole budget include only the operational activities, whereas the administration expenses are not presented due to are included in the total budget of European Patrol Network (EPN) Programme.

Thanks to excellent cooperation of the participating MSs, it has been reached the payment of 97.90% of the total committed budget for the JO.

### **5. Link to the usefulness of other Frontex activities**

- In the framework of EPN Programme, the establishment of an organizational structure in the hosting Member States is vital, to steer the operational activities and to enhance the information gathering for the effective implementation of Frontex coordinated activities;

### **6. Added value of the joint operation in the light of Frontex goals**

- Awareness – to achieve the situational awareness of the EU external borders;

During the operation the ICC received the information regarding the incidents occurred in and out of the operational areas increasing the effectiveness and accuracy of the analysis process; however the flow of information should improve in future similar operations;

- Response – to establish synchronization and efficient utilization of available resources;

In this regard the ICC carried out an effective coordination of the participating means increasing the level of surveillance of the defined areas.

The experts were deployed according to the needs increasing the information gathering.

- Interoperability – to ensure development and integration of required tools and platforms;

Due to the experience gained in previous operations the level of coordination among different participating authorities considerably increased despite of the language barriers.

- Performance – to enhance the quality and quantity of border control;

In this regard Frontex should continue encouraging the developments on sharing knowledge and standardizing the work done by patrolling means, experts and national authorities when performing the border control.